THE YEARS OF ENDEAVOUR

Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi

AUGUST 1969—AUGUST 1972

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PREFACE

The Years of Endeavour is a collection of speeches made by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi from August 1969 to August 1972. It also includes broadcasts, messages and interviews given by her during the period. The speeches delivered in Hindi appear here in translation.

The speeches are grouped in nine sections. The first three sections deal with the political and economic aspects of Indian life; the next three sections cover more specific spheres like education, science and technology, health, social welfare and arts. Next comes the section on events on the sub-continent covering speeches relating to the emergence of Bangladesh. Then comes the section dealing with foreign policy and India's relations with other countries. The last section includes a collection of homages and tributes.

Within each section, the arrangement of speeches is chronological. Where two or more speeches deal with the same theme, they have been grouped under one heading.

The volume does not claim to be a complete record of the speeches made by the Prime Minister between August 1969 and August 1972, but all of the more important speeches are here. The collection aims at presenting, as fully as possible, the quality and substance of her thinking on the major national and international issues as also the range of her interests and concerns.

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Democratic Progress

Democratic Functioning

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS of the I.P.U. and other distinguished guests: May I say how glad we are to have you amongst us. I sincerely hope you will find discussions useful and your stay in India interesting as well as enjoyable. You have come from countries which differ in their political objectives and systems, but you are united in fostering the rule of the people. You know that the laws you make can command obedience only to the extent that they embody high principles and secure the people's welfare.

Until our own times, in almost every country, citizens with recognised political rights formed only a small part of the population. Rules were made by the few for the benefit of the few; the many had merely to acquiesce. Any ambition or attempt at self-assertion was suppressed.

But today Parliaments represent—and are elected by larger numbers. The "people" are no longer an idealised entity by which constitutions draw their authority in theory. They are the source of power.

India is the world's largest democracy. You know that we have full adult franchise. Our national Parliament has an electorate of 250 million and, in the last general election, 150 million people exercised their vote. There are elected assemblies in our seventeen states. In the rural areas, our people choose their own village and district councils. But the functioning of democracy should be judged not merely by the size of the electorate, or the percentage of people exercising their franchise, but by the faith which they have in representative institutions. The test of democracy, it is said, is not how governments are chosen, but how governments are changed. The change of governments in our states has been peaceful. Our general elections have been milestones in the growth of the constitutional outlook. They are a testimony to our people's faith in themselves and to the inherent strength of our democracy.

Your newspapers, and ours, will tell you of our great poverty, of our regional rivalries, of our student agitations, of religious riots and so on. All these conflicts are there, as indeed they exist in one form or another in most other countries. Some of them are due to historic causes, some to the tensions unavoidable in a developing and changing society. But, compared to the judgment and self-restraint shown by our people

Address at the 57th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, New Delhi, October 31, 1969

in matters related to the substance of government, these disturbances are peripheral. The heart of India is strong and its limbs are sturdy. It is necessary to say this because, as a well-known Western newspaper editorial stated recently, India "seems always to be on trial—of no other country is it so insistently asked : Will it make it ?"

The Indian Constitution is federal in nature, making for the fullest development of regional personality within the ambit of national unity, and clearly demarcating regional and national functions in administrative matters. This does not mean that differences do not arise between states, or between the states and the Union, but we have the machinery to resolve such differences. Two years ago, after the fourth general election, governments in some states were formed by parties opposed to the Indian National Congress—which is the party in power at the Centre. We accepted the verdict of the people and welcomed this development as a new phase in the political maturing of our country. By and large, the central government has had the co-operation of all State Chief Ministers, whether they head Congress or non-Congress governments. If there are problems, and indeed there are many, they arise not from any constitutional insufficiency but from the scarcity of resources which creates situations, where even justifiable demands outspan the means to meet them. The earlier suppression of culture and language along with economic disparities gives rise to fierce regional pride which sometimes misleads people to temporarily regard their immediate regions as something bigger than the nation. But the federal system is a constitutional answer to the conflict between centrifugal and centripetal forces.

A few weeks ago, religious clashes occurred on a large scale in one state. This is not the occasion to discuss the origin of such clashes or to go into their history. Such riots are indefensible. We take the sternest action to deal with them, for we know that our political edifice rests on secularism and religious equality.

These occasional outbursts have also to be viewed against our centuries-old tradition of tolerance. India is a land of many religions : Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and others. People of the minority communities live in every part of the country and participate in all walks of life : politics and business, administration and the defence services, the arts, films and sports. Our first Christians date back to the time of St. Thomas the Apostle. Now there are 13 million. The Muslims are more than 10 per cent of our population—numbering 55 million. Two communities—the Parsis and the Jews—are numerically small, but culturally dynamic. Last year, the synagogue in Cochin celebrated its fourth centenary. The Parsis, only a hundred thousand in number, have produced many leaders.

From the earliest times, the spirit of Indian culture has been one not of negation or exclusion, but of assimilation and synthesis. In our

own days, Mahatma Gandhi lived and died for religious unity and brotherhood. We, who seek to draw our inspiration from him, are deeply conscious of our responsibility to continue his mission. And, as I have just said, when clashes do occur we make every effort to mobilise all our resources to put down the trouble.

In the Western world, social and economic evolution was a step-by-step process. But in India, several revolutions—political, economic, social, intellectual and technological—are taking place simultaneously and peacefully, although not always without confrontation and crises.

The years of colonial rule succeeded indigenous feudalism without supplanting it. They bred an attitude of fear, passivity and dependence. Amidst such a people arose Mahatma Gandhi. He told us: 'Regard yourselves as free and you will be free'. Mahatma Gandhi led us to freedom and Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation of our modernisation and scientific growth. Nehru was the greatest of democrats, for it was he who took all issues to the people, patiently explaining to them the meaning of modern technology and the intricacies of events in other parts of the world. Doggedly he fought the unpopular battle against superstition and outmoded ritualistic habits which obstruct us. Both Gandhi and Nehru emphasised that freedom did not connote mere political independence, but economic welfare, social justice and renaissance of the spirit.

Freedom is the starting-point for effective economic self-government and planned progress. In the last two decades, we have nearly doubled our food production from about 50 million tonnes a year to more than 95 million tonnes now, and have built large steel and machine-making industries as a result of which we are now in a position to build our own steel mills. Educational facilities have vastly expanded. The number of children in schools has risen from 23 million to 75 million. Expectation of life has lengthened by 20 years. This and the fall in the death rate have increased our population. The government has a vigorous family planning campaign, aiming at reducing the birth rate from 40 per thousand to 23 per thousand in a decade.

But the greatest advance is in the quality of our young people—our scientists and engineers, our artists and designers. Alas, we sometimes export these also, much to our detriment.

Our women were once considered the most backward. Today some of them occupy important positions. But it is not enough for a few to be prominent; they should be enabled to make full contribution as individuals, as home-makers and as moulders of social outlook.

It is true that we have made mistakes. When so many tasks have to be undertaken simultaneously and on such an enormous scale, in conditions unexperienced elsewhere, one cannot eliminate errors. We ourselves are more keenly aware of our shortcomings than the most

scathing of our critics and we are making earnest endeavour to correct them.

But progress itself upsets the *status quo*. It shakes people from the attitude of numb acceptance. It disturbs vested interests not only of the well-to-do but of the vast numbers who, although they want to better their lives, yet fear to depart from the familiarity of the known. Education and contact with other countries unleash pent-up expectations and give wing to dreams. The gap between one's grasp and one's reach generates greater competition. Despite many safeguards, the better-off sections in any particular group take greater advantage of our schemes. Every solution creates new problems. The expansion of education swells the number of the educated unemployed. The intensive agricultural programme, which we undertook to meet the challenge of prolonged and severe drought of three years ago and which has brought us to the threshold of self-sufficiency in food, has also made the poorer farmers who live on dry lands more keenly aware of what they lack.

To give another example of new problems arising out of progress, the building of industrial overheads and the restraint on imports have helped private industries to consolidate and extend their economic power, even though we have made vast investments to establish a public sector. These investments had to be made because, on its own, private industry had neither the will, the resources, nor the ability to set up new lines of production and enter new fields of technology. In our scheme, private and public industry should complement each other to increase production. But in order to remove disparities and ensure more equitable distribution, all economic activity has to be subordinated to the social purpose. When distortions take place, corrective action has to be undertaken with decision and firmness.

In our programme of development we have received financial assistance, mostly in the form of loans. In absolute terms, the total aid thus received may appear large. However, it is well known that when translated in *per capita* terms, development aid to India is perhaps the lowest that any developing country has received.

We recognise that transference of capital and technological resources from the developed countries to the developing countries can be a means of accelerating the pace of development. However, the terms and conditions of such transference and the concepts governing international aid and development need closer scrutiny. I hope that the publication of the report of the committee presided over by so distinguished a person as Mr. Lester Pearson will provide an opportunity for a wide-ranging debate on the subject of international aid for development.

Stated simply, the issue is whether international aid is to remain primarily an instrument of national policies of the donor countries, or

whether it becomes a part and parcel of genuine international co-operation for development.

Like all developing countries represented in the UNCTAD, India would like to see the whole pattern of international trade and aid in a new perspective of international co-operation.

International aid, as at present conceived and administered, has produced disenchantment among the recipients as well as among the donors.

The path of progress is full of reverses, frustrations and hardships. But India is no longer stagnant. It is in ferment. The people are afire with hope. They are vocal and impatient—conscious of their rights. Against the background of a highly stratified society, which had even invented the concept of untouchability, you now see the pride and self-assertion of groups and classes who once were regarded as being beyond the pale. As Prime Minister, I am concerned with the problem of the social, economic and political engineering of new India. I travel constantly and meet millions of people. Each such encounter confirms the impression of changing ideas, attitudes, even habits. And this transformation is taking place by consent and within the framework of a political democracy.

Tension between continuity and change, between high expectations and limited means is inevitable. Yet a forward movement, a growing sense of interdependence, of unity and of working together are perceptible even in the midst of agitations and clashes. Life in India may not be easy, but it certainly is interesting and challenging.

In these 22 years since Independence, India's conduct of international relations has been based on principles which we cherish and which govern our internal policy.

We regained our freedom after long hard years of suffering and sacrifice. Naturally our concern must be to preserve and strengthen it and to give it content. So, we are not prepared to abdicate our judgment of right or wrong in terms of our own assessment, or to abandon our right of action as a sovereign nation. Powerful nations attempt to mould other countries in their own image, tending to clothe their national interests in ideological garb. India decided to keep aloof from the cold war and to concentrate on her development, free from outside interference. At no time did we consider non-alignment to mean neutrality. On matters affecting the international community, we do express our own opinion. We believe in enlarging the areas of peace and reconciliation. We are convinced that the world can survive and progress not by conflict, but only through co-operation. If this premise is accepted, there is no problem which cannot be solved through peaceful deliberations. On the other hand, if force or compulsion is to be the sanction behind international relations, problems will become

more intractable and the maintenance of peace will be increasingly endangered.

The world is too complex and diverse to be fitted into any neat pattern of ideology of one kind or another. Our ancient sages have pointed out that the roads to truth are many. Peaceful co-existence and non-interference in each other's affairs can no longer be regarded as moral injunctions but intensely practical necessities, without which international relations cannot be meaningful. We, who live as different nations, must be made conscious of what we have in common but we must also learn to accept our differences so that our very diversity contributes to the richness of life.

But it takes time for thoughts to change, for people to accept changes and to form new associations based on them. Some of these basic considerations, therefore, do not find acceptance, and fear and suspicion may still compel nations to enter into military combinations. However, such security is not real, nor is it conducive to evolution in keeping with the genius of a people. The membership of armed camps and subsidiary alliances have only weakened the self-reliance of nations. The policies of a country are motivated by its national interests, which are conditioned by its heritage, traditions and the requirements of its people. Foreign policy is a reflection of domestic preoccupations. Can we not pursue our national objectives by identifying them with certain collective interests and by pursuing them in co-operation with others so that we can benefit from the endeavours of the community as a whole? We think this can and must be done. Our foreign policy of peace and co-operation, based on co-existence and non-alignment, is directed towards these objectives.

We cannot be unaffected by what is happening in the rest of the world or ignore the challenge which confronts mankind as a whole. The swiftness of invention and achievement gives the average man a feeling of importance and, at the same time, of helplessness, a sense of power and also of insecurity. Man is confronted with an incredible extension of scientific and technological knowledge, without a corresponding generation of inner resources which could evolve new thinking and enable him to break the old bonds of prejudice and of the old systems. Man is not yet attuned to the dynamics of the new. He approaches the new structures and processes now available to him, with a static mind and old attitudes. He seems to be unable to make full use of his knowledge to transform himself and to create a new and more beautiful life for all mankind. It is for us, who are interested in the processes of democracy, to build not only the structures and institutions, but also to concern ourselves with the spirit of democracy, with the transformation of educational systems and their expression in terms of action, so that the minds of the young can carry the dimension of the new. It is only when the change in man is fundamental

and on a deeper level that there can be a full flowering of his personality and the release of energy as well as compassion. Then will he become capable of true democracy and of laying the solid foundations of enduring peace.

The realisation of the dreams and hopes of countless millions depends on co-operation and international peace. India is deeply committed to both. Parliaments are instruments for the understanding of one another's points of view and of ensuring peaceful change. I hope that the deliberations of this conference will advance the cause of justice and that this organisation of the Parliaments of so many nations will always exert itself in the endeavour to build a world in which the growth of wisdom keeps pace with the growth of knowledge.

May I thank you for giving me this opportunity of telling you something about my vast, complicated, difficult-to-understand country, and at the same time to give you all good wishes on my own behalf, on behalf of the Government and the people of India.

The Pay Commission

THE QUESTION OF appointing a Pay Commission to review the pay structure and other conditions of service of Central Government employees has been under examination for some time. Government have taken a decision, in principle, to appoint a new Commission for the purpose. Questions like its composition, coverage and terms of reference are under active examination and as soon as these details are finalised an announcement will be made, if possible in the course of the current session.

It has been made clear in the last session that Government regard a need-based wage to be an important objective of their socio-economic policy and that it could be said that the Gajendragadkar Commission on labour was seized of the question. That Commission has since made its report, and on this particular question the Commission has expressed the view that the principle of a national minimum wage to be determined in monetary terms is not practicable. They have also accepted the principle that the capacity to pay will be a relevant consideration in determining a need-based minimum. They have also stated that they are not in a position to quantify a need-based wage in money terms or to assess Government's capacity to pay. These matters have been left by them to be gone into by a Pay Commission.

Statement in Lok Sabha, November 21, 1969

As I said in the statement, the terms of reference of the new Pay Commission are under consideration. However, it is our intention that it should be open to the Commission to consider this question in all its aspects. The previous Commission also considered similar issues.

The House is aware that our general sympathy on this issue is with the workers, but the question is a rather complicated one in terms of what is possible and practicable. The matter was considered by the Second Pay Commission, but they neither accepted nor rejected the demand. So, we would like this question to be considered in all its aspects by the new Pay Commission as was recommended by Shri Gajendragadkar.

Some Hon. Members said that the previous Commission's recommendations had not been accepted. As far as I know, speaking subject to correction, by and large they were accepted and, in fact, in regard to some aspects like family pension we went beyond the recommendations.

Indo-French Colloquium

I AM VERY happy to welcome our eminent guests because I share the admiration and the love of my father for France and for French culture. Any meeting which can further the relations between our two countries is welcome and is likely to give fruitful results.

It is a little difficult to know what to say about India in a few minutes. I think all of you are aware that it is a country of many complexities and contradictions. No matter what one says can be true of one part of India or another and yet be untrue of India as a whole. And one of the reasons, perhaps, why there is not better understanding of what we are doing or attempting to do is that most people who come to India visit only a part of it, and even the reporting that is done on India is done about a scene or incident isolated from the historical perspective or from the large image of India. We are today perhaps better placed in many ways than we have been for several years. The economic situation is more buoyant than it has been for some time. Our agricultural harvest has been remarkable and in almost every direction there are visible signs of progress. Yet, whenever anybody reports, especially the foreign newspapers, on India, the one headline that predominates is—Can India survive? Will democracy survive in India

Address to the Indo-French Colloquium, New Delhi, December 13, 1969

and so on. One American columnist said a short while ago that of all countries in the world it was only India about which this question was being constantly asked. It was only India which had to prove itself somehow time and again and, even though we undertook something that was unexpected or that was considered too big for us and, even if we succeeded in it, the question arose with regard to the next step.

I inherited many good things from my father. One of them I have told you—which is love for France, French language and other things. But I think the most precious gift was tremendous confidence in the people of India. And I have no doubt that this country which has faced great storms in its long history will always be able to weather whatever new storms burst upon us. Just now, to some people the political situation seems to be insecure or difficult to understand. Actually I do not think it is so at all. What has happened recently was in the making for many years. In fact, it began immediately after Independence. As in all countries, there were different points of view. Only in India the Congress Party was like an umbrella which had covered under itself many different points of view. That is one common factor of winning political independence. Even before Independence, there were different ways of functioning and thinking and there were different groups. But after Independence, this became very much—I mean the division became very much sharper.

If I can take you into personal confidence, I tell you a personal anecdote. There was much talk that because my father did not perhaps agree to every sentiment of Mahatma Gandhi, there was some talk after Independence that Mahatma Gandhi did not wish him to be the Prime Minister. I heard this gossip and I went to Mahatma Gandhi and said : "If you do not want him to be the Prime Minister, you should say so openly and I think he should resign immediately, because at this moment only someone you want should be the Prime Minister". Mahatma Gandhi's reply was immediate and very clear. He said : "I have made my own opinion very clear. I have said that I do not think anybody else can be the Prime Minister at this moment. But even if I did not think so, I have neither the authority nor the power to make a change—because this choice is the people's choice and although people will listen to much that I say, I doubt very much if they will listen to me if I go against your father". Then he said this sort of thing will always happen and I should not be concerned about it. So this kind of thinking along two lines was present from the very beginning. The question is : Did my father take the party or the country in a direction which Mahatma Gandhi did not want? On all basic issues, they agreed entirely : on the issue of removal of poverty and particularly how to do it, on the issue of what we call secularism and that we could never be aligned with any party which believed in one religion or one race or one language. This was the very basis of

attitude that we have the right to acquire, we have a right to privileges of citizenship and so on, that is one of the biggest changes. It is also of course one of the greatest difficulties in front of the Government because whereas in France, and perhaps in other countries, you were able to have a certain amount of industry before the people's demands came to the forefront, we started with political consciousness of a very high order, not limited to a few people but which permeated right down to the villages, the hills and everywhere because our Independence struggle, as you know, was not confined to a small group but it really was a mass struggle in every meaning of the word 'mass'.

So we are confronted today with this very acute awareness of the people. We hear the phrase sometimes that the rich have become richer and the poor poorer. This, I am afraid, is not a fact. But what is the fact? The fact is that the rich have grown richer, many people who were not so rich have grown richer. Many people who were, I won't say, poor but certainly the middle class has also gone up. Even amongst the poor many people are in a much better situation but those who lack things are more acutely aware of the lack than they were before. It was not that they did not lack them. Maybe, they had much less before but at that time they thought it was God's will and now they are aware that it is something that can be done and they are extremely angry that it has not been done. Of course, there was no way possible to do it in 22 years even whether we had bloody revolution or any kind of 'ism' or any kind of path. There was simply no way to do it in fewer years and even now there is no short-cut to it. We are fully aware whatever steps we take are merely tools which we think will bring us nearer to this goal.

Now the Indian character is such that people see things in extremes. If something is good, then they will praise it to the skies, if it is not good, then they think nothing can be worse and so if you take any steps, as for example we nationalised 14 banks, as you know nobody in the Government and certainly not myself believed that it was going to create a revolution in India. It is a step which we thought was necessary. It was necessary because we were not able to effectively work out the previous steps taken. Had we been able to work social control as originally envisaged, we would not have to nationalise the banks but because that was not done as it should have been, this became a political as well as an economic issue and it became inevitable. But immediately the sort of response that came about in the country was unexpected and a little bit alarming even, because through these banks we do now have some funds which can go to give credit to sectors of population which did not get credit before—the smaller farmer and the different sections in the city. Obviously, we can touch only a very very small fringe of the population. We cannot say that the difficulties

of the poor will go or poverty will be wiped out but this is the type of reaction which is visible in the people. So, I gave that only as an example.

Today one of the greatest obstacles is cynicism of our intelligentsia because no matter what is done they always look at it as something that is of no account. And this opinion is reflected in our press and it does have an influence on the people. In fact one of the strange things that has happened is that our press, of course, is entirely divorced from the people. They do not express what the people as a whole think but this has happened to most, in fact all our political parties. I do not think that there is any single one which I would say has really kept itself in touch with the people's thinking and on the whole I think it is a bad thing. They should be in touch with what the people are thinking. But what is good thing is that the people have not remained where they were. They have gone ahead regardless of the political parties. There is a momentum in the country which nobody can stop—none of the politicians or intellectuals or anybody else.

What I have done in my own party was not to split it; on the contrary, I tried desperately hard for three years to prevent this split which I could see coming. In fact, it nearly happened even in my father's time. But I thought that it would be a bad thing for the country and I tried to prevent it until a situation arose where the party was really getting so far from the people that I could not see the Congress Party surviving even till 1972, till the next elections. And that is why I had to insist on something and even then it is not I who asked the people who are with me to split the party but the others who decided to go and sit with the Opposition and if I may say so, I think they showed rather unseemly haste in doing so. Had they continued for about a week till they got their proper seats, I do not think that anybody would have misjudged their intentions or judged it to be a weakness on their part and the things like that. But on the very first day in Parliament, they made a great dramatic show by sitting with the Opposition and it is not without point that the Opposition they sat with is the extreme rightiest Opposition—the two parties which are in different ways entirely opposed to anything which Mahatma Gandhi stood for. I am specially mentioning this because, of late, Shri Minoo Masani raised the cry 'back to Gandhi'. So it is worthwhile knowing what Gandhiji stood for. He may not have stood for socialism as we understand it in the sense of the State having some of the means of production, but he did believe that nobody should have property. In fact he went some steps further when he said quite clearly that he thought that people should have these things as a trust: But if it did not work out, then buildings and other things could be taken away and he saw no reason why any compensation should be given at all. He said after all they made this money from the people and things belonged

to the people and there was no question of compensation. These are his words and not my words. But Government does give compensation and rather much compensation, if I can put it that way.

Well, the Swatantra does not matter really because it is a party which has no future. It was in a way a still-born from the beginning. But the party which is dangerous is the right wing Jan Sangh, and it is dangerous because it appeals to the religious emotions of the people. And when a person thinks of religion in an emotional way, he is swept off his feet. He cannot think logically or rationally and this is a great danger of the Jan Sangh.

We may be able to change their thinking, I do not know. They have changed quite a lot in recent years. They started off as being very conservative in their economic policy but lately they have been saying that they believe in socialism. Only they do not think that we are socialists and we do not follow properly. First, they were against the very concept of planning. Now they say : No, planning is good; but our plans are bad. In foreign policy also they were against our policy of non-alignment and they were for a pro-Western attitude. Since last year they have been saying that they believe in non-alignment but we are not certainly non-aligned. So in any way it is several steps forward and in most of my public speeches when I criticised them I have said I am not against the Jan Sangh as indeed I am not against any party as such. I am against certain ideas which I consider to be bad for national unity or national strength and that is why as long as the Jan Sangh talks about superiority of one religion or the people of one region, about the majority community being the first class citizens and the others being the second class citizens, on that point I am certainly going to oppose them with all my strength and I hope I am not immodest when I say that it was largely due to my efforts in the last mid-term polls that we were able to reduce Jan Sangh seats both in Bihar and U.P. and for which they cannot forgive me. And there is no occasion when they have come to me on other matters, when they have not said : "Why do you hit us?" And I tell them that it is only for these reasons, and if you change, well, you have a right to think like us on economic matters or any important matter. It is a democratic country but just religious opposition is very bad for us, as we have seen in the last communal riots that we had. It is something which eats away the very foundations of our nation.

While we are settling down, the people are maturing politically, the people are being strengthened. The example I gave of the Jan Sangh—changes for instance. They changed certainly not because of my speeches. They could not care less for what I said. They changed because they felt that the people would not allow them to hold certain ideas. They started off by being against bank nationalisation. But

they found that they could not go back to their constituencies; they could not say we are opposed to this measure. This is how the people themselves are bringing about these changes.

Obviously, the people are not at one level. Many of our Swatantra Party MPs are elected from areas in Bihar which they had never visited before. They do not even speak the language of the people. They know nothing about it. But they got elected from those areas because people are economically backward, less politically conscious than in other parts. There are within any country different levels of development. Again, if I may give an example, in 1950 I went to a place in NEFA where the very first wheel that the people saw was the wheel of our Dakota plane. They had no conception of anything round, although they had a fairly developed irrigation system of their own. But they had never worked a wheel. They had not seen a cart or anything like that. That was in 1950. Now today they have got jeeps. You cannot say that those people are as politically conscious as people in Delhi or Bombay, or in Bihar or U.P. So when you think of India, you must think of this in the background.

Now, obviously, I cannot prophesy about India's future except that, as I said earlier, I have great confidence in the people. And I have no doubt that whatever happens, they will come at the top. And that is what matters. One of the points of disagreement between me and some of our party bosses was that right in the beginning, soon after becoming Prime Minister, I made a speech in Bombay where I said that Congress is very dear to me because some people joined it at the age of 15, some people at the age of 20 and some at 40 or 50. But I was born in the Congress. There was no time when my home, since I was born, was not the centre of all the major political movements, decisions and the meetings that took place and the whole of modern Indian history was being made there. People from all over India—peasants and others—were constantly coming. I was meeting them. I was in touch with their problems and so on. Nobody could be closer to the Congress or even more emotionally involved than I have been and I still am. But even so, I do feel that the country is more important than the Congress. If the Congress serves the needs of the country, it is all right, we are with it. But if it does not, we cannot say that this is more important than India or the people of India. And many people resented this remark of mine and felt that it was disloyalty to the party. But still I feel strongly on this matter and I think the reason why the Congress went away from the people is partly because of being in power for a long time perhaps but also because our type of democracy gives an easy foothold to what in America is called 'bossism' —that everywhere a few people identify themselves that they are the Congress; they are the people of that State with the result that they have become popular, rightly or wrongly, that is not for us to judge.

It is only the public who can make up their mind. We started losing in State after State and I saw no way in which we would make up that gap except by going once more direct to the people. Now, here, you will go into why we lost in Bengal, for instance. Everybody knows why we lost in a State like Kerala. Perhaps you have not heard what happened in Pondicherry. Perhaps you being French you may be a little interested in Pondicherry. It is a very small place. It is a charming French provincial town. We had there a Congress Chief Minister. He was a young Congress Muslim. For no reason suddenly some of our people decided that he must go. He is not the right person and it was the mistake for him to become the Chief Minister. Now I said : "Well, it is all right. He is there. He has got elected. Now you wait for the next elections and you put up somebody else at the next elections." But they said, "No, No. He must go", and I was unable to help him and I tried very hard with the Party. But the then incharge made up his mind with the result that the Government fell because the other person was not acceptable. There was re-election. Now we have the same young man as the Chief Minister but he is not in the Congress but with the D.M.K. He has Ministers and his Ministers who were in the Congress are now in the D.M.K. So his set-up practically is the same but instead of the Congress Government it is the D.M.K. I am giving this example for no particular reason. This enthusiasm went against the people's wishes and created a situation where you got less and less in touch with the people.

Well, I have taken a great deal of your time. I want to congratulate the organisers of this Colloquium for this excellent idea and I hope that Indian transcendentalism and French logic working together might give a better perspective to our contemporary world.

New Phase

AS MANY HON. MEMBERS have remarked, the President's Address this year has been much more than a mere formal address. It is not a mere outline of the business before this particular session or during the year. Actually, it is an urgent summons to the tasks which await us as we enter one new decade after completing another. In fact, it is something even more than this. It marks the transition from one definite stage in our economic development and political evolution to the beginning of another.

From reply to debate in Rajya Sabha on President's Address, March 2, 1970

Anyone who views modern Indian history with comprehension and a sense of fairness, anyone who is at all conversant with the processes of economic development, knows that today the country is economically and politically stronger that it was before, and also more capable of facing the challenges with which it is confronted. In fact, at no time has there been more enthusiasm and greater self-confidence in the people of India, a greater expectation of change and also, I would say, a greater capacity to bring about this change.

The Leader of the Opposition, Sir, has used many alliterative adjectives. He has called the Address, if I remember his words right, dull, dry, and so on. It is human, Sir, to see the world in one's own image. The trouble with the Leader of the Opposition and his party is, as one Hon. Member said just now, that they have to listen to the voice of the people. They have ceased to notice the urge and the fervour, which is so evident not only to our countrymen, but to the many people who have been visiting us from different countries from all parts of the globe in recent months. But they, Sir, have unfortunately fallen out of step and got so far behind that they are under the illusion that there is no progress at all. The Hon. Member, Shri Mishra, has alleged that we are, or perhaps I am, obsessed with the idea of toppling State Governments. I presume he has in mind Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Now, Sir, Bihar is his home state and I do not know whether he has some grievance against the ending of the Governor's rule there, because that is the only government that was toppled in Bihar, and if I remember right, only some little while ago I was being urged by some of the same people to end the Governor's rule as soon as possible. Now the other charge on which he spent some considerable time was that it was my tours which brought about the fall of the Uttar Pradesh Government. This, as I have said during those tours and afterwards, is entirely without any truth at all.

My visits to U.P. were undertaken to acquaint myself with the problems of Uttar Pradesh and also to counteract the accusation made very loudly and often there that the Centre and more particularly this Prime Minister and also the two preceding Prime Ministers had been neglecting it. Now, one cannot simultaneously complain that the Prime Minister is neglecting U.P. and also that the Prime Minister is giving attention to U.P. You have to make up your mind which out of the two you want. My purpose in going whether to U.P. or any other State is to tell the people about the policies of the Government generally and with regard to that particular State and I did tell the people of U.P. that while it is true that the State does not get all that it expects from the Centre this happens to be true of all other States as well and also with regard to the Central Ministries; not that they do not get it from the Centre because they are in the Centre but they do not get all that they ask for from the Planning Commission or the

Finance Ministry. As far as U.P. is concerned, more than half of the expense on the development plans of that state has throughout come from the Centre. Admittedly this is not sufficient to meet the needs of the state which is one of the most economically backward in the entire country. That is why very much more has to be done not only by the Government of India but also by the State Government. But the picture that is being painted here, if I may use the word, was rather a romantic one which was perhaps because of the nature of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition but I do not know what picture was conjured up before the other Members.

But anybody who did not know the situation and who was listening to him might have got away with the impression that from the helicopter I was flying in I was busy shooting down all the politicians who were opposed to me. The only reply that I can make to this is, if there was anybody who toppled the previous government there it was the leader of that government himself.

One of the amendments moved here speaks of totalitarian methods. That is indeed a most extraordinary statement and it shows a certain lack of knowledge of how totalitarian governments have acted in the past or, where they exist today, are acting today. I think it is crystal clear not only from my words but from my actions that I am for democracy, unqualified and unchallenged democracy, in the country as a whole, in every state within, and even in every part of our country. Any doctrine or system which encourages a few to think that they are better than the people at large and that they can order about the people at large is repugnant. One has to see what is happening in dictatorships around the world to know that this old system is dangerous and self-defeating even in the short run, to say nothing of the long run. After the fourth general election Hon. Members are aware that I was the first to proclaim unhesitatingly that the Central Government would respect the will of the people and would extend their full co-operation to all the State Governments which were established after the election and we have given our co-operation to all State Governments, whatever their political complexion. In fact, some of the people who talk of democracy in this House, at the same time would like us to change our attitude with regard to those parties with whom they do not happen to agree. This is also a very strange description of democracy. Some State Governments have been able to appreciate our help, others do not say so openly. That is because every State Government needs a bogeyman on whom they can transfer the responsibility for their own shortcomings and who can be more convenient than the Central Government. But this has not deflected us from our path of giving constructive—often one-sided—co-operation to all the State Governments. Had we not followed this policy, the

foundation of our Republic and of our Union would have been weakened after the swift political changes of the last few years.

Another Hon. Member, Shri Dahyabhai Patel, spoke of the needs of Gujarat. In the past years, Shri Patel used to roam about, during such a debate, all over the world, if I may put it that way, from China to Peru, but this time he restricted his field to merely Gujarat and Taiwan. I do not know whether he has found some link or affinity between the two. He has been pleased to observe that the notes which the Chief Minister of Gujarat gave me last month when I went to Ahmedabad ably summed up what Shri Patel himself has been saying for years.

Now, Sir, the notes contain certain legitimate demands but there are also certain proposals which would be extremely difficult to accept. If I may give an example, there was a demand for a steel mill there. Now, I do not have to go into steel economics here, but the setting up of a steel mill thousands of miles away from any source of iron ore or coal would certainly make steel very costly and I doubt if it is a proposal which could be acceptable to any Government. A complaint was also made that we are going slow with regard to oil exploration in Gujarat. This is a most unjust complaint. The Hon. Minister is sitting here and I have no doubt that he has spoken on this earlier and the House is aware of the detailed negotiations in regard to offshore drilling along the coast of Gujarat. I believe that the first deep-sea operation should start any day now. As the President's Address has rightly observed, oil is next only to steel in taking us nearer to self-reliance.

The Hon. Shri M. P. Bhargava has rightly cautioned the Members of this House against speaking loosely about the Supreme Court. Just now in my presence also many Members have touched upon this subject. I do not think anyone in this House or even outside would like the name of the Supreme Court to be brought up lightly. After all, it is well recognised that one of the pillars of our democracy is the independent judiciary. Accusations have been made that I made disparaging remarks about the Supreme Court after its judgment on bank nationalisation. May I make it very clear that I have done no such thing. On the contrary, I stressed the importance of not saying anything without a full study of the Supreme Court judgment which at that time I had not seen and since then I have not spoken about that matter at all. However, I did refer to the difficulties in the path of progress. This is a self-evident statement. Many bills of reform and acts of legislation which were meant to serve the cause of progress have met with setbacks. Many of our land reform Acts have been taken to the courts and have been invalidated either in part or in full, but we went back to the legislature and to the Constitution and took the necessary remedial measures. This has happened in other countries

also. No human institution is infallible. Those familiar with the constitutional history of the United States must have heard of the celebrated Dred Scott decision when the U.S. Supreme Court declared that slavery was legal and that the anti-slavery legislation passed by the State was *ultra vires* the U.S. Constitution, but within a few years the U.S. Constitution itself was also changed. I do not want to go into the history of the New Deal and the conflicts which arose between the legislature and the judiciary in the U.S.A. and the very open and forthright arguments which the then President of the U.S.A. made about their own judiciary. All organs of the Government are subject to the same historical forces and have to be receptive to the same needs and compulsions in evolving a social order. There is, here in Parliament and outside, a widespread feeling that Parliament should not be divested of the power to amend the Constitution. I believe all political parties with the expected exceptions are in favour of Parliament having the power to make laws for the country, specially in regard to social justice and social progress. The Nath Pai Bill seeks to remove any doubts that might have arisen about the competence of Parliament as a result of the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of Golaknath versus the State of Punjab.

Some Hon. Members, in fact, many Hon. Members have spoken of the increasing violence in West Bengal and other parts of the country. The President in his Address has expressed concern at the continuing resort to violence by certain extremist political groups which pursue disruptive aims. Violence breeds violence, whatever be its origin, whether it is communal, regional or economically or politically motivated. I do not think that any kind of violence can be justified at any time, but this is a problem which needs the concerted efforts of all sections of society. We must strengthen the fibre of our people to resist violence. I was a little surprised to hear one Hon. Member making rather contradictory statements. While, on the one hand, we should not interfere with the Government of Bengal, on the other hand, we should do something about what is happening there. Now, Sir, it is not possible to do both. In this sort of situation it is the responsibility of the State Government. It is up to the parties forming the government there not only to take action themselves, but also to create the type of public opinion which will not stand this kind of violence, a few people taking law into their own hands, causing not only loss of life and other harm, but also disrupting the daily life of the majority of the people. It is only by doing this that the disruptive and anarchical groups can be made to realise that violence does not pay.

I should like to turn now to the field of economic development. My Hon. friend opposite sought to convey the impression that the economic outlook is not bright. On the other hand, many Hon. Members have pointed out the opposite. Shri Dahyabhai Patel, not

surprisingly, said that the progress which the President has depicted was illusory. The President's Address has tried to set out only the salient facts of our progress and has indicated the trends in the immediate future. The progress in agriculture is there for all to see. I do not exaggerate this progress and I have been specially careful in my speeches to avoid the phrase 'green revolution'. The progress is there and cannot be denied. The new programme, involving the package of improved agricultural techniques based on the use of high-yielding varieties of seeds, intensive application of fertilisers and extension of irrigation facilities, has made a definite impact on the rural economy. Industrial production also has picked up significantly. Trends in production in the current year so far point to an increase of more than 7 per cent. There is no doubt that the economy is now much better poised for growth than ever before.

There was also reference, at some length, to the present trends in prices, but may I request Hon. Members to look at the situation in the proper perspective? Can it be denied that 1969 was characterised by a considerable degree of price stability? It is true that since the middle of November 1969 prices have been under pressure. This is due mainly to the downward revision in the crop estimates of cotton and groundnut and the delay in winter rains in many parts of the country. Between November 1969 and February this year there was a contra-seasonal rise in prices, but over the last one month the position has again become stable because of a number of measures taken by Government and the Reserve Bank. In the last few weeks, while the Reserve Bank has taken a number of measures to tighten its credit control over bank advances against commodities which are subject to demand and price pressures, Government has been building up a sufficient buffer-stock. Foodgrains, as we all know, play a very important part in influencing price trends. Production in the current year, I am told, may be of the order of 100 million tonnes. By the end of this month the buffer-stock should be about 4.9 million tonnes. We are thus better placed now to influence the prices of foodgrains. However, there is no doubt that Government will continue to be vigilant. We know that a rise in prices causes considerable hardship to people, particularly the poorer sections of society, but some critics are raising the bogey of prices because they want outlays in the public sector to be kept down. They do not reckon with the heavy toll which a reduction in public sector outlay takes in terms of increased unemployment and economic stagnation. We have, therefore, to keep in view the objectives of growth and stability in formulating our economic strategy.

Now, Sir, I share the concern expressed by many Hon. Members regarding unemployment. I have spoken on this matter on many occasions here and also the President has mentioned it. I have

mentioned it in my Budget speech. I think some Hon. Members tried to quantify this problem of educated unemployed by referring to a 7 per cent increase in unemployment. Now, reference has also been made to inequalities of income. I have said on previous occasions that the two problems, *i.e.*, unemployment and economic inequalities, are not separate but very closely interlinked. The concept of economic equality itself should be raised from the level of the income redistribution of existing wealth or incomes to an altogether different plane. We aim at an equitable distribution of income-earning opportunities. It is only in this way that we can harmonise the two important objectives of augmentation of production and enlargement of employment opportunities.

I should also like to say that a solution to the unemployment problem has to be found within the framework of the Plan. There cannot be a separate or independent solution and, looked at in this way, by far the most effective remedy for unemployment is the vigorous implementation of the Plan. Our labour force is growing at the rate of 2.5 per cent per year. An annual growth rate of anything less than 5 to 6 per cent will, therefore, prove inadequate to provide opportunities for the absorption of this growing work force. Therefore, the need is to step up the outlay on the Plan and to raise the rate of investment. This is what the Government is trying to do. All those who are earnest about tackling this major problem should support the efforts to raise the level of Plan outlay. In the coming financial year we are enlarging it to the order roughly of Rs. 400 crores in the States' and the Central plans together. This is not an insignificant increase and it will contribute materially to a faster tempo of development and creation of more job opportunities. It is also necessary to impart a conscious employment bias to our development programmes. The new Budget has made special provision for programmes such as those relating to rural works and small farmers, land reclamation and improvement, renovation of minor irrigation works, proper maintenance of irrigation channels, construction of roads linking the villages with marketing centres, etc. All these could be and should be undertaken as part of the programme and in their totality they will make a significant contribution to rural development as also to the generation of additional employment. The details of some of these programmes have been given in the brochure entitled "Growth with Social Justice" circulated along with other Budget documents.

Growth with social justice is particularly relevant to our industrial development. The new industrial licensing policy keeps this objective in view. The Government have tried to remove the impediments to a fast rate of growth in the industrial sector, while providing safeguards against the concentration of economic power and monopolistic trends. The raising of the limit for industrial licensing is intended to broaden

the base on which our industrial structure must stand. It will provide opportunities to small and medium entrepreneurs, and I know that this will make a difference.

Now, Sir, there has been a lot of noise here and elsewhere with regard to the Goa Fertilizer Project. I am afraid that some of this criticism is rather ill-informed. As perhaps the Hon. Minister has said, this project was before the Government since 1964. Approval was given and a firm licence was issued in December 1966. The requisite clearance for financial assistance from some international agencies and the Cooly Funds was also given some time ago. But towards the end of December 1969, the Government were called upon to take a view only on two limited points. One was what should be the condition which the public financial institutions might stipulate before underwriting the public issue of shares by the company; and the second point was whether the Government should agree to a further small increase in the drawal of loan assistance from the Cooly Funds to match certain changes in the pattern of financing of the project. So far as the first issue is concerned, Government have ensured two seats on the Board of Management. Regarding the second, having already agreed to a loan of Rs. 18.5 crores from the Cooly Funds, Government could not have taken serious objection to a further drawal of Rs. 3 crores. There is no doubt that our preference is and will remain to have such projects in the public sector. In fact, in the crucial field of fertiliser production, the public sector already occupies a commanding position. We have eight plants in actual production with a capacity of 0.65 million tonnes; seven plants with a total capacity of 1.03 million tonnes. These are in different stages of actual implementation. Besides, seven plants, including three coal-based plants, have been allotted to the public sector which, when implemented, will result in an additional capacity of 1.7 million tonnes. As against this, there are only five plants in the private sector now in production with a capacity of 0.43 million tonnes. The Goa plant will mean an addition of only 0.17 million tonnes. Letters of Intent have been given to a few other projects, but at this stage it is doubtful whether they will come up as on previous occasions. Many of these have not materialised because of the difficulties relating to finance, feed-stocks and other problems which remain unresolved.

But even assuming that the requisite resources could have been found for an additional project in the public sector, we would have lost at least 18 months in bringing the project up to the stage already reached by the Goa project. The Government, therefore, opted for the only feasible course of action, taking care to ensure that the basic idea underlying the joint sector concept was incorporated in the scheme.

There is continuing discussion on nationalisation. I am not afraid

of nationalisation, nor do I believe that it is an answer to all our difficulties. I think that any proposal for nationalisation should be subjected to two tests.

First, we should see whether it enables the public sector to occupy a key position in the economy of the country. Secondly, our approach must be realistic and practical. At any moment if any privately-owned industry is operating against the national interest or is impeding social progress, we should not hesitate to take it over. At the present moment, our priority is the acceleration of development so that the problems of unemployment and inequalities are solved, and this calls for not only the right policy but unremitting hard work, higher savings and greater investment, and the emphasis should, therefore, be on the flow of the scarce public capital into new areas of production. The economic battle which lies ahead requires many weapons in our armoury and nationalisation is only one of these weapons, and it is one which should be used judiciously and with great care. It is against this background that I would urge upon the Hon. Members to consider the various suggestions which have been made either during the course of the debate or in the amendments for the nationalisation of the different sectors of the economy.

The problem of Centre-State relations, more particularly financial relations, has also been raised now as it has been in every debate for quite a long time. Various issues pertaining to this problem have been debated in different forums, in Parliament and also in the National Development Council. They have also been studied in depth by expert bodies such as the Planning Commission and the Administrative Reforms Commission. I do not think that there is any conflict between the interests of the States and the Centre. Both are charged with the responsibility of promoting the good of the people in the fields respectively assigned to them. Some sources of revenue are assigned to the Centre under the Constitution and these are a little more elastic than those allocated to the States.

If our objective of common citizenship and free movement of goods and services within the country is to be assured, is it possible for sources such as income tax or excise duty or customs to be assigned to a unit smaller than the Union Government? The founding fathers of our Constitution, therefore, wisely assigned these revenues to the Union. At the same time, they did realise that functions such as law and order, education, public health, would be constantly growing with development. So they laid down a scheme for the sharing of the resources of the Centre with the States and also provided for a periodical review through an independent body, namely the Finance Commission. As far as I know, in none of the older federations is there a body comparable to our Finance Commission. The resources transferred from the Centre to the States in accordance with the recommendations

of the Finance Commission have steadiiy grown. The amount transferred to the States under the award of the Finance Commission in the First Plan period was Rs. 386 crores. But it is estimated to be Rs. 4,066 crores during the Fourth Plan period. Over and above this, the Centre has also been providing assistance for the implementation of the State plans and for some of the weaker States, the Central assistance will be as much as 90 per cent and even more of the total size of the Plans.

The States have also a considerable latitude in drawing up their programmes with reference to the local problems. Central assistance is now being provided in the form of block loans and block grants in accordance with the decisions which have been reached jointly by the States in the National Development Council. The problem now is to ensure how these State programmes will fit into the national framework and fulfil our basic objectives. V2 4 7N19 L5

As Hon. Members know, the Central Government is constantly asked what it is doing for the backward classes, the backward regions and for the items such as rural water supply, etc. How is the Centre to discharge these responsibilities unless it does have certain sanctions at its disposal? Complaints are also made that a large number of villages are still without drinking water. If you look at the overall provision for drinking water supply, it is not inadequate in our Plan. But I feel that even with the existing provision, substantial impact can be made on this problem. But it is necessary to ensure that funds meant for rural water supply and for the development of backward areas are not diverted to any other purpose. Unfortunately, sometimes it does happen. 123261

When we speak of the backward areas, we should remember that even the so-called advanced States have backward pockets and the policy which we propose should be such as to promote accelerated development of all these pockets wherever they may be. The policies of the financial institutions are also being reoriented in favour of the development of industries in such areas and, as the President's Address has pointed out, all these schemes will be fruitful only if the infra-structure for development is built up expeditiously in all these areas.

Shri S. N. Mishra spoke of the fourth Plan being outdated. I honestly do not know what exactly is meant by this. The immediate tasks before the nation in the economic field are to reduce the disparities swiftly while adding to production; also to achieve and consolidate agricultural and industrial self-reliance and to lay the firm basis for further technological change from our own capacity and know-how. While doing this, we must pay special attention to the problem of the educated unemployed on the one hand and the rural landless on the other. The Fourth Plan does set out to do this and whatever rethinking or enlargement we have done in the last few months has been in order to do this more effectively. So, it is not as if the Fourth Plan was

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drawn up some 15 years or more ago and was dusted up and presented to the country anew.

I should now come to the point raised by some Hon. Members relating to foreign affairs. Many of these have already been discussed in this House on several occasions. I hope the House will excuse me but it does seem as if the thinking of some Members on foreign affairs has got stuck up somewhere. The Plan has not got stuck up. It is not the Plan, but the thinking of some people that gets stuck up while the world itself has changed and moved very much further. Many Governments have noticeably given up their rigid and inflexible postures of the past whether in concept or in expression. But I notice in the short while that I was here before speaking that some of our Members have obviously not done so.

Our own endeavour has been to keep pace with the changes in the world and even, if possible, to anticipate them so that our national interests are safeguarded at all times. Hon. Members will agree that no country can claim that however right or strong its policies, the expected results are always realised. We have to persevere with patience and determination and not give up what we consider to be right and moral because of some temporary setback.

We have been strengthening our friendship. I was very surprised to learn that some Members have thought that there has been a deterioration in our relations with our neighbouring countries. As the President in his Address said, we attach great importance to our relations with Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Iran and Nepal and have devoted special attention to these countries. We are making sincere and earnest efforts to increase our economic and political co-operation with these countries. Some differences or minor difficulties might arise occasionally. But these will always be resolved in a spirit of goodwill, understanding and cordiality.

As regards our other two neighbours, Pakistan and China, there have been no dramatic developments. The House knows that it is my view that we should keep trying to make Pakistan realise the importance of resolving all bilateral differences in a peaceful manner. I feel that it is as much in their interest as it is in ours to give up attitudes of conflict and confrontation. It is unfortunate that China continues to see the realities of India through a distorted mirror.

An Hon. Member here said that we did not outline in the President's Address what steps we would take in this regard. I am sure the House will appreciate that these are hardly the matters which you can outline beforehand. As I said, the whole world has changed and is changing today, and I think we are keeping pace with these changes and that in this fluid, delicate situation it is better not to say too much.

Some Hon. Members have allowed anger and frustration to cloud their thinking. Some have said that our political freedom is being

endangered. Quite different reasons were given by the different parties. Now, political freedom can be endangered basically by only one thing, and that is when the people themselves are weakened, whether they are weakened by communalism, by lack of trust among themselves or by any one group thinking that they know all the answers and the people need not be consulted. Both are equally dangerous to democracy.

The Government are fully aware of the difficulties faced by some of the minority communities and are doing everything possible to try and help them. This is not a matter which can be dealt with purely administratively or by making laws. It is something for which we have to create a right social atmosphere, very consciously and with great determination. It is for the Hon. Members to judge whether all political parties in our country are helping to create such an atmosphere.

The purpose of the Opposition is obviously to oppose. Personally, Sir, I have always welcomed opposition because when life is easy one tends to become flabby and it is not good to be flabby. But in opposing the Government's policies, I want our Hon. Members not to sap the self-confidence of the nation. In fact, I would go a step further and submit to them that the way in which the public of India is reacting or acting—because it is we who are reacting to what they do, it is they who are giving the direction, it is they who have the momentum for progress and change—they will refuse to shed their self-confidence, however much some individuals might try to say all these things.

In my Budget speech I set out our socio-economic thinking but it does have a political counterpart as well. Just as we have avoided the extremes of doing too little or attempt too much in economics, so also do we wish to avoid the political extremes. We are convinced that there is no path better than the democratic, secular, socialist path to which we are pledged. I think it was in this House that somebody said that democracy comes first and socialism comes second or something like that. I want to make it very clear that I think there cannot be true democracy without socialism or secularism. Nor do I think there can be true socialism without democracy. All these things are parts of the same thing.

When earlier I was talking about Opposition I was not saying that they should not oppose. I was merely drawing their attention to the roots of our culture because it is through anger and frustration that one is not able either to think clearly, speak clearly or act clearly. As the *Bhagawad Gita* warns us, from anger comes confusion. And I think a lot of confusion that has been witnessed in this House recently has come from anger and frustration. So I would request all Hon. Members to think calmly and clearly about all these questions, and I have no doubt that if we keep determinedly to this path which I have outlined we shall overcome all the obstacles in our way.

* * *

FOR THE LAST five days or so we have had the debate on the President's Address. I am glad that several Members recognise that this Address marks the beginning of a new phase in our national life. It is reflected not only in the Budget but in the many steps which have been taken and it will further be reflected in other steps. We have had the customary speeches from Hon. Members sitting opposite in which they have set forth views, which are expected and well known. Nevertheless we have always welcomed criticism of all kinds, especially in a debate of this nature which gives us opportunity of putting forward our own objectives and policies.

The President has beckoned to us to look ahead, to look forward. Some of our friends opposite seem to have turned a deaf ear to this call; this has not surprised us. The debate has succeeded in performing another useful function. The events of the last few months have had the effect of bringing together on the one side people who are largely in favour of progress and on the other side those who look backward.

In this House we are so absorbed in immediate problems that we tend to take for granted the large intellectual and political forces at work in the world. While we are involved in changing the economic and social structure of our country, technology is changing and transforming the entire world. Modern communication methods are having an impact on young people everywhere including our own country, even in the remoter parts of the country. Let us not forget that what we say and do today must have meaning for young people. Our decisions must stand the test of their approval during the coming years.

I must confess my disappointment at the speech of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. Many of us had hoped that the emergence of a formal Leader of the Opposition would make a difference in the level of the debate and would strengthen parliamentary convention and civilities. I am sorry that this hope has not been fulfilled. His speech was short on vision, short on perspective, short on facts and short on temper. Frustration breathed through every word he uttered. A sense of defeat and utter helplessness has enveloped him and his group. I am glad to say that it is not shared by the people of this country or by any of us on this side of the House. At no time have our people felt more imbued not only with the urge for change but also with a growing feeling of their capacity to bring about this change.

Sir, recent events had brought about, as I said just now, a broad division between forward-looking people and those who wish to stay put. In fact, it was the like-mindedness as among the no-changers that in a way led to the events which have taken place. The debate has given further proof of such like-mindedness. Prof. Ranga and

From reply to debate in Lok Sabha on President's Address, March 4, 1970

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh sounded much alike except for their accent. I believe that a common mint supplies both of them with the currency for their ideas and their phrases.

The Hon. Member, Shri S. K. Patil, sought to resurrect Mark Twain. Mark Twain has been one of my favourite authors when I was a child and, if I may say so, it was not one of his better sayings which was quoted. Shri Patil spoke of slogans, but few people have used more slogans. He talked also of my being a prisoner. Perhaps, the House has heard the story of the tiger which was put in a cage, but he took consolation in thinking that it was the whole world which was in a cage because he saw it through the bars.

Shri Patil has been a forthright and candid person. He has never hidden his true opinions, no matter how he has voted. I know that his views on nationalisation, on socialism and the privy purse are not shared by all those among whom he now sits. I hope, however, that he will vote with them as he voted with the Congress when it adopted the 10-point resolution. He spoke of privy purses with great passion. Let him convert his own followers to his point of view before he preaches to the rest of the House and to the Government.

The House and the country need have no feeling that anything wrong is done either in appreciating the historic role played by the princes when our country became independent or in asking them today to move with history in the same spirit as they had then displayed. I should like to acknowledge the courage and far-sightedness which a large number of princes are displaying to bring about social integration even as they helped the political integration of the country.

However, I should like to remind the House that it was no accident that the loudest acclamation during the President's Address was reserved for his mention of the ending of privy purses and the privileges.

Some Hon. Members talked of inter-borders disputes. I think Shri Lakkappa mentioned it. The object of setting up Commissions is to assess facts and points of view in depth so that their recommendations can lead to decisions which have a measure of fairness. Territorial disputes have arisen between our States because of a variety of historical circumstances. The factors are not the same everywhere, but issues do not get settled unless the action taken will generally satisfy the majority or dissatisfy the least number of the people concerned. Hon. Members will recall that several recommendations made by the States Reorganisation Commission had either to be substantially modified or rejected. But in all such cases, the main object was to provide the maximum satisfaction to the people concerned. There was a demand also for certain basic principles to be enunciated to solve the present disputes and those that might arise in future. When this was first said. I think it was at the meeting of the National Integration Council in Srinagar, I must confess that the idea seemed attractive but on further.

consideration it seems somewhat naive to suggest that all human affairs can be reduced to general laws, and I think that there might be more practical wisdom in solving some of the issues in the light of their own facts and circumstances. It might be hard to evolve principles to fit all cases in a way which would satisfy everyone. Indeed, we know from experience that some solutions create more problems than they solve. I would, therefore, make a plea for us to try to isolate some of these problems rather than to generalise them.

It has been said in this House and outside that we are, or perhaps I am, planning to use the civil service for political purposes. I have denied and contradicted this on every possible occasion and I can say that my remark about committed civil servants has been twisted. I have always held the view that the duty of the civil servants is to give frank and honest advice and not to let their judgment be cramped by fear or favour. I certainly do not want civil servants who are in any way servile or politically convenient because if they were so, they would not be helpful to the Government or to the administration. However, I do think that all people who are in charge of the administration or of projects should have a commitment to the service of the people and their welfare. They should think of people as individual human beings, not merely as statistics. Therefore, when I used the word "commitment", what I meant, as I have clarified on previous occasions, is that they should be loyal to the guiding principles of our Constitution and the objectives which have been adopted by Parliament.

AN HON. MEMBER : Are they loyal ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is a good question. They are not disloyal but we are all aware that previously there was not great stress laid on attitudes, because Government did not have the great problems of development and change before it. By and large I have found these qualities of courage and conviction at all levels of the civil service.

While talking of the civil service, I am aware that since Government have to assume larger responsibilities, we must constantly aim at greater efficiency, more expertise and more speedy methods of work.

Reference was made by several Hon. Members to an interview which I gave some months ago to a French magazine called *Elle*. Hon. Members have presumably not seen the original and have referred to a translation. The translated version has appeared in a weekly which I do not normally see and which always has a slant of its own. Only this morning I saw the original article in French, not the whole series. I believe three series have appeared and more are to come. The lady who interviewed me seems to have got mixed up about certain things. Immediately before the lines which were mentioned here, she has mentioned my great reverence for Gandhiji. The words which

appear afterwards which were quoted here are not in quotation marks. They are her own version of what she thought I had said. She also says that I told her that Gandhiji lived in Anand Bhavan during all his visits to Delhi. Sometimes in these interviews, people get a little mixed up. As I said, as regards the reference to village economy she does not claim to quote my exact words. Hon. Members will appreciate that with the increasing number of journals which are cropping up all over the place, it is hardly possible to chase every wrong or twisted article. If one did that, one would not have time for anything else, specially in regard to the journals brought out by some of the Hon. Members sitting opposite which seem to have made it their business to deliberately twist the meaning of whatever I say. In the Gandhi Centenary Year, there was hardly a meeting where I did not refer to Gandhiji and pay tribute to the inspiration and guidance which he gave our country in its darkest hour. In this House, I have referred to him as the great revolutionary of our times. It is unthinkable and in fact I did not call him reactionary. The words "reactionary and madcap" I put these in quotation marks are presumably Shri Piloo Mody's own contribution to truth!

Acharya Kripalani has also referred to the Padma Shri award to Shri Ritwik Ghatak. Shri Ghatak is a film maker, and most Indian and foreign film critics think he is one of the most creative of our film makers. When an artist is honoured, it is for his art—a musician for the quality of his music, an artist for the quality of his painting. Shri Ghatak, I believe, had to go through many stresses. He has publicly said a few days ago that he had gone through a severe mental crisis and uttered some unfortunate words. Gandhiji's greatness cannot be sullied by such words. Hence, there should be Gandhian forgiveness in such things. We all know the humour and tolerance with which he himself dealt with such matters.

Hon. Members have naturally been concerned with our economic policy. I shall not deal with this matter in detail today, as it will be discussed later on when the budget and the Plan are considered. However, I should like to mention a few points which, it seems to me, are based on wrong assumptions and imperfect data.

Prof. Ranga sought to develop a thesis of his own on steel. He seems to doubt that there would be any demand for the steel which we are planning to produce. He is perhaps under the impression that recessionary trends for the demand in steel and other engineering projects still continue. There was a decline in the demand for steel between 1964 and 1968; but since then there has been a steady and significant rise. It is well known that there is an acute shortage of various types of steel such as billets, sheets, plates and wire rods. We must remember that any decision on the creation of additional capacity in steel has to be taken, not with reference to today's needs, but the

long-term projection of demand. It takes anything from one to seven years to plan, design and commission a steel plant and for it to attain the rated capacity. That is why we have decided on the expansion of Bokaro and Bhilai and have also initiated action for the creation of new capacities.

The House is aware how many States are demanding steel plants. Perhaps Prof. Ranga would be so kind as to help us out in dissuading them. Should he agree to this, may I ask him to start with Visakhapatnam?

From Prof. Ranga to Shri Morarji Desai is an obvious transition these days, as they are close to each other, not only in their sitting but perhaps in their thinking also. Both of them made critical references to Bokaro. The reason sounded different but there is much likeness even in their reasoning.

I wonder how Shri Morarji Desai computed the capital cost of Bokaro at Rs. 2,960 per tonne. Probably, he has not been told of the extra pig iron production of about 900,000 tonnes. Taking this into account, the latest cost estimate would be about Rs. 2,500 per tonne. The main factors which pushed up the cost, as compared to plants such as Rourkela, are : (1) devaluation because of which the cost went up by Rs. 75 crores even at the 1.7 million tonne stage; (2) considerable time spent between the completion of the Rourkela plant and Bokaro Plant during which period there was considerable escalation of the cost of steel, cement, labour and so on; (3) the cost of domestic and international equipment has also risen continuously. Such overruns in costs in other projects, whether of the public sector or private sector, due to similar factors are not unknown.

The Rourkela yield of finished steel from ingots at 1.8 million tonne stage is about 72 per cent. In Bokaro this is estimated to be 81 per cent, which gives considerable advantage to Bokaro. In other words, if the investment costs are calculated per tonne of finished steel, this factor alone would lower the cost of Bokaro by about ten per cent. Calculating in terms of finished steel, the cost of Rourkela would be about Rs. 2,750 per tonne of finished steel, against Bokaro's investment cost of Rs. 3,100 per tonne of finished steel.

It would also be stressed that there has been a greater element of indigenisation entailing additional cost not merely in respect of steel plants but also many other projects such as power and irrigation projects.

It is understandable that Shri Morarji Desai should refer to the virtues of social control. However, his inference that the position did not significantly improve after the nationalisation of the fourteen banks is mistaken. I am deliberately not going into the matter here, because this matter will come up very soon when the Banking Bill comes up for discussion.

Hon. Members are rightly agitated over Rhodesia. The Government of India consider the decision of the break-away regime to declare itself a Republic as totally illegal. Government will continue to support all measures taken by the world community and the African States against the racist regime.

We maintain our firm belief that any constitution for this colonial territory must ensure the principle of "one man one vote" in a multi-racial society. We also hold the view that world action should be concerted towards taking effective steps to lead Rhodesia to independence based on the principle of NIBMAR—no independence before majority African rule.

The basic question before us today is what type of society we want to build. It is not merely a question of how much the national or the per capita income will go up but how one Indian will deal with another. Will he regard all his countrymen as equal; will he believe that some people have more rights than others; if there are differences which are not unlikely in any society, how will they be resolved—by resort to violence or through discussion and understanding?

We have inherited certain values not only from the long past but also from our training during the independence movement under Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Let me make it very clear that our picture of India and the methods which we are pledged to pursue are certainly not those of the Hon. Member opposite, Shri Vajpayee, and his party. He spoke of Indianisation. In his Address, the President has said that the problems of India require uniquely Indian solutions, taking into account our way of life, our history and our tradition. If, therefore, Shri Vajpayee wants every Indian to love his country and to be patriotic, nobody can quarrel with that, and I certainly do not do so; nor is any special theory of Indianisation required. But I think his theory is not quite so innocent. Shri Vajpayee would not waste his energy stating something which is so obvious. He and those of his way of thinking have a very definite purpose. Evidently, they have taken upon themselves to be the judges of who is Indian and who is not. This, I think, is most sinister. Whenever any group sets itself up to decide who is an Indian and who is not, there is bound to be trouble. May I ask the Hon. Member as to who will judge the quantum or quality of Indianness of any individual?

What I want to know is: Does the Hon. Member envisage a tribunal to go into the matter or does he think that it is his party who should be assigned this task? We remember vividly the havoc caused in America by some people who declared other Americans to be un-American and, in the entire world, when some Germans maintained that other Germans were un-Aryan and, therefore, un-German. These people have paraded under the banner of ultra-nationalism and have

attempted and, unfortunately in some cases succeeded, in undermining the very basis of democratic society. Such assertion of ultra-nationalism is a masquerade to disguise the face of reaction. And this must be unmasked.

I have thought deeply about what Shri Vajpayee said here and what his other colleagues have said. I think it is time that all these statements should be replied to. I would just say that the test of any statement is not how you yourself interpret it, but what impact it has on the people about whom you make that statement. To me, every child who is born of Mother India is a good Indian. There is the law of treason and there are competent courts to decide if anyone is guilty of treason. This cannot be left to be decided by any political party or group. No oratorical devices by any political group or party can hide the real intentions of those who advocate the Indianisation of their fellow countrymen.

Shri Morarjibhai has referred to my speech in Ujjain and also to what I said in the other House on the Supreme Court.

Sir, in Ujjain I barely referred to the Supreme Court, except to say that the news of its judgment had just come.

I want to say very categorically that our reverence to the Supreme Court is total. In fact, everyone in this land should have the highest regard for the judiciary. The Constitution has clearly laid down the role of the Courts. And, all three parts of the Government—the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary—are pledged to upholding the Constitution. But, Sir, the Constitution has also given us certain Directive Principles. In realising them, difficulties of interpretation might arise. This is not a new development. We have gone through this before. Many of our Bills on land reform and so on have met with reverses, and this was what I had referred to in Ujjain, just in one very brief sentence.

But whenever any of our Acts has been struck down, we have taken the necessary remedial action within the framework of the Constitution, for every living Constitution contains within itself the capacity to respond to changing needs and to new forces of history.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, the pace of change in the entire world and in our own country is much faster now. This is something which is beyond our control. It is the technological and scientific changes which are coming about, which are bringing this about. But in the last year, it did look to our people as if the pace of change in India in some directions was slowing down. This is what had created restlessness and disturbance in the minds of many and especially of the younger generation. Now, we are again in a position to go forward. Let nothing be said which will hold back our people, which will sow doubt in their minds, or deflect them from their determined path. Mistakes are sometimes made; wrong things are also being

done, but basically, the people are on the move. They are impatient only because they see that change can be faster; they are impatient because they see that their difficulties and their hardships can be removed. Let it be said that responsible representatives of the people acted at this difficult time with vision and courage and with faith in the people of India.

As I said, I remain deeply convinced that the democratic path is the only path for India to solve its problems. But there can be no true democracy without socialism and secularism. There can be no true socialism without true democracy. So, let us move forward with this ideal, for only then shall we be able to reach our goal and overcome all obstacles.

A Big Push Forward

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am very glad you were able to come. We welcome such exchange of visits and discussions of ideas with Japan because we are anxious to have closer co-operation with your country. I hope that your travel in India has been interesting as well as enjoyable and that you have been well looked after. You must have seen that our problems are entirely different from the problems faced by Japan.

QUESTION : We think the political situation in India has become difficult because of the split in the Congress Party and the increased activities of extremist Communist elements in West Bengal and other places. So, how do you, Madam Prime Minister, propose to handle the situation and what is your political strategy to ensure the orderly progress of India on democratic lines ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The size of India is such that our problems have always been of great magnitude. Only the nature of the problems changes. Perhaps you know that this is not the first time that people have left the Congress. In fact, amongst the major national parties today—the PSP, the SSP, the Swatantra and even the Communist Party—consist of many people who formerly belonged to the Congress Party. The only difference this time is that the group which has left us has kept the old name, although they are now known as Congress (Opposition). This group, as you know, is one-third of ours in number and even when they were with us, many of the members of this group were working against us from within the Party, so that the situation has not really become more difficult but in a way easier,

Interview with Japanese journalists, New Delhi, March 12, 1970

because when you know people are working against you, there is not much you can do.

The two developments which you have mentioned have certainly complicated the political life. But the split in the Congress is now several months old. It did not create the kind of upheaval that some people had feared and some others had hoped for. The country and the Congress have both taken the split in their stride. Just last week, we had an occasion in Parliament to test Government's strength. The vote for the Government was nearly three times the vote against it. On one amendment, all the Opposition parties—the Opposition Congress group as well as all the Opposition parties—voted against us. Even so, we had a very clear majority.

The extremist Communists are another story. We have several groups of people who challenge authority and operate in remote forest areas. Some of them, who operate along our eastern border, are instigated and helped by China and Pakistan. Perhaps you know that we have been through a very severe economic recession. This recession created a great deal of unemployment and unrest in urban areas. As a result, some of these extremist elements have been able to find new followers in the cities also.

Our political strategy is clear. The Congress and the Government have adopted a middle course which is definitely left of the centre. We must now demonstrate to our people that this road can achieve results. And by results I do not mean only a higher growth rate but also a quick narrowing of social disparities. Our people believe in democratic institutions. If we are able to show quick economic progress, this faith in democracy will take even deeper root.

QUESTION : What are the basic guidelines of India's Fourth Five Year Plan and what does Madam Prime Minister hope to achieve to strengthen the country economically and improve the standard of living of the people?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is indeed a very important problem. Our Five Year Plans are drawn up with a view to taking the country forward. We are now at the beginning of the Fourth Plan and we are in a position today to make rapid advance. It is only when the overall development of the country comes about that all the regional and other problems can be solved. Therefore, in the Plan, while we have kept up our investment in State sector, we are giving special attention to agriculture. Even in agriculture, we want to focus attention on the problems of dry farming. In the last two years, we helped the farmers having irrigated land and this enabled us to increase our food production. I think that for the first time, the figure of foodgrain production has crossed the 100-million tonne mark. So we are practically self-sufficient today so far as foodgrains are concerned.

While economic growth is important, we must remember that it is dependent on certain amount of political and social peace. Therefore, we have to see that economic growth is matched to some extent with social justice. Even though it may slow down the economic growth, you cannot ignore that part; otherwise social tensions will hamper economic values.

In the Fourth Plan, we aim at achieving a 5.5 per cent growth rate and to consolidate our agricultural and industrial self-reliance and to lay a firm basis for further technological change. This Plan will also greatly reduce dependence on foreign aid. In fact, we think that the need for such aid should disappear by the end of this decade.

QUESTION : What is your assessment of the working of India's traditional policy of non-alignment and do you propose to take the initiative to put relations with Pakistan and China on a new footing in the interest of peace, especially in Asia ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The policy of non-alignment corresponds to our national interest. We believe it is also in the interest of world peace and stability. Recent trends in international affairs have served to emphasise the validity of the assumptions on which the policy of non-alignment is based. The nations of the world today are gradually breaking away from the rigidities imposed by the military alliances and power blocs. So this leads us to believe that non-alignment is not a mere slogan, but a basic necessity for nations which are situated as we are. The broadening of the area of non-alignment and the increasing recognition of the basic principles of co-existence provide hope for a durable world peace.

We sincerely desire friendly relations with Pakistan. We have taken a series of initiatives to normalise our relations with them, because we believe that this would be to our mutual benefit. I hope that, sooner or later, the Government and the people of Pakistan will realise that they will profit as much from a step-by-step approach towards the solution of our mutual problems rather than by permanently freezing our conflicts.

With China also we desire an improvement in relations. There is an old Indian saying, 'One cannot clap with one hand'. So no improvement can be brought about unilaterally. So far we have not discerned any change in China's attitude.

QUESTION : Some of the recent policies of the Indian Government, such as bank nationalisation, have caused misgivings among the Japanese who may be able to collaborate with India in the economic field. Could you, Madam Prime Minister, clarify these policies and, if possible, remove the misgivings ? Also, could you indicate some of the fields in which the two countries might collaborate in the coming years to their mutual advantage ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not understand why the nationalisation of 14 banks should cause any misgivings in Japan. We nationalised them in order to have a more rational credit policy and to ensure a faster rate of growth of our banking system. Before nationalisation, the ownership of banks was such that it stood in the way of a sensible credit policy and an expansion of the banking system. While banks will continue to meet the genuine credit requirements of industry, Government will ensure that bank finance is not made available for speculation and that it is not pre-empted in favour of a few industrial and trading firms.

We seek economic co-operation between India and Japan. When I was in Japan, several projects and possibilities were discussed and there are many areas in which our two countries can collaborate to our mutual advantage. The Japan-India Committee is serving a useful purpose in exploring areas of such collaboration.

QUESTION : During your visit to Japan, you had discussion on some major projects. Since then half a year has passed. In this half a year, has there been any progress so far as prospects of co-operation between the two countries are concerned ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is going on quite well. After that, we had a team from Japan and certain things have been finalised. These are in the process of being talked about.

QUESTION : Regarding the economic relations, collaboration between Japan and India, I think joint ventures will be the first thing. For example, it is not that Japan should come to India and try to sell out its things here. But what I feel is that if the Japanese capital and the Indian capital could be mixed up together, *i.e.*, if joint ventures could be established by which projects could be either utilised for these two countries or could be sold to third countries, that seems to be one of the best methods.

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is a very good idea and we do propose to have joint ventures with various countries. I do not know at what stage this is with Japan. It is a good idea to work together.

QUESTION : Since Japan is facing acute labour problem, I think by these joint ventures spare-parts for automobiles, spare-parts for TV sets and other things can be manufactured in India and those can be easily sold out in Japan and can even be utilised by other countries.

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I said earlier, we had a delegation of businessmen and they would be the best men to see in what areas such a co-operation could take place with Japan.

QUESTION : We have seen evidence of the progress India is making in the agricultural and industrial fields but the productivity of Indian

labour appears to be low and the serious unemployment problem and bad living conditions, especially in urban areas, may be posing dangers to the Indian Government. How do you, Madam Prime Minister, propose to meet this situation and develop the human resources of India in the seventies?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do not have the discipline of the Japanese people. The productivity of the Indian labour is low because of a number of contributing factors—many inherited from our colonial past; for instance, low rate of literacy and, of course, this is not inherited—the high rate of population growth; and there is sharp political consciousness amongst the people. The advanced countries of today had a longer period when no labour laws stood between the employers' desire for profit and the workers' need for a better wage.

But productivity is going up. In one district of Punjab, the per acre yield of wheat is regarded as being amongst the highest in the world. A couple of months ago, I learnt that the productivity in our Bhilai steel mill achieved something of a record. These are two random instances of our farmers and workers being able to do as well as those of any other country, provided the right kind of environment is created.

You spoke of development of human resources. Twenty years ago, we had 25 million children at school. Today there are 75 million. Nearly 60,000 new students go in for engineering degrees or higher diploma courses.

I know that the living conditions in parts of our cities are very bad. But slums are to be found even in the cities of advanced countries. In fact, they are posing major problems for their governments. To visitors from these advanced countries, who have forgotten how their slums looked a century ago, they must be an excruciating experience. But urban improvement schemes come as a result of sustained improvement in national living standards. We have newly taken up large housing programmes, but because of the size of the problem I am afraid it will be many years before there will be a real impact.

India is a country of many problems, but it is sincerely and determinedly endeavouring to solve them.

Our experience is that as we solve problems, the solution itself brings about new problems.

QUESTION : So your country is very great!

THE PRIME MINISTER : Even your country is also facing new problems —the problem of affluence and so on. I think no country is without problems. You exchange one kind of problems with another kind.

QUESTION : At the end of a few weeks going around the country before coming to Delhi, my impression is that yours is a very great country of diversity in every dimension—social, cultural and otherwise. You have the gigantic works at Ellora and Ajanta and at the same time you

are having very serious modern problems. I think the most serious problem is education. You have just mentioned about the low rate of literacy. From our own experience of Japan, this means mobilising 550 million people. How to mobilise these people to work hard under very hard conditions? How to solve this literacy problem? How to increase the number of primary schools, higher secondary schools and universities? What do you think about it?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think you are right. It is a very important problem and we are trying to increase the number of schools. All over the country, the number is going up. But the other problem is that even if you want to do something small, it becomes very big in India because of the size. And a school means many things. Education is very important. But to many people, communications are just as important, otherwise they are cut off from the markets and so on. So we have to try and balance everything. But education is very important and it is also expanding very rapidly. But we need to modernise it more. Our system of education is still very much the old system which was there in the British times.

QUESTION : In my two weeks' experience in the country I found that although India is very big, there is a lot of water problem for irrigation and other things. I think water is a major problem. How about thinking of converting sea-water into fresh water, and this can be possible with your atomic energy resources, and I think this can be easily done. How about your ideas about this?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is very very expensive.

EDITOR : No, no.

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is what we are told and that is why we are trying other methods of irrigation. Do you think it is not expensive?

EDITOR : No, no. We are now paying water charges. If these charges could be increased a little this will not be a big problem.

THE PRIME MINISTER : You see a large part of our country is the Indo-Gangetic plain in the north. There is plenty of water there. We just have to get it out. Places where there is a shortage of water are the hilly areas. It would not help to desalinate the sea-water and transport it there. Perhaps the only areas which could be helped are some of the coastal areas. Of course, we have one desert area but that also is at some distance.

QUESTION : I do believe that economic co-operation between India and Japan is important. But even in Japan several businessmen are worried about various things. For example, there are various problems

in this co-operation. One is Indianisation. And then the company taxes are also rather high. Then they are not sure whether protection of patent can be ensured. These are the various things that the Japanese businessmen are worried about, and if these can be somehow or the other solved, I think there could be better relations.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have to view all these problems in the context of national interest. It is true that we had discussions in Parliament about patents. We have a Bill on that. It is because many medicines which come under a patent name are so much more expensive. So all these matters have to be considered keeping different things in view because we should not enter into any agreement or do something which will either take a lot of money out of the country which need not otherwise go out, or in other ways harm the interests of our own people.

QUESTION : I am sure you must be looking forward to various co-operation schemes from the Japanese side. Will you tell us what exactly you are expecting?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is very difficult to say exactly. Many proposals have been discussed. And it is only through discussions and the Japanese businessmen seeing things here or our businessmen seeing things there that they can outline the area of co-operation.

QUESTION : While meeting people in India we have found that there is some misunderstanding. Probably, we were also under some misunderstanding, *i.e.*, the Indians feel that Japan does not recognise India as one of the Asian countries, but what I feel is that if India considers itself to be part of Asia and does not look forward to Europe so much, we can also make a promise that we will recognise India as part of Asia.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do not look towards Europe. I am sure your visit will help in creating a better understanding between the two countries.

Towards Distributive Justice

I HAD OUTLINED the main features of the proposals contained in the Bill in my Budget speech. The details of the specific provisions in the Bill have also been set forth in the Explanatory Memorandum circulated to Hon. Members along with the Budget papers. Hence, it is hardly necessary to go over the ground again. On the present occasion, I

Moving the Finance Bill in Lok Sabha, May 1, 1970

should like merely to explain the principal changes that are proposed to be introduced in the provisions of the Bill. In deciding on these changes, the valuable suggestions made by Hon. Members and others during the past eight weeks have been taken into account.

The central objective of the Budget proposals has been widely appreciated both in this House and outside. There is little reason, therefore, to disturb the general structure of the fiscal proposals in the Bill. The Bill gives concrete shape to the task of reconciling the need for augmented revenues for developmental purposes, with that of using the fiscal device for furthering distributive justice. Through these amendments, I propose to suggest a few changes which would make the fiscal proposals in certain instances more rational and, in certain other cases, more purposive to achieve the stated goals.

I shall start with direct taxes. The relevant proposals in the Bill, while aiming at reducing the more extreme forms of income inequalities and at plugging loopholes in the law leading to tax avoidance, also take care to provide greater incentives to savings and investments. The Bill makes provision to exempt from tax income up to Rs. 3,000 in a year derived from investments in certain specified categories of financial assets; investments in such assets up to Rs. 1.5 lakhs are also being exempted from wealth tax. It is now proposed to also include in those categories of investments the deposits with State Financial Corporations and other approved long-term financial institutions. This is being done to enable these equally worthy institutions also to attract deposits from members of the public for nation-building purposes.

The tax on the interest payable by banks to their constituents is at present deductible at source. In the context of the Government's policy to extend significantly the coverage of banking to rural areas, it would be justifiable to alter this arrangement on administrative grounds. I propose to amend the relevant provision in the Income Tax Act so as to exempt from deduction of tax at source the interest earned from deposits with banking companies, including co-operative banks.

In regard to charitable and religious trusts, the Bill makes certain changes in the existing law so as to check abuses which have come to light, and reduce the scope for use of these trust funds to acquire control of industry and business in which the author and his relatives are interested. These provisions in the Bill have been widely acclaimed, and there is no reason to make any major changes in the proposals. At the same time, while replying to the general discussion on the Budget, I did indicate that we would try to remove any genuine difficulties which may be faced by the affected parties in complying with some of the conditions introduced in the Bill. Under the Bill, the facility enjoyed earlier by a charitable or religious trust to accumulate 25 per cent of its current income has been withdrawn. However, as Hon. Members are aware, there is already a provision in the existing law whereby such

a trust can accumulate its current income without attracting tax liability for a maximum period of 10 years for purposes authorised under the terms of the trust, provided the funds so accumulated are invested in Government securities. It has been brought to my notice that the requirement to invest the accumulated income exclusively in Government securities is unduly restrictive in that the funds so invested would not be readily available to the trust in times of natural calamities like floods and earthquakes; this restriction may also involve risk of loss when the investments are needed to be disposed of before maturity. In order to remove this unintended hardship, I now propose to amend the relevant provision in the Bill so as to allow the investment of accumulated income also in the form of deposits with the post office saving banks, with banking companies including co-operative banks, as well as with approved long-term financial institutions such as State Financial Corporations.

Under the Bill, a charitable or religious trust is liable to forfeit the exemption from tax on its income, if the income or property of the trust is used to provide direct or indirect benefit to the author of the trust or his relatives. The Bill sets forth examples of transactions which would be regarded as providing indirect benefits. A trust or institution engaged in any of these transactions at any time during the previous year relevant to the assessment year 1971-72 would forfeit the exemption from tax on its income for that year. As the previous year relevant to the assessment year 1971-72 could, at the option of the trust, be the financial year 1970-71 or the calendar year 1970 or the year ending on Diwali in October 1970 or even the year ending on 30th June, 1970, trusts which may already have engaged in these prohibited transactions before the announcement of the Budget proposals on February 28, 1970, would normally forfeit exemption from tax on their current income. Such a result would be unintended in the case of religious trusts as also in the case of the charitable trusts established before April 1, 1962, since the proposals in the Budget could not have been anticipated. I, therefore, propose to provide that in the case of such trusts, any use of the trust income or property to provide direct or indirect benefits to the author, founder or any of his relatives in relation to any period up to May 31, 1970 would not entail forfeiture of the exemption from tax on their current income.

Another circumstance specified in the Bill, which would lead to a complete forfeiture of the exemption from tax, is the investment of the trust funds in any concern in which the author or founder of the trust or any of his relatives has a substantial interest, and the amount of the investment exceeds 5 per cent of the capital of that concern. In order to comply with the provision, a fairly large number of trusts and institutions would have to change their pattern of investments in order that they do not forfeit the exemption from tax on their current

income. It has been represented that unless a certain minimum time is allowed for the rearrangement of investments, there would be danger of widespread capital loss, since any sudden rush for the sale of such shares in the market could have a depressing effect on share prices. In order to remove any *bona fide* difficulties, which trusts may face in complying with this provision, I propose to allow them time up to December 31, 1970, to alter suitably their portfolio of investment.

A related minor change is also proposed to be introduced. As I have just explained, a charitable trust, under the proposals in the Bill, is liable to forfeit completely the exemption from tax on its income if its funds are invested in any concern in which the author, founder or any of his relatives has a substantial interest. However, where the amount of investment does not exceed 5 per cent of the capital of that concern, such a trust would lose its exemption only in respect of the income derived from that investment. But persons are liable to forfeit the tax relief which they would otherwise be entitled to obtain in respect of their donations. It is proposed to introduce a specific provision that persons making donations to a trust will continue to be eligible for tax relief so long as the quantum of investment in any of the prohibited concerns does not exceed 5 per cent of the capital of such concerns.

Under the Bill, capital gains arising from the transfer of agricultural land situated within the limits of any municipality or cantonment board, which has a population of not less than 10,000 persons, will hereafter, be subjected to income-tax. However, there will be instances where agricultural lands in such municipal or other urban areas are held for *bona fide* agricultural purposes, often as the main source of livelihood. Where the holder of such land sells it, but acquires some other land elsewhere in order to continue his agricultural occupation, it would be justifiable to exempt from tax the capital gain arising to him out of such a transaction. An amendment is being introduced to this end.

Under the provisions of the Bill, discretionary trusts often created in order to evade or avoid taxation are to be taxed at a flat rate of 65 per cent on their incomes and 1.5 per cent on their wealth, or at the rates applicable to individuals, whichever is higher. However, I had said in my Budget speech that steps would be taken to exempt certain categories of existing discretionary trusts from taxation at these flat rates. The provisions will not apply to trusts created by employers for the benefit of their employees, such as provident funds, superannuation funds, gratuity funds, pension funds, etc. The necessary amendments are being moved.

I now refer to an amendment to the Wealth Tax. Until now, a farm house was exempt from the Wealth Tax, irrespective of the value of the house. Under a proposal in the Bill, such exemption

would henceforth be limited to Rs. 1 lakh. For persons having extensive agricultural holdings, however, there may be farm houses situated in the midst of such holdings, the value of which may even exceed Rs. 1 lakh. Such persons may also own a residential house apart from the farm house. As the maintenance of a farm house is essential to direct agricultural operations, I propose to restore the *status quo ante,* and exempt altogether such a house from the liability under the Wealth Tax, irrespective of value.

We now come to the proposals in the Bill regarding indirect taxation. May I stress again what I have said in my Budget speech and in my reply to the general discussion on the Budget? In the present circumstances, we can scarcely ignore the role, which indirect taxes can play in broadening and strengthening the fiscal system. The major aim of fiscal proposals with respect to indirect levies is to augment our export effort, discourage the consumption of certain items, and protect the interests of the poorer sections of the community. I do not believe that the package of proposals will disturb the general price stability either. Representations have, however, been made about the likely effects of some individual proposals. These have received our most careful consideration, and we propose to introduce a number of modifications, particularly to remove any hardships which the manufacturers in the small-scale sector may encounter.

A number of representations have been received from the decentralised sector of the art silk industry, expressing concern over the difficulties which, they think, might arise with the declaration of values for purposes of assessment. It has also been urged that the price limit of Rs. 2.50 per sq. metre, up to which the rate of duty would be 3 per cent *ad valorem* does not ensure that the common man's fabrics are taxed at a level not exceeding the specific rates effective before the Budget proposals. It is now proposed to fix tariff values for the assessment of most varieties of art silk fabrics which would simplify the process of assessment. At the same time, the slab up to which the effective rate of duty is to be 3 per cent is proposed to be raised from Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3.00 per sq. metre. It is also proposed to give a reduction of 5 per cent in the duty chargeable on fabrics processed by "independent processors" when the grey cloth brought to such processing houses is delivered to the owner, after processing, in an uncut condition.

Hon. Members will recall that I had proposed the levy of 20 per cent duty on television sets with great reluctance. At the present stage of our economy, only the relatively better-off can afford a television set, but television has an educative value in our conditions and, as the TV manufacturing industry is in its infancy, I feel that the balance of advantage lies in levying a somewhat lower duty than was originally proposed. I, therefore, propose to reduce the excise duty on this item

from 20 per cent to 10 per cent *ad valorem*. To provide a further stimulus to the indigenous industry, certain other ancillary measures, such as reviewing the facilities provided under the existing Baggage Rules and other regulations which enable television sets to be brought into the country in large numbers without the payment of duty, are being considered.

The abolition of export duty on tea has generally been welcomed. The increase in the zonal excise duties has, however, brought forth a large number of representations from tea producers, especially those among the weaker sectors, who stand to benefit less from the export duty reduction but whose excise duty liability has gone up because of the predominance of internal sales over their export sales. There does not seem to be any justifiable case for an over-all reduction of excise duties. However, some changes are necessary in the incidence of duty on those gardens, which are small or the quality of whose tea is inferior and fetches low prices. In proposing modifications in the levy, I have kept in view the special problems of the small tea gardens in the Nilgiri district, and also in the Assam and Darjeeling areas. I propose to limit the excise duty incidence to 70 paise per kg. in respect of tea cleared in the rest of the financial year 1970-71 which is sold at a price not exceeding Rs. 5 per kg. The details of procedure to give effect to this concession are being worked out and will be notified separately. In addition, the 10 per cent reduction in excise duty available to co-operative factories is being extended to 'bought-leaf' factories.

I now turn to a few of the excises proposed on commodities, where a sizable production is in the small-scale sector. It is my intention to make these provisions the least onerous for the small manufacturers. I, therefore, propose to exempt wholly from excise duty the production of metal containers, safes and strong boxes by units which do not use power. I also propose to exempt from excise duty units which manufacture safes and strong boxes up to a value of Rs. 50,000, provided that the total annual output of such a unit does not exceed Rs. 2 lakhs in value. This exemption will also extend to the manufacturers of biscuits. In the case of metal containers, the exemption limit is being fixed at a still higher level of Rs. 1 lakh, since the value of such containers would include the components of duty paid on tin plate used as raw material.

I should not like the cause of education to suffer; hence mathematical boxes, geometry boxes and colour boxes used by students and children, irrespective of whether those are manufactured in the organised or small-scale sector, will also be wholly exempted from excise duty.

It is necessary to clarify and, in some instances, marginally alter the fiscal proposals in respect of pasteurised butter, refrigerating and

airconditioning appliances and plastics. Pasteurised butter, which is used in the same factory, either for making ghee or for re-constituting into milk, will not be charged to duty. Apart from the concession extended to components intended for the setting up of airconditioning plants in hospitals, room and package type airconditioners also, if they are installed in hospitals, will get the benefit of exemption from the increases proposed in the Budget. Cold storage plants already enjoy a concessional rate of duty. This concession is being extended to fish-freezing plants. In the case of plastics, certain anomalies resulting from the proposed levy on P.V.C. sheets are being rectified.

I should like to clarify that it was not our intention to bring sago, vermicelli and arrowroot within the purview of the excise levy on 'prepared and preserved foods'. Similarly, the levy on aerated waters is confined only to products which are manufactured with the aid of power and are marketed with a registered brand name or trade mark.

As Hon. Members are aware, in order to stimulate the handloom sector of the cotton textile industry, we have already made effective an exemption from excise duty, of hank yarn of counts less than 40 N.F. and reduced considerably the duty on hank yarn of higher counts. I now propose to extend the provision of total exemption to hank yarn in plain straight reels for counts other than 51 N.F.

Lastly, I come to the representations made by certain sections of the book trade regarding the adjustments proposed in the postal tariffs, particularly regarding V.P.P. fees. As the proposed increase in fees on items of lesser value is rather steep, I propose that the V.P.P. charges be retained at 10 paise for all packets up to Rs. 10 in value.

The changes proposed in direct taxes are not expected to have any significant impact on revenue. The adjustment in excise duties would imply a reduction in revenue to the extent of Rs. 1.80 crores of which about one-half would be because of the changes related to tea. The effect of the change in the V.P.P. rates would be approximately Rs. 8 lakhs.

May I conclude by saying that we have made an effort to remove the genuine difficulties which might have arisen because of some of the measures proposed for direct and indirect taxation. In so doing we have accepted a marginal sacrifice of resources. I know that this will not satisfy all Hon. Members. However, we cannot escape from the stern obligation to mobilise resources for our development. Such a mobilisation imposes burdens on all sections of our people and calls for sacrifices. But we have sincerely endeavoured to ensure that the burdens do not fall heavily on those who are least able to bear them.

Fighting Communalism

WE HAVE MANY institutions and organisations in our country and today we see the birth of yet another. And yet, perhaps, it will not be redundant or be a duplication of work, because we find that in spite of our wishes, in spite of the clear direction which was given to our party from the very beginning, the concepts of democracy, of socialism or secularism are not yet clear in the minds of our people. We see in a growing number of people and sometimes in young bright people the desire to take a shorter cut, to try and reach our goal more quickly, not realising that no matter what path we take, what steps we take, they all require a price to pay. It is a question of choosing how much or what type of a price we are willing to pay.

It was after much consideration that we chose the path of democracy. Not because it is the quickest path; perhaps it is not. But because it is the path which helps the people to grow to political maturity. And we felt that that was most important for our people—for them to feel involved in what is happening in the country, to participate in the development of the country. This can only be done if they have certain choices open to them. And this is a system which gives them that choice. But democracy, as all other systems, has its dangers. And today we see the danger of the majority in some places trying to or wanting to change certain minorities. Our democracy does not mean that. It does mean that you vote, you express your view and ultimately you accept what the larger number of people want. But this cannot mean that there should be regimentation of any kind. This does not mean that only one group of people, even if they are in larger number, has the right to say that the others should change and conform to their way of thinking.

So the situation, as it is in India today, is full of hope in some ways and full of dangers in other ways. And I think the dangers have become more acute because of the hope. That is when people saw that there is a determined effort to go in a particular direction, they redoubled their own efforts to try and combat this direction. What can be more easy in a country like India than to arouse people emotionally with slogans of religion, with slogans of language or with other regional interests? And these are some of the matters which come in the way of our progress and of speedy development.

The other day I used the word 'Fascism' with regard to what some people in our country were doing. I did not use that word lightly as it is sometimes used. We use the word 'Fascism', 'Nazism,' we use the names of various dictators for anybody who we think is acting in an

Inaugural speech at the Institute of Democracy and Socialism, New Delhi, May 21, 1970

authoritarian way. I did not use that word in a loose way. I used it with the very specific meaning that it has—of what that system did in a particular country. It was not a general use of the word. There are parties today who think that one group or one religion in our country is superior. Now that is a facet of what Hitler said and what he followed. It was not just a question of saying. Many of us say things. But Hitler went out to destroy a whole community, millions of people, not by words but in actual fact millions were tortured and put to death. That is what it means when one uses this word.

The theory of one race being superior to another was also taken to its logical conclusion to the detriment of the country. Whether they were scientists, whether they were artists or other people belonging to the Jewish race, because of their race they were condemned. As I said earlier, millions were killed in the most barbarous and atrocious manner; others fled for their lives and went to enrich other countries. Today, if American science has taken gigantic strides, it is because many German scientists were driven out of Germany.

In all aspects when one sees the theories which some parties are propagating before us, even the shape they try to give to socialism, one finds it is very akin to national socialism that was practised in Germany of that day. Whether they talk about employment, whether they talk about the right of young men, all these things are not new ideas. We have seen, we have heard them talk about them. I have heard with my own ears. I have not just read them second-hand or heard from others. I have seen these things happen with my own eyes. It is not a memory one can forget in one's whole life, no matter how long one lives. And that is why if I speak with anger, it is not a simulated anger; it is not a put-on show; it is something that has gone deep into my being, because I have seen what it did to a whole people, how in one country a whole people could not resist a small party who in the name of democracy overthrew democracy, who in the name of nationalism overthrew true nationalism, who in the name of taking their country forward barely risked destroying it entirely—it was almost risked. These things the world has seen happen and memories of it are there. I am glad that in Germany they have kept these camps as they were. They have kept the camps with lamp-shades made out of human skin; they have kept the goods made out of baby's skin and baby's hair, to show that generations to come will see what people did there.

So when we talk about Hitlerism or Fascism, we are not talking in the air. We are talking about things which started in just such a way as people are trying to start things in our country. It is just the small beginning which led to that movement which engulfed the whole world in a war. Wars have taken place and I am one of those who believe that war at any time is wrong. But still a war can be fought.

If you are attacked, you must defend yourself. And certainly India will always defend herself. But India will not be strong enough to defend herself if she does not build real inner strength, if she does not build real inner unity. That is what we have been trying to do. But there are groups, there is a thought which is against this stream. It would not be true to say that they are against unity. But their vision is so narrow that they cannot see that their talk and their action is against unity, is against strengthening of the country, is against the progress of the country and is even against the very spreading of the traditions or heritage in which they say they believe. I do not know whether they know it or not, I do not know whether they understand it or not, because, as they proclaim, their religion and their tradition is nothing like which has been proclaimed by most of the great sages of our country through the ages.

So, this is a danger which democracy faces today. We have often heard the phrase : 'Let democratic parties come together.' What does it mean ? I have asked this question on an earlier occasion: Which is a democratic party ? Can we call any party democratic which would like to change other people's opinion by force, which thinks that only its view—a very narrow view—is the right view, which would like to cut off the country from many different trends of thought ? Today democracy cannot exist without being modern. Democracy cannot exist in a fast age, and I must say that one of the dangers we do face is from parties such as these communalist parties, and I have no hesitation in saying that they can belong to any religion. When I spoke the other day in Parliament, I was not merely referring to one party. I was referring to a particular way of thinking. If today it happens to exist mostly in one or two parties, we have to mention them. But we cannot hide the fact that it does also exist amongst us. Why have we been weakened ? Because there are amongst us people who have not said strongly about these things to fight them. When these ideas have been expressed by individuals, by groups, by parties, there have been some who have thought: "Well, it does not matter. Let us go along with this for the time being". This reminds me of a small couplet which I read a very very long time ago when I was at school. A person says :

Who knocks ? A little lonely sin.
"Come in", I said, and all hell was in !

This is how things begin. They begin in a small way and you think, "Well, we can tolerate it". This is not big enough to fight and before you know what it is, it is so big that it is almost impossible to fight. Now this is how some of the communal forces have gathered strength in India. And let us make no mistake. They are not communal only in the sense of belonging to one religion and being against other religions or being against groups. They are retrograde in every possible

aspect—socially, economically, politically and in every other way. This is a big danger. Had there been only one front, it would not have been so difficult to fight them. But they stand for all that is backward looking in our country. And why is it so dangerous? Because this is an aspect which the country finds difficult to accept. We are a country steeped in tradition. Can we really be forward looking unless we sweep away some of the tradition which is not relevant to life of today? But we find how many of our functions, how much of our time goes in something which has happened long long ago. I have nothing against the religious functions of our people. But how much time can we spend remembering something that happened thousands of years ago, or may be, did not even happen, but we think it happened? So, much of it is looking backward. Even our national leaders—they are great leaders, they have inspired us, they have brought the country forward, they have given us independence, but the new generation has to go forward. It cannot keep looking back, however great a person was. But so much of our energy goes in observing festivals and other things—looking backward. You cannot look backward and go forward. You have to make up your mind what you want to do. If you look backward and still try to go forward, well, you will progress. It is not that you want it, but you will stumble, you will fail; you do not know where you are going. You may take the right turning or you may take the wrong turning. But the time has come when we have to look at these things in depth. We have to fight all these backward-looking things. I am a believer in some of our traditions. I am a believer in our philosophy, but that part of it which is fundamental and which, I think, is equally relevant today and perhaps will be relevant as long as human life exists. And those values do not conflict with any of our modern thought, with any of our modern values, whether it is economic values, whether it is a democratic or an egalitarian society, whether it is taking the people forward and giving an equal chance to all—all these we find in our ancient times. But today, in the name of religion these fundamental things in our religion are brushed aside and we take some small item. Is it important whether *gulal* is thrown or not thrown? Is it important whether a person takes part in a particular procession or does not take part? Is it important, all these superficial things of religion, do they really make a difference to one's life, to one's thinking, to one's progress? They do not, and yet we get caught in these discussions which have no relevance to our programmes, no relevance to our progress, and we forget the very fundamentals on which this country has been built, which have inspired our people and which could, even today, give us the strength to go forward.

Now, as I said, this is a seminar on democracy. I have talked of other matters deliberately because I think that democracy can only be understood if you look at it in this framework. There can be no

democracy if you are looking backward. There can be no democracy if you have a communal outlook and you have barriers between man and man, citizen and citizen. There can be no democracy if you do not have socialism, because democracy and inequality cannot co-exist. Hence if you want democracy in our country, and I believe we are pledged to it, you have to remember that it is not a matter of parliamentary institutions. We have to see that the feeling of democracy, the involvement or participation of the people, is not confined to voting once in five years for Parliament or for any other local bodies or other elections, but it is a genuine participation in the programmes of our country. I believe that spirit is there in our country, but we have not made sufficient effort to harness it, to galvanise it.

We talk of socialism, of equality, but we almost always think of it merely in terms of the economic programmes. Can there be equality if someone says: "This man cannot drink when I am drinking, this man cannot sit with me when I am sitting." It is not a matter of what economic programmes we have. If this situation continues as it does in parts of our country, you cannot have democracy, no matter how your Parliament or your Assemblies work. So these are fundamental matters to which we have to give thought, and I am sure that this Institute will go into the depth of many of these matters and try to educate public opinion so that more and more people not only think about these things, but make up their minds to act. What does action mean? Action does not merely mean that we speak, write or discuss things. Those things are important and they have their place. But action means that if there is something wrong happening in my neighbourhood, I go all out to fight it, to stop it, to give up my life if it was necessary. This was the tradition of our freedom fighters; amongst our leaders many did give up their lives in trying to bring about communal harmony. If we see that people are not behaving properly towards, say, Adivasis or Harijans, it is for us to see that things change. Can each one of us take the responsibility at least of one *mohalla* or one street, and see the things through? Even if you can do this little thing, there will be a very big change in our country. But if we think it is enough for us to talk and not to see what is happening just in our neighbourhood, then it is not enough to pass laws, it is not enough merely to have a programme. Democracy can work only if each person becomes a soldier in making democracy real to the people. Today I dwelt specifically on the communal question because it is one of the major threats to democracy. Democracy and the participation of people mean that there must be no fear and suspicion in the minds. If any person is afraid because he belongs to a minority community or because he belongs to a lower caste or for some other reason, he cannot assert his rights and, therefore, although he is a citizen of India, he is not really enjoying the privileges of that

freedom or of citizenship. And, therefore, to that extent, democracy is not real in the country. So, these are the ways which may seem small, but I think are fundamental, which can strengthen democracy and strengthen us to face those forces which today take the name of democracy but are trying to destroy it in many different ways.

Today because the concept of democracy has taken root in our country, no party or no individual can openly say that they do not believe in democracy. There are very few who are willing to say openly that they do not believe in socialism, but in actual practice, they do things which negate democracy, socialism, secularism—all these things. Some people allege that because I take up the cause of the minority, I am trying to foment communal disharmony. But this is a strange argument. Whosoever foments communal discord must be punished whatever religion or group he belongs to, whether it is one Sena or group he belongs to, whether it is one Sena or another Sena. In the modern world, you cannot live an isolated life. You must know what other people are thinking; you may disregard what they are thinking, you may disregard what they are doing; but you cannot do so until you understand what they are doing. But if you try to shut the doors and windows of your mind to confine your thought to modern India, and more so to the past India that is gone, finished and lumped up in the pages of history, then you are completely cut off from the world and there is no possibility of taking the country forward in any direction. So, this is what I would say. This Institute should take up not only the broad aspects of democracy and socialism, but these many small trends which seem small, but which assume terrific proportions, because they are couched in words and emotions which sometimes appeal to people who can be exploited because there is poverty in our country, because there is not enough to go around, because there is unemployment. Therefore, you can talk: "Oh, why should so and so have a job when you do not have a job? Why should so and so get a post if you are not getting it? If you drive out one community, well, there would be more jobs for the other community". These are the thoughts which are going to petrify the country and destroy it and, therefore, we must fight them with all the strength which we can possibly muster, and this means moral strength, intellectual and spiritual strength and also physical strength. So, I hope that this is what this Institute will help us to do because the major need is to spread this education and to see that the mass of our people who are sound in mind and in thinking will not be led astray by this kind of narrow and twisted meaning of the words, to which we have given importance such as democracy, socialism and secularism.

A New Awakening

INDEPENDENT INDIA TODAY enters the twenty-fourth year of her freedom. Every year, on the banks of the Yamuna, at this Red Fort, the people and those who serve them meet one another, and derive strength from one another. The country has witnessed many changes in the past one year. There has been a rethinking by the various political parties and the people on various issues. All of them have been trying to clarify their policies and looking for new paths. The people had an opportunity to strengthen democracy and to take stock of their progress.

The past year had been a year of great revival of activity. Earlier, many programmes had been left unexecuted either because of war, drought, economic recession or other reasons. We are again marching forward but certain forces are perturbed by the speed of the progress we are making and are opposing the steps we are taking. However, I know that the people are aware of what is going on, of what is right and what is wrong and what is good and what is bad. The people have the capacity to discriminate between good and evil. Herein lies the value of democracy. Real power vests in the people.

Ever since I was elected to this office I have been touring the four corners of our country. And never before, as in the last year, have I found our people so alert, so awakened, and so aware of their rights. Never before have I seen them so hopeful and so ready to welcome the new changes. This is both a good sign and a great challenge to us. We have to face this challenge.

As I said earlier, many programmes which could not be implemented are being carried out now. Production in both agriculture and industry has increased and is continuing to increase. Nationalisation of banks has thrown open new avenues to the people, particularly to the youth of the country. Though it is more than a year since nationalisation of banks took place, the fruits of nationalisation have started accruing to the people only during the last few months. As you know, the implementation could be started only after the matter was cleared by the Supreme Court.

These days we hear strange slogans being raised. Some people talk of violence. But I want to tell them that violence has so far not solved any problem. However noble our objectives may be, if we adopt wrong means we cannot achieve these objectives satisfactorily. I had thought that the debate between violence and non-violence had already been settled in our country. During our independence struggle we had disproved the belief of those who felt that we could not achieve inde-

Free translation of speech in Hindi from the ramparts of Red Fort, Delhi, August 15, 1970

pendence through non-violence. We proved to the world that it was possible to free our country by means of non-violence.

I want to assure you that even economic progress and all big changes can be brought about in our country through non-violence. It is our duty to rise above 'slogan-mongering' and unitedly find out ways and means of doing some solid work. Some of our young men think that they have discovered a new way of revolution. I can understand the disappointment and restlessness which is felt by them. I do believe that restlessness is not always a bad sign. But I appeal to them to first see in which way the interests of their country can be best served, whether these interests can be served by raising slogans and by indulging in destruction and sabotage.

We are today facing some big and difficult problems. Price increase is one. This is, in fact, a big problem. When prices rise, the common people feel the pinch, particularly those belonging to the fixed income groups, as also the workers. We are very much exercised over it. However, you have also to appreciate the fact that when a nation goes forward prices move up to a certain extent. Doubtless, it is our duty to ensure that the prices of essential commodities are stabilised and there is a balance between incomes and prices. At the same time, we know that when prices of foodgrains go down, our peasants and those living in rural areas are adversely affected. This adds to their burden. We have therefore to weigh every issue very carefully and then find a middle path. Thus, if there is any distress it will be evenly distributed and no one individual will suffer more than another. We are seriously exercised over the problem of the "haves" and "have-nots", between those who have everything in excess, whether urban property or anything else, and others who have very much less. As already announced, we are going to take some action in this matter.

With our march forward, we will have also to be careful that there is no setback to our production. Any slowing down in our pace of progress will considerably affect our ability to help the poor and the down-trodden. I know that many people feel that the country is not going ahead with sufficient speed. I am, however, confident that the path we have chosen is bound to accelerate our progress and, by taking new steps, we would be able to forge ahead.

This is not the time for minor changes here and there. We have to bring about great changes. Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru have shown us how big changes can be brought about through the strength of the people.

When I was thirteen years old, my father gave me some advice in the letter he wrote from jail. He told me not to do anything secretly and not to do any work which it might be necessary to hide from others. By adopting this principle in our struggle for freedom, Gandhiji could give it a non-violent character and it became a source of strength for

the weakest among us. All parties, organisations and the people should work in the open so that the people are able to understand them and help and co-operate with them. This is the essence of democracy.

It must be admitted that our economic condition has improved considerably. Along with progress our problems have multiplied, for progress creates problems and sometimes problems show the way to progress. Our problems are like a mountain which we climb. We cannot afford to look back and see how far we have climbed. We have only to think of how much more remains to be climbed. For that purpose we have to rally together.

This is the approach we have to adopt in the matter of price stabilisation and in creating employment opportunities for our youth. Where price increase is inevitable we have to put up with it. Many employment avenues have been suggested, some within the Plan and some outside the Plan. I hope our young men will take advantage of these and explore new ways so that they can stand on their own feet and be self-reliant. The youth in advanced countries have shown how self-reliant they can be.

We have started implementing youth employment schemes. Some young men are receiving assistance from the banks. Some get assistance from other sources. All these schemes will serve as effective instruments for providing employment to the unemployed young. It must be realised that everybody cannot at once get job suited to him. We are on a journey which is long and arduous and we can reach our destination only step by step. Already many steps have been taken on this journey with courage and enthusiasm. When our young men join us in this march they would be able to take us all forward more speedily.

Undoubtedly there is need for economic and social transformation. At the same time there are certain difficulties which come in the way of such transformation. Recently, there was a new problem. A new slogan had been coined : "Land Grab". I do not want to say anything at length about this on this occasion. I will confine myself to only saying that some people have too much land whereas some have no land at all. This is not just. We have taken a few steps in this direction which have given relief to some people. It is our duty to see that the Acts which were passed with this end in view are immediately enforced. Whether this is done by the Central or the State Governments, implementation must be done honestly and effectively. The Central Government are doing their best to persuade the State Governments to implement these reforms speedily and thereby discharge their responsibility. Necessary legislation which has not yet been passed will soon be passed. But, however strongly we may feel about it, it would not be just possible to give land to everybody. The problem before us now is how to distribute the fallow land that is good. We

are concentrating our attention on this and I hope that this will be done more expeditiously.

We still face yet another problem, which is frequently and widely discussed. That is the problem of communalism. One of the many great qualities possessed by our country, not from the modern period but from time immemorial, is that it has treated all religions on the basis of perfect equality. We have equally respected the different philosophies and creeds of all the religions. This has not meant the individual departing from his own religion. But we have always given shelter in our country to others, irrespective of their faith.

I have often asked myself as to what is really Indian. Our ancient saints and sages have told us that Truth is one but there are several paths to reach it. We have always accepted this fundamental truth. If we forget it we will weaken ourselves, and if we remember it we will go from strength to strength.

This is an age when the people of one country learn from the experience of other countries. This is not a sign of weakness but the sign of a new age. We can learn a great deal in the field of science and technology and use this knowledge for the removal of poverty of our people. Change is the law of life and the changes taking place in the world today are of entirely different kinds. Basic changes are coming about. That is the reason why there is so much turmoil, turmoil not peculiar to our country alone but which is sweeping the whole world.

The cardinal principle of our foreign policy is world peace. If there is a dispute between two parties, they should settle it by mutual discussion without taking recourse to force. This we have been repeating for years together. Recently, two developments have given us great happiness. One is that President Nasser of the United Arab Republic has accepted the U.S. peace proposals for West Asia. Perhaps a complicated problem will be solved by this. President Nasser has displayed courage in accepting these proposals. Similarly, Soviet Russia and West Germany have met together and signed a non-aggression pact. The point which India has been repeatedly stressing in pursuit of its foreign policy has, it seems, been accepted by them. I hope that the result of these two recent developments will prove beneficial to world peace.

Unfortunately, in another area, war is still continuing. There, it is not only continuing but it has further enlarged. Many people who have nothing to do with it—innocent children, old men and women—have also been engulfed by it and they are undergoing tremendous suffering. Our heart goes out to them in sympathy.

In the United Kingdom, a step which the new government has taken after coming into power has caused us some anxiety. This is their intention to give some arms aid to South Africa. We know

that this aid would give encouragement to the South African Government's policy of colour bar and apartheid. It would also prove dangerous to the independent countries adjoining South Africa. We have raised our voice against this and we hope that the United Kingdom would reconsider her policy.

I come here every year and meet the people. It seems to me that the assembly gathered here today is larger than in previous years. This may be due to several factors including hopes roused in the hearts of the people, as also the realisation that the struggle is a long and difficult one in which they should participate. It is not enough that we enjoy the facilities and comforts which are available in an independent country. We should equally share the miseries, sufferings and burdens that are there. If we look at our problems from this point of view, then we would be able to solve them.

There are many people in our midst who do not have strength enough to bear any more burdens nor can they march in step with us. Every year we remember them on this occasion. So long as we are not in a position to render more help to these people we will not be able to accomplish anything, however laudable our programmes for their betterment may be.

I realise that the Harijans, the tribals, those living in the mountains and forests and those on whom the burden of poverty is the heaviest have been the least cared for after Independence. There are many reasons for this state of affairs. In some cases, even if there is a programme for their uplift, the benefits cannot reach them owing to lack of communications. We shall do our best to help these people, however great the difficulties.

We are determined to solve our problems, however complicated they might be. Ours is a great country, but sometimes we are lost in trivial matters. I am a member of a political party. Most of us are members of this or that party. Even if you take all these parties together, they are very small compared to the totality of the people of India. We have always to keep the general good of our country, its problems, its development and its progress, before us and not that of any party and have to relegate small matters and small objectives to the background. Ours is a great country and, therefore, we have always to adopt a high and noble outlook. Gandhiji tried to place this picture of our country before us. Young as we then were, we could not understand this and were sometimes angry with him. We felt that perhaps we knew more than he did, just as our young men feel today. But now we have started realising the true significance of Gandhiji, and it may be several decades before people will realise what a great man was amidst us. As we realise the extent of his greatness, we should try to shape our thoughts and actions accordingly so as to better serve our country. This is the objective we should keep before us. To provide material

comforts to the people is the duty of both government and society. But there is a higher objective to be achieved. We want to provide facilities to the people to increase their strength so that all might join in uplifting the country and making it really great.

I had referred earlier to our foreign policy. With the interests of our country uppermost in our minds, our policy has been to maintain friendship with our neighbouring countries and to arrive at agreements with them, by sorting out differences and seeking new ways of co-operation. At the same time we realise that the stronger our society and the greater our unity, the more strongly would we be able to stand up to other nations. You know that our brave defence forces, whether they belong to the Army, the Navy or the Air Force, and whether stationed in the mountains, the plains, the deserts or on the sea coast, are ever prepared to face every danger. Part of their strength lies in the strength of their arms. The other part lies in the strength and the support of a strong and united people standing behind them. The defence forces will be relieved of much anxiety with the knowledge of strong support assured from a united people. Today, on my behalf as well as on your behalf I offer my good wishes to the Armed Forces, whether they are stationed here or are far away from us.

I also offer my good wishes to our peasants and workers, students and intellectuals, traders and government employees and to the women of India, whether they live in cities or in villages. As a servant of this country, I renew my pledge that, with your co-operation I will continue to struggle to eradicate the poverty in our midst. Gradually, our people are getting nation-and-civic conscious. As they come to realise their duty towards the building of a glorious future for India, they would be prepared to make any sacrifice. Our people are brave and have shown great courage, particularly in times of difficulty. Sometimes, however, when we have felt there was no danger, we have tended to relax and become complacent. But, the present age is a perilous age, not only for our country but for the whole world. Whoever is weak may come to grief. Therefore, it is our duty to remain united and overcome our shortcomings and failings.

We have to take determined steps to move forward. All of us should ask ourselves a question every day. Have you done anything for the country? Have you done it honestly and industriously? If you are able to get honest answers to these questions, you will soon find that we are able to accelerate the pace of progress of this country.

Thousands of years ago, Gautama Buddha said: "I am not concerned with what others are not doing. My only concern is with what I do or do not do". Every citizen should have this ideal before him. Everybody should see that he pursues correct path, that he serves the country and society, and if he does that the society would gather strength. We have to make full use of that strength and knowledge. And I hope

that our young men, who are now restless, will become a great source of strength to our society and will be able to give a new leadership to the country. I have full faith in them. Sometimes some of them are led astray but most of them wish to become an asset to their country. So all of us who are now not so young should help these young men.

We are citizens of an ancient country which is now becoming a modern one. We would like to build up this country in such a manner that if India's name is mentioned anywhere or if her citizens go anywhere, there goes with them a new light, a new strength and a new ideology.

Abolishing Privy Purses

THIS IS A historic Bill, for it represents an important step in the further democratisation of our society.

Naturally, our minds go back to our freedom struggle. One objective of that struggle was to free ourselves from foreign domination. The other which was no less important was to bring about an egalitarian society in which social divisions and disparities would be abolished. A special characteristic of our freedom movement was that it recognised no class distinction and sought to protect no privileges. Some leaders of the movement were intellectual giants, yet all worked together as political equals. We have not been able to establish a society of complete equality, but we can claim that we are still engaged in this mighty endeavour.

The Bill has to be viewed against this background. It represents the momentum of social change in our country. I should like to assure the princes that there is no animus in it against any individual. The manner in which we propose to bring about this important change is in keeping with our democratic tradition of achieving far-reaching and even revolutionary changes peacefully, through consultation, through debate and through parliamentary approval.

The initiative for the integration of the country came from the people's leaders, leaders of our democratic movement and an important part of this was the heroic struggle of the States' people. This is not to say that we minimise the co-operation given by the rulers and their constructive role in the unification of the country soon after the achievement of Independence. They have contributed to the political,

Moving the Constitution (24th Amendment) Bill in Lok Sabha, September 1, 1970

social and cultural life of the community. Many former rulers are held in high esteem by the people of the areas over which they once ruled, and some have been elected to this House by them. This public regard, I am confident, will not be diminished in any manner. Indeed, if I may say so, it will be considerably enhanced if at this time the rulers co-operate with the Government in doing away with certain institutions which are not in harmony with a society striving for equality and social justice.

The present Bill seeks to omit Articles 291, 362 and Clause 22 of Article 366. The intention of the Government is to discontinue the privy purses, abolish or restrict the privileges and abolish the concept of rulership.

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In a letter which I wrote to the rulers, I had categorically stated that the amending Bill had been introduced in Parliament and would come up for consideration and passage in the current session, and I had told them that there was no intention to cause hardship to them or to injure their self-respect and that the Government would make some transitional arrangements.

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The transitional arrangements have not yet been worked out in detail, but the Government's broad approach was indicated by me. I mentioned the suggestion that the actual payment of transitional allowances to be made to each ruler should be based on a multiple which would be higher for those with lower purses and lower for those with higher purses. The total payment would be such as would help the rulers to adjust to changed circumstances. I had also said that the Government was ready to further discuss the details of the scheme with the rulers.

Some Members may question such consultations. Others may advocate that nothing should be given. But this is not our way. The President himself had mentioned the Government's intention to give transitional allowances. For these past six months, I had hoped that without prejudice to our stand to abolish privy purses and privileges, it would be possible to reach some agreements. It is a matter of regret that this attempt on our part appears to have been misinterpreted. However, even now I sincerely hope that wiser counsels will prevail.

Some princes and their friends have claimed that the Bill which I am placing before this House is repugnant to morality. I can only say that it would be unthinkable for me to come before this august House, which represents the constituted will of our people, to ask them to enact something which is not in conformity with the precepts of morality.

History is replete with instances of customs, practices and enactments which were regarded as sacrosanct in one age and inhuman in the next. All the great reformers of our country have fought against customs and practices which were unjust and which perpetuate

inequality but which earlier had been regarded as justified. I am convinced that while there exists such poverty and inequality in our country, there can be no immorality involved in wanting and working to end them.

The continuance of hereditary titles, customary rights, special privileges and privy purses without any relatable functions and responsibilities is incompatible with our democratic Constitution, the spirit of the times and the demand of changed circumstances.

In the 20 years since the privy purse settlements were made, many things have changed. Many hereditary rights and unearned incomes have been restricted. We have done away with a series of privileges and vested interests. In Parliament and in the State Assemblies, we have adopted laws to check the concentration of economic power, both rural and industrial. All this was done through open discussion and parliamentary debate. Changes do bring difficulty and necessitate adjustments, but they are inevitable. Historical forces are irreversible. The choice is clear. Either we bring about change peacefully and with consent, or changes will come in a manner which, I am sure, this Parliament and this country would not like.

The legislative measure before the House is a Constitution Amendment Bill. It will have to be passed by the requisite majority. It will be for the House, irrespective of party affiliations, to show a sense of history and to consider whether a princely order with attendant rights and privileges should continue indefinitely in a society striving for equality and social justice.

* * *

IT IS NOT surprising that this Bill should have received such wide support from different sections of the House. It is not surprising also that two of the Opposition parties should oppose the Bill so vehemently.

One of the speeches was a masterpiece of beautiful packaging, of beautiful words, with no substance; nor was the speech of the Maharaja of Dhrangadhra surprising. He was born and brought up in a particular milieu. He and his friends are personally involved. He has his point of view, which he has always expressed openly and in the most chaste English. He spoke of the reference to the Supreme Court. But, since this is one of the amendments, I shall come to it when we take them up.

But, there is another party of my honourable friends opposite. It is difficult to know what to say about them. I have long since stopped being surprised by either their words or their deeds.

From reply to debate in Lok Sabha on the Constitution (24th Amendment) Bill, September 2, 1970

The Government has examined all the constitutional and legal implications of this Bill. We have taken legal advice on the question of referring this matter to the Supreme Court. But the advice of the highest law officers was that the proposed Bill is constitutional and legally in order and that it is, therefore, not necessary to refer the matter to the Supreme Court.

Now, as I was saying, I have long since stopped being surprised by what some of my honourable friends opposite say and do.

When Shri Morarji Desai rose to lead the opposition to the Bill, the thought came to my mind of the Kauravas setting up Bhishma Pitamah to plead their case. It was his lot to give a moral facade to an indefensible case.

Shri Morarji gave rather a one-sided view. Other Members have also mentioned that negotiations with the princes did help us at that time. But, let us not forget that had the princes taken any other course at that time, the reaction of the people would have been very different, and I doubt if we would have been able to control the situation. Maybe, it would have created difficulties; I am sure it would have. But, perhaps, it would have solved some problems also.

Some point was made about Shri Y. B. Chavan having suddenly thought of the abolition of the privy purses as a political device. I do not remember now, but I do not think that Shri Chavan was a member of the Congress Working Committee in 1953, when this was first taken up there. I myself became a member in 1955, and there was hardly a year when this matter was not taken up and discussed. And year by year, almost month by month, the pressure from our party was growing that something should be done about it, long before the 1967 elections. So, either people do not know this or knowing it they deliberately want to distort facts.

Many points of view have been put forward, which are not in correct perspective. It was said, for instance, that the agreements and pacts with the rulers had been entered into before the Constitution came into force and that the Constitution only put a seal on those agreements and, therefore, although the constitutional sanctions may go the agreements would continue in force. Now, this view is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of these agreements. They are not contracts between individuals. They were political settlements which were followed by the political acts of the President in recognising the rulers under the Constitution. Some Hon. Members said that the President has the right to recognise or derecognise a ruler and that the merger agreements are thus dependent on the continued recognition by the President of a ruler as a ruler. It was suggested that the Government could have discontinued the privy purse without involving Parliament in a constitutional amendment bill. From the nature of the merger agreements, it was possible for the Government to do so.

However, Government preferred to bring about a change by the democratic method of discussion and ascertaining the collective will of the people as reflected in this House. Government's willingness to subject this proposal to a vote by the special majority required for a constitutional amendment reflects their desire to abide by the highest conventions of democratic processes.

Another criticism was of the omission of Articles 291 and 362 and Clause 22 of Article 366 and the retention of Article 363. I would not deal with this matter because, I think, Shri Chavan has dealt with it. It must be recognised that such settlement must be subject to the final arbitration of Parliament and not the courts and that is why the Constitution-makers decided to keep the agreements out of the courts.

A point was also made that the continuance of Article 363 would deny the rulers even the ordinary rights of a citizen. Surely this is a travesty of facts. The rulers have and will continue to have the same rights and remedies as ordinary citizens. Their recourse to courts is barred only in respect of the special privileges they acquired through a political settlement. Today, totally unjustified political motives have been imputed to this Bill. We have been charged that the decision to abolish privy purses and privileges was because some rulers had contested the elections against the Congress. It has also been said that we planned to take time to strike political bargains with the rulers in settling the transitional arrangements. All this will come up in the Bill for the transitional allowances to be brought before Parliament, and Hon. Members will have ample opportunity to speak about it in the House. The actual payment is supposed to be based on a multiple of the privy purse. I am sure they will realise that in such a principle, which we accepted, there will be no scope whatsoever for individual bargaining.

Now, much was said about heritage. I am also proud of the Indian heritage. But, as I said yesterday, we do not live in that heritage. Times change, everything in life is changing every minute, every second of the privy purse. I am sure they will realise that in such a principle, which have no place in contemporary life. Shortly before I got up, we were offered a high-level speech but I am afraid much of it did not strike me as high-level. If the Hon. Member will forgive me I thought that much of his speech was full of the diversionary tactics which he was attributing to the Government, because he listed various items, all of which have no relevance whatsoever to the matter in hand today.

We were told of special planes being despatched to Kerala. Earlier also, we have heard the story of planes going to other States for different purposes. I have still not been able to gather the information where the planes came from, who flew them, where they disappeared after their flights, and what problems were solved by their use.

I also believe that all Members should vote as they think is right to do. I wish that the princes and some of their friends had also stuck to that belief and had not tried to put pressures on some of our Members. It is not our wish to do that.

Much was said about the people who lived in the princely States. You will have noticed that the most bitter speeches that were made yesterday and today were those by individuals who had the chance or ill-fortune to live in princely States. It is those people who felt more bitter about the whole question. We who have not had that experience can afford to be generous. But even though I did not live in a princely State, I did have occasions to attend some of the meetings of the States' Peoples Conference. I know the deep feelings, the hurt, the atrocities and humiliations which were piled on our political workers in those days. We do not want to start recrimination against anybody. If there is to be such a debate, certainly we can have plenty to say. But I do not want to say it; this is not the occasion. In fact, I have gone out of my way to ignore that side of it and have tried to see the brighter side of the picture. I think that the least that could have been done was for the princes also to try not to hark back to the time about which much can be said on the other side as well.

Now, when we talk of heritage, does it mean we want the old feudal customs to continue, the old feudal methods of functioning? Have they been able to continue anywhere in the world? They have not. We do not want them. The people do not want them and they will see that they go. It is where there is the least education that you find there is most consideration for such old customs and so on. As education spreads, as consciousness of their rights awakens amongst the people, there is revolt against injustice and inequality. I do not think it is a thing to be proud of that you do not have such a revolt in your States, because it shows that the people there are not politically conscious; it shows the people do not know what their rights are.

There has also been talk about justice. Justice is a much misused word. I have asked before in this House: justice for whom? We do not want to do injustice even to one person or to two people or 200 and odd people. But as against them, there is the question of justice to some millions of people. I am not saying that the removal of the privy purses is going to solve the poverty problem or the unemployment problem or any of the other problems. We have not said it at any time, nor am I saying it now. But it is a step in a particular direction in which the country wants to go, and the country will go in spite of anybody. If we oppose the country in that, we also will be swept aside; I have no doubt about it.

The Hon. Member said much about political moves and so on, but what seems strange to us is that this is the second occasion when we have heard him applauding the speech made by the Hon. Member of

the CPI (Marxist). So, it is evident that politics make strange bedfellows. Our views are perfectly clear. It is not we who say that merely because a person is a Communist he is bad. We are against certain policies, we are against certain methods, we are against violence. But here is somebody who does believe that the mere word Communist is an abuse, and then he thinks it is not strange at all that he should get together with one of the extreme Communist parties, whether on this issue or the issue of Kerala elections or some other issue. I do not mind, I am just pointing this out. It is for him to decide whom he wants to be with. As I said, the question is not whether individual princes were good or bad, whether today they are good or bad. We are not concerned with their individual qualities, but it is a principle which is in question today. The members of the princely order look at the question from one angle; I must confess that we look at it from the opposite angle.

The Constitution-makers could not foresee all eventualities. We have had amendments to the Constitution before. We must make the Constitution such as will serve the aspirations and the needs of the Indian people. The only thing that matters is what is necessary for the welfare of the people of India. The Hon. Member knows that it is not just our party which has been anxious to bring this Bill here. Many other parties, who are not Communists, have been, and are supporting it.

As I said earlier, I think this is an important step. It is very strange to hear that some people feel that this is a step to destroy them. On the contrary, I think this is a step that could strengthen them because now they can make a life on their feet, not on the basis of what their forefathers did, not on the basis of money or something which is coming from the Government, but they can make a new life for themselves and, as I said, what sort of life it is, what sort of new heritage they give to future India is today in their hands.

The step we are going to take is an important step. In our segmented society, broken up by caste and creed, fragmented further by the concepts of hierarchy and graded privileges, a step, however small, which is directed towards the dissolution of vertical and horizontal division is a step in the direction of the democratisation of that society.

Personally I feel that this is of far greater significance than all the arid controversies garbed in high sounding phrases. That is why I was pained to hear a doctrine propounded here so violently in contradiction to some of the basic and essential tenets of India's national movement. The basic tenet of our national movement lay in asserting the sovereignty of the people of India, both of British India and of the Indian States as against the sovereignty of the Imperial

Crown and that of the princely order. The assertion of this principle amounts to fighting against the system and not against an individual.

So, in advocating the adoption of this Bill, there is no animus against individuals, for we are fighting for a principle; we are fighting to take the country in a particular direction.

As I said yesterday, the Bill is of historic significance. Let us walk in step with the times; let not the value of men be judged by their wealth or rank.

With these words, I commend the motion to this august House. I hope that the other motions will be rejected.

* * *

MY TASK TODAY is considerably lightened because of the Resolution passed unanimously by this august House, not the other House, but by this august House on the 19th December, 1969 asking the Government to take all legal and other steps for the abolition of the privy purses and privileges of the ex-rulers. I was also helped by a speech by another Member of Shri Mishra's party on that occasion or on another occasion in this House urging us to hurry up and bring forward this Bill. I think the word used was 'forthwith'. This Bill gives concrete shape to those sentiments. It seeks to omit Articles 291, 362 and Clause 22 of Article 366. The intention of the Government is to discontinue the privy purses, abolish or restrict the privileges and abolish the concept of rulership. This Bill provides an opportunity to Hon. Members to redeem their own Resolution. In the context of that Resolution, anything one says would be redundant and would be like preaching to the converted. I shall, therefore, desist from this superfluous exercise. The House knows the feelings of our people and their urge for greater equality. The compulsions of social change and the democratisation of our society were admirably expressed by many Hon. Members of this House on the previous occasion and the Bill before you today echoes the feelings which were then expressed. We are convinced that the indefinite continuance of hereditary titles and customary rights, special privileges and privy purses, without any relatable functions and responsibilities, is incompatible with the spirit of the modern age, the demands of the changed circumstances and the political and social evolution of the life of the nation along democratic lines. In the conduct of human affairs, there are always two broad points of view. There is the point of view which fixes on the past and on the desire to conserve all that is old and familiar. The other point of view recognizes what is good in the past heritage and tradition of a nation but refuses to be imprisoned or shackled down by them.

Moving the Constitution (24th Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha, September 4, 1970

It seeks to synthesise the best of the old with all that is worthwhile and enduring in the new. It recognizes that history is irreversible and change inevitable. Ours is the second point of view and, judging by the wide measure of support which the Bill has received in the other House, this view is happily shared by a majority of political parties and the overwhelming majority of the people of our great country. It has been our way to try to do things in a manner which is the least abrasive. Hence I tried to talk with the princes to find a solution which, without in any way compromising our stand or our commitment to our party and our people, would help to smoothen the path of change. Unfortunately, the sincere effort on our part was misinterpreted and nothing came of it.

It is not our intention to cause hardship to the ex-rulers or to injure their self-respect. In keeping with this point of view, the rulers were told and the President said in his opening Address to Parliament that Government would make transitional arrangements. Although these have not yet been worked out in detail, our broad approach is that the payment of these allowances to each ruler should be based on a multiple which would be higher for those receiving lower purse and lower for those receiving higher purses. The total payment would be such as to enable the rulers to adjust to the changed circumstances.

This Bill is the culmination of an important aspect of our freedom struggle. This House showed a sense of history in its resolution of the 19th December, 1969. I now invite it to rise to the occasion and to pass the Bill with a tremendous majority, if not unanimity.

* * *

MY REPLY SHOULD have been an opportunity to answer the major arguments raised in this debate, but in spite of what my Hon. friend opposite, Shri S. N. Mishra, has so graciously described as my minute observation, I was not able to discern any such major argument put forward against this Bill. We found the venerable Member, Shri Ruthnaswamy, of the Swatantra Party teaching us what socialism is. We found Shri Babubhai Chinai trying to interpret my own father to me. I think Hon. Members here and the people of Bombay know how ardent a follower he was of my father and my father's policies!

When one takes Shri Mishra's wayward rhetoric seriously, what his party said today is such a clear and blatant repudiation of what they have so openly professed only yesterday that I wonder whether they have elevated pointlessness into a programme. We have heard long quotations from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Those who have quoted

From reply to debate in Rajya Sabha on the Constitution (24th Amendment) Bill, September 5, 1970

them could have used the same quotations a little earlier, perhaps in the AICC meeting. It is quite some time since this resolution was passed in Delhi. It is true that when it was passed, I was not present. It is true that I was a little disturbed at its passing, not because I was against the resolution but, as Shri Mishra would say, at the manner of its passing.

Those who have since opposed it had many an opportunity to reopen the issue in the Working Committee and in many subsequent sessions of the AICC or the plenary sessions of the Congress. But it was not brought before these bodies for a very good reason, because they knew that if they brought it back, it would be passed again and over again. So now, just because there is a division in the party, to go back on their own commitments may be somebody's version of honesty or integrity but I do not think that is the way the world or the people of India will look at this matter. Now, somebody else also said that the wisdom of the Agreements was not questioned at that time. My Hon. friend, I think it was Shri Goswami, who said that he himself had questioned it. I certainly know that I questioned it, and the States' Peoples Conference in every State had questioned these Agreements. I know that in every province there were many who questioned the wisdom of these Agreements, and I can say that I was amongst those who questioned these Agreements. And most of the Youth Congress at that time had questioned this as indeed we questioned many other things that happened. I had also questioned the manner in which we kept the administrative system as I do question it even now.

There was a body of the Congress youth of which I was a member. Now, whether we had one name or they had something else added to the name, I do not know. But we certainly regarded ourselves as Congress youths. Whether there was a registered name or not is not the point here. The point is that the younger people of the Congress did exist, that they did meet in a separate body, apart from the AICC and other Congress bodies, and that I was a member of those groups. Surely, I know of the meetings I attended.

So these things were questioned then, but now we know that many more people question them, as we can see; at that moment we also wondered that perhaps this is the right way, we might think differently, the elders are proposing something. They know better. They have more experience. They think this is the right thing to do.

Having once expressed our views, we did not make an issue of it, or even broadcast it. But now that we look back at it, what is the view, what is the view not only of those of us who were involved then but of the many people who were not asked for their opinion or who were not involved in these questions then? This is the question before us today, and it concerns the nation. Well, it is the nation's desire that as things have changed we must change with the times. My Hon.

friend, Shri Raj Narain, never loses an opportunity to snipe at me, but this time I will say that there is some truth in what he said. And it is not he who is saying it; I have said it from the public platform on almost every occasion in every public meeting since our Bangalore session. I have said that it is not I who am showing a new light to the people, it is the people who are showing a new light to us. I have said on countless occasions that the time has come when we must follow the people's light. But why is it that we have this great division in our party? I think everybody knows why it really happened. Everybody knows that the seeds of it were there from the time of these Agreements and before. Everybody knows that there was a division in the thinking of the party. There was one section which wanted socialism, which wanted major changes, and there was another section which thought that independent India could grow and prosper within the old structure. There was that division, and it does not matter who gets up and says that it was not there. They cannot change the fact. This is what came to the fore in our party, in our times. It does not mean that we can do some magic, or that by using the word 'socialism' we think we can change everything. We know we cannot and we have said so, but we do know that we have made a beginning. We do know that we have taken steps which will make it difficult for anybody to reverse the trend, no matter who runs the Government tomorrow, and that is my concern. It is not my concern that I shall stay in power or be the Prime Minister. Had that been my concern, I would not have taken the number of risks which I have taken. But why am I taking these risks? It is because I know that each one of these steps, once taken, will be irreversible, no matter what happens, and that is the important fact. Nobody is going to change what we do here.

I was saying that these steps have taken the country in a particular direction and this direction cannot now be reversed. I will give one small example of this. Our Hon. Member from the Jan Sangh, even he who is opposed to the whole idea behind the things which we want to do, the direction in which we want to take the country, had to say here: We have no fascination for the princely order. He could not get up here and say: I support the princely order.

Our good friends, the Syndicate group, whether they are supporting the abolition or not, could not get up and say: We will oppose the Bill because we are opposed to the concept of the Bill. They do not have that courage. I would have admired them if, wanting to go back on their policy, they had got up and said: We oppose this Bill. But, no. They want to please the princes and they want to please the people. You can fool some people for some time, but not all the people all the time.

As far as I am concerned, I have only one reply, that I am prepared for the people to judge. When the people say 'we do not want you',

I will very gladly resign. I do not believe in the methods used by the Jan Sangh. I do not believe in rioting to win a free election. We are prepared to stand in front of the people with all our programmes, all our deeds. My friend, Shri Niren Ghosh, said, as if he was discovering some great dark buried secret, that transitional allowances are being made. Did not the President make this announcement in his opening Address to Parliament? Did I not write openly to the princes? Did I not say it in the other House that we have done nothing in secret? We have done nothing in such a manner. Everything we have done and everything we stand for is out in the open before the people of India and before this House. In this connection, I would also like to say that again my friend, Shri Mishra, said: "What was the necessity of bringing this to the House? The Government could have done it on its own." Certainly the Government could, and the Government still can do it on their own. There is nothing to stop it. But we think in a democracy it is better to bring this to Parliament. We think that it is better to see that the majority is behind us. This we have now proved to the country.

Now the question was what would happen if the princes had not signed the Agreements. Mr. Chairman, is there any doubt about it as to what would have happened? In free India if they had not signed the Agreement, would not the Government have used all its strength to do something about it, and would not all the people have risen to do something about it? Certainly there would have been bloodshed, certainly there would have been disturbances. But nobody can say that the princely states would have continued as they were continuing. I was surprised to hear the use of the word 'sovereignty' in this connection. What does it mean? Can anybody in this House say that they were sovereign under the British? What right did they assert except the right of making money? Did one of them go against the British Government in the smallest possible thing? How can they use this word in this connection and demean the word 'sovereignty'? Let us see the reality of the situation. Are we living in 1970 or are we living in 1870? Some things have happened in the world, not only in our country but all over the world. I am not concerned with the quality of the princes. I know that like all men some were good, some indifferent, some have even been bad, some have neglected their people, some have done good work for their States like education, health measures, roads, parks, and so on. I am not against the princes at all. I want to assure the Hon. House that this Bill is not directed against the princes individually or even as a group. This Bill is against a system. We are against the feudal system. It is not just something that has come to our heads today. This was the whole point of the freedom struggle. The question was not merely that we drive out the foreign government. It was that within the country all such

feudal structures should be changed. If we have not been able to change them, I certainly say it was our mistake. I have no doubt about it. It was our mistake that for so many years we have not been able to change the feudal structure. It is not only a question of princes. That happens very much lower down the line also. That is why there is that treatment of the Harijans. It is the same attitude of mind that one man is superior to another man. Why? Because he has money, he has rank. Do we subscribe to this theory?

The ICS people will also be dealt with. It does not mean that if you have not dealt with all you cannot deal with one thing. This is a new argument that we have heard today from some of the gentlemen opposite. If you cannot do the journey in one leap, then you cannot do the first phase also. Therefore, before there was the aeroplane nobody would have gone to any place. As I was saying, I hold no animus against the princes. That is why we tried to talk to them. As I made it clear in my opening remarks, I was not going against our commitment to this House or to commitment to our party. But we did feel that if we could come to some agreement, it would smoothen the path, it would make the change easier. Perhaps, they thought that by prolonging the agony of negotiations, the Bill would be postponed, although all along I had said that I wanted to talk, but we were committed to bringing the Bill in this session. This was not kept in doubt at any meeting, in any session. I have no hesitation in saying that if this matter has come in this way, it is because of those amongst the princes who are known as the hardliners, those who wanted to hang on more tightly to whatever they had. Had those who were willing to talk been given their way, some understanding could have been reached in a much more graceful manner. This is not a new thing.

Sir, everywhere when something new happens, the people concerned try to hang on to the old. But nowhere have they been able to resist the new. The princes are very high-up people. The motor-car came in England. Perhaps you will remember that those people, who were concerned with horses and horse-carriages and everything that had to do with them, said that the motor-car should not be allowed. They were in danger. Many people helped them, the British M.P.'s helped them. But the wise amongst those people said, "No. This thing is here. We cannot stop the car. Let us learn something about it. Let us become mechanics. Let us become drivers." They took that path and they suddenly got new opportunities, new jobs, and they became high in the new hierarchy. And those who said they will have only the horse-carriages were little by little made jobless and finished off. This is the way of the world. It is not the way that I am advocating. It is the way of the world from time immemorial. The old has to give way to the new. And only those amongst the old who adapt themselves can find a place amongst them.

It is not I or any group who is removing them. These are the forces of history that march and make these changes.

Pushpabenji, in her usual quiet and effective manner, suggested that there should not be only one-sided criticism, that there should be a balanced appraisal. How I wish that she could have given that advice to some of her party members who were speaking about us!

Incidentally, Sir, I was deeply shocked to hear from the opposite side—I do not remember which party—that the princes are being brought down to the level of ordinary citizens. I might say that nobody should use a phrase like this. What can be better than being a citizen of this great country of India? Does a person become greater because he is called His Highness? This is the mentality that we are fighting and which we will continue to fight while it exists in any corner of India. And this is what we endeavoured to fight during the freedom struggle.

Now I come to Shri Raj Narain's amendment, the SSP amendment. Several other Members have also urged that no compensation should be paid to the princes on the abolition of their privy purses. Now, it is our opinion and the legal opinion also that the privy purse is not a property and thus there is no question whatsoever of paying any compensation. However, there is the human aspect. I do not think it would be fair to put an abrupt end to the payment of the privy purses without providing some means for the families and the dependents of these former rulers to adjust to this new situation. And it is in that light that the transitional allowances should be viewed. The same holds good for the date, *i.e.* the 15th October, when it comes into effect.

Now, Sir, as I said earlier, this Bill is not in any way against the princes. On the other hand, I would very humbly suggest that I think it is in their interest, because in a free country, I think it is the duty of every man and woman to stand on his or her feet, by his or her own merit. This is the great opportunity which we are giving to them. They are not poor people, nor do we wish to make them poor. They have great advantage of having had the best of education. We want that education to be used for the welfare of their own people and their own country. I think, Sir, as I have said on an earlier occasion, there can be no greater gift to anybody than this, that they use their energy, their wealth, their talents for the good of the nation. This is our intention in this Bill. So, I hope that those Hon. Members who are making an excuse that merely because they do not like the manner of it, therefore, they would rather defeat and wipe off the whole Bill, will reconsider the matter and will vote at least for the first phase. About what they do in the next phase, of course, it will be debated all over again.

Now, one point which was constantly made was that we have delayed bringing the question of allowances here merely because we want to

do something underhand. Sir, this is very unworthy of the Members who have made such a remark, because whatever allowances are made, the matter will come before the House, and again it will be before the Hon. Members to accept or to reject, and there will no doubt be a full and frank debate. I hope that the Hon. Members from the SSP will, therefore, withdraw their amendments, since I have made it clear that it is not compensation which we are giving. Now, Sir, it was understandable that so many of the speeches should be concerned with the past. But, Sir, this Bill is opening one of the gates towards a more egalitarian future for our people. Sir, I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

Seeking a Fresh Mandate

THERE COMES A time in the life of a nation when the Government of the day has to take an unusual step to cut through difficulties in order to solve the pressing problems with which the country is beset. The present is such a time. Therefore, on the advice of the Council of Ministers, the President has dissolved the Lok Sabha before its full term. In a parliamentary democracy this is not unusual, but in India it has happened for the first time.

Why did we do this, when it is conceded on all sides that our Government could have continued in power for another 14 months?

It is because we are concerned not merely with remaining in power, but with using that power to ensure a better life to the vast majority of our people and to satisfy their aspirations for a just social order. In the present situation, we feel we cannot go ahead with our proclaimed programme and keep our pledges to our people.

In the years since Independence, the nation has many achievements to its credit—vast and complex industrial enterprises, agrarian reforms, including the abolition of the zamindari system, mass education, including substantial expansion of university and technical education, major social reforms and advance in many other spheres, particularly in science and technology.

But despite this progress, many problems still await solution. Millions live in backwardness and poverty in towns and countryside. Justice—social, economic and political—which is the basis of our Constitution, is yet a goal to be fought for and attained. Our people are rightly impatient in their ardent desire for a speedier and more resolute advance towards this goal.

Broadcast on the dissolution of Lok Sabha, December 27, 1970

Our recent political initiatives reflect this urge. The decision to nationalise the banks, the setting up of the Monopolies Commission and the attempts to abolish privy purses were welcomed by large masses of people throughout the country.

These attempts to accelerate the pace of social and economic reforms have naturally roused the opposition of vested interests. Reactionary forces have not hesitated to obstruct in every possible way the proper implementation of these urgent and vitally necessary measures.

The present political situation has set in motion a process of rethinking on major political issues within every political party.

With the division in the Congress, we lost our party majority although throughout we retained the confidence of Parliament. The amendments to the Constitution designed to pave the way to abolish privy purses and princely privileges were lost by a fraction of a vote in the Rajya Sabha. The Presidential Order derecognising the princes has been struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional.

Economic difficulties and the growing impatience of the people are being exploited by political elements. Violent activities are being organised by extremists. Reactionary groups are arousing communal passions and trying to divide our people. This has often led to a breakdown of law and order and the dislocation of normal life, causing suffering to our people. The challenges posed by the present critical situation can be met only by the proper and effective implementation of our secular socialist policies and programmes through democratic processes.

Time will not wait for us. The millions who demand food, shelter and jobs are pressing for action.

Power in a democracy resides with the people. That is why we have decided to go to our people and to seek a fresh mandate from them.

We hope that the elections will be completed in time for the new Lok Sabha to assemble in March 1971, well before the end of the current financial year.

The old year is ending. I wish you—each one of you—a happy New Year, a year of renewed hope and common endeavour to realise the great goals, which we have set for ourselves.

Mid-Term Poll

QUESTION : Now that you have dissolved Parliament and you are no longer answerable to any democratic institution, will your Government have any right to announce any major policy during the period preceding the mid-term poll? What is the constitutional position? Are you functioning as a caretaker Government or a Government as it was prior to dissolution, capable of taking major decisions?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are functioning as a full Government that had the confidence of Parliament before Parliament was dissolved. There is no question of not being answerable to a democratic institution. This happens in every country in the midst of elections. It is the most peculiar question, if I may say so.

QUESTION : It has been repeatedly held that there would not be another mid-term poll in West Bengal until conditions were created in which people could go about freely and exercise their franchise without intimidation. As the Centre is now directly responsible for the administration of the State, do you think that conditions are not sufficiently normal to allow free and fair elections there? Secondly, what is your assessment as the leader of the ruling party about the chances of the Congress, both for Parliament and for the West Bengal State Assembly?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is a valid question and a difficult one because it is true that conditions in West Bengal are not normal. I can only say if elections are held, then every posisble measure will be taken to see that they are as fair as possible.

QUESTION : I would like to know what really prompted you to go for this mid-term poll and why did you take the decision in the dramatic manner that you did?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think it was specially dramatic. I am afraid the press is rather dramatic-minded here. Many such decisions are taken much more suddenly in other countries than they are in India. In India this has been discussed over quite a long period of time.

QUESTION : Many people regard you as a symbol of democracy, progress and healthy politics. What do you think about having either a national Government of all the political parties at the Centre or President's rule till the elections are over and a new Government takes over?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There are clearly defined constitutional rules about the Government continuing while elections are being held. There is no reason why they should be changed just in this country.

From replies to questions at a Press Conference, New Delhi, December 29, 1970

Your second question, I believe, was whether there should be a national Government. Now, what does a Government do? A Government is presumably there not to occupy certain chairs, but to implement certain policies. Therefore, a Government that holds together could be only of those people who subscribe fully to particular policies. If they did, there would be no reason for them to be in different parties.

QUESTION : Till the elections are over and a new Government takes over in a period of two months ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I also mentioned those periods. There is no reason why a Government should resign and it doesn't in any country.

QUESTION : I crave your indulgence to two questions. The first one is : In the event of any of the State Governments opting for a mid-term poll, we expect the Governors concerned to be guided by the views of the Chief Ministers concerned, or do you expect the Governors to seek the assistance or rather the advice of the Attorney General ? The second question is : Have you decided which are the like-minded parties ? If so, is the DMK one of them ? If it is, does this like-mindedness extend to the language policy which the DMK is attempting to pursue in Tamil Nadu against the wishes of the people of Tamil Nadu ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is very difficult to compare with a party which is a regional party. It is quite a different situation with regard to a national party. My views about the language are very well known. I do not think I have to explain all over again to the press here. As far as the State Governments or State Chief Ministers are concerned, I have not gone into the legal aspect of this question and it just has not struck me. I think it depends upon the Chief Minister so far as I know. As I said, it depends on the legal opinion.

QUESTION : Do you intend to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in Singapore ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : So far my plan stands, but I do not know what will happen, whether I will go or not, it just depends.

QUESTION : May I ask you what are the major issues on which you are going to campaign in the mid-term elections ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think the people of India know those issues very well indeed. We have been thrashing them out for the last year and a half.

QUESTION : You have said in your speech that privy purses and certain other economic reforms were among the factors that had prompted you to opt for the dissolution of Parliament. May I ask what difference will it make in the new Parliament ? Which steps do you want to take ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I did not say that this was the reason for the poll. I just stated as a matter of fact that we have not been able to implement these things. I did not say that was the reason for the poll. I think that although the policies are clear, all the Opposition parties and much of the press have been saying all along that we should seek a fresh mandate. We just decided to take their advice after all.

QUESTION : There are reports from the State capitals also showing that some of the Chief Ministers, including some belonging to your party, are under pressure to dissolve the local assemblies there and hold mid-term polls simultaneously. Has any of the Chief Ministers spoken to you formally or informally ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think any of our governments are going to be dissolved.

QUESTION : Are you confident that you will still be the Prime Minister of India at the end of March next year ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, anything is possible in the world; but I certainly hope so.

QUESTION : In your broadcast you said that vested interests and reactionary forces were obstructing socio-economic programme chalked out by the Government. Can one presume that fight against these forces will be the main plank of the election struggle of the Congress ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think so, yes.

QUESTION : The General Secretary of your party is reported to have said that the party will have to make certain adjustments with like-minded parties. Would you like to explain which are the like-minded parties and what is the approach of your party *vis-a-vis* communal organisations ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our attitude towards communal organisations is very clear and has been very clear. We are not for any communal type of activity, propaganda or programme. If you are referring to the Muslim League, you should be honest enough to say so. As I have said before, the Muslim League is a communal organisation, but the way to meet the problem of minorities or the threat posed by communal organisations is to try and solve some of the genuine grievances of the minorities.

QUESTION : What about the prospects of electoral understanding ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think there is any such proposal before us.

QUESTION : Some of the Opposition parties have made a definite charge that you have decided to dissolve this Parliament because there will be heavy taxation in this budget and you did not want to put heavy taxation and go for a full-term election. After getting this fresh mandate, do you think that you will be able to control the economic crisis ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that election is going to make any difference to prices or to the budget and I am certainly not in a position to comment on the budget which has not even begun to be thought of. So far as the prices are concerned, we are trying to control them to the extent possible. It is a complicated situation. So far as foodgrains are concerned the prices have risen only marginally. And I think all of you are aware of the reasons for the rise which is the shortage of edible oil and so on. But I do not think that has anything to do with the elections. And the people who say these things say many other things which, over the last year, have gradually turned out to be wrong.

QUESTION : Will you get an absolute majority or will your party be the largest single majority party ? How do you propose to have your alliance and adjustments to ensure that there is one candidate on behalf of the Congress(R) and the like-minded parties for each constituency ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think the question of like-minded parties comes here. Naturally we would like as many people to support us as possible. So far as the prophesying is concerned, you have met me on the eve of other elections and, as you know, I never go in for any kind of prophesying.

QUESTION : In case you fail to get a clear majority in the polls, what are you going to do ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I do not think I can comment on a situation which has not arisen yet.

QUESTION : The Congress split took place in November 1969, and this demand was made even then that you should seek a fresh mandate. What prompted you in December 1970 to seek a fresh mandate from the people, keeping also in view that as far as the Privy Purses Bill was concerned, it was adopted by the Lok Sabha ? Secondly, do you propose to have any alliance or adjustments with any party at the Central level ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : If I can answer the second question first. So far as I know, there is no such proposal. The other question, I do not think that one just decides when to go for elections. Why did we not go then ? Why do we go now ? I do not know if it was a good thing to go then or it is a good thing now. All you can say is that it is a little late, but it does not become a wrong thing for that.

QUESTION : Do you propose to contest all the 520 seats ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, I think so.

QUESTION : When the time comes to give the tickets to the various candidates, would your party give tickets to sitting members, who are now sitting with the so-called Congress Opposition ? And secondly, what is your expectation regarding the performance of the Congress Opposition in these elections ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I said, I do not prophesy before an election. I have not quite understood you. Did you say we would adopt Members of the Opposition as our candidates ? That sounds a bit strange. Doesn't it ?

QUESTION : There has been some movement of people between the New Congress and the Old Congress and I wonder whether at this stage you would welcome back to your party some people who are still nominally in the Congress Opposition.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it is not my desire to disrupt any party, but if any of our old comrades feel that they have a greater belief in what we stand for—and indeed they have also pledged themselves to these ideals earlier—or, if they want to come back to their old programmes, they are certainly welcome.

QUESTION : You said that people already know the issues on which you are fighting the election. Do these include major constitutional amendments to push through your socialist policies ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think obviously they do because, as I have said on numerous occasions, the law or the Constitution is there to protect the people's rights. When there is a conflict between a few people and a mass of people, some way has to be found to resolve it. You just cannot say that we cannot do anything for the larger number of people. Some way has to be found. We want to find a democratic and constitutional way.

QUESTION : Do you think after this election Government would want to amend the Constitution ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think so. No.

We want some democratic way of resolving this conflict. What you have in mind is that probably the Constitution may have to be changed. What did you have in mind ? I couldn't follow exactly what you meant by this.

If the Constitution needs to be changed, then certainly that has to be explored and ways found to change it. But it is a matter which has to

be gone into in some depth because of the view the Supreme Court has taken. So, I do not think I can comment on it here. But I want to be clear that we are not in favour of removing all the fundamental rights nor are we even against the right to property, but we do believe in having a certain ceiling on property, whether urban or rural.

QUESTION : Other political parties have been supporting the Government on all issues, whether of the Right or Left. In regard to major reforms that you wanted to carry out, could you identify which political party has raised what objection ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that I can go into an analysis of all the political parties here but certainly it has been difficult to put through these things specially because not all the Opposition is co-operative. By "co-operative" I do not mean that they should necessarily support what the Government says but they sometimes take an attitude where they don't even want to discuss things.

QUESTION : According to the Opposition, your broadcast speech on television and radio was a political speech and they want an equal time. Do you foresee in this election campaign that All India Radio will be open to the Opposition to make political speeches ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, mine was not a political speech at all. I was exceedingly careful not to say anything which could be counted as party propaganda. As far as the other main part of your question is concerned, it has been debated and we just could not get an agreement on the subject.

QUESTION : In the Supreme Court judgments on the Golak Nath case and on bank nationalisation it has been found, or at least in some quarters it is argued, that only a new Constituent Assembly can draft a new Constitution which will sustain such progressive legislation. Apparently there is a lacuna in the Constitution regarding convening a Constituent Assembly. Has this been examined by the Government and, if so, what are the findings of the Government ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As you said, there is no provision for it.

QUESTION : You said one of the main planks of your campaign would be against vested interests. Do you envisage further nationalisation as one of the methods to help the people ? And if so, what kind of things would you have in mind ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, we don't have any nationalisation plans and when we say that it is against vested interests, I want to make it clear that we are not against any one group or section of the people. But when in a country like India, there is so much poverty and so much

disparity and inequality, there can be stability only if an effort is made to reduce this inequality and disparity. I think everybody, even the poorest, realises that we cannot do away with that altogether in a short time, but I think if we can show that we are going in a direction where there will be greater equality, people will be patient. I do not think that any administration can take a different direction.

QUESTION : There is a great resentment in Opposition benches for all your important decisions like the dissolution of Parliament and the privy purses. All these things generally come in the night. Do you get a *mahurat* from a *jyotishi* or you do it on your own ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : If you take the trouble to read some modern books, you will find that most decisions everywhere are taken in the evening so that they catch the morning press. I think my life is clear enough, that I have fought superstition since I was a small child and certainly I am not going to go back at this age.

QUESTION : Keeping in view the need of the time that has forced us to change the Constitution many times, is it not possible to go straight away for a new Constituent Assembly instead of going for an election ? Election might not help you, the way you want to change the country. It might assist you if you go for a Constituent Assembly. Is it possible for you to do it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no provision for a Constituent Assembly in our Constitution and the question you asked is whether election helps. It is not whether it helps or not. But in a democracy it is the only way of finding out what the country wants.

QUESTION : In view of the unhappy experience of our country in the past election, would you consider issuing an appeal generally to all the candidates in general and your party candidates in particular that they should keep within the strict limits of the permissible election expenses ? Secondly, in the past the united Congress organisation had been receiving massive financial support from the business community. Do you expect your party to continue to receive the same support ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I do not know what I expect. I can only say we have not received it so far.

QUESTION : What measures do you propose to take to reduce the flow and influence of foreign funds during this election ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This matter has been discussed with the Opposition parties and in Parliament. It is a very sad state of affairs if such things happen and certainly Government should be vigilant to see that it does not happen.

QUESTION : Do you visualise any prospect of the two Congress parties coming together before or after the Lok Sabha election ? Secondly, would you like to identify the reactionary forces as far as the present political parties are concerned ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is pretty well known who stands on which side and who has voted for what programme.

So far as the coming together is concerned, this question has been asked many times and the answer is : What is the aim ? Is the aim merely coming together or to do something and go in a particular direction ? If the aim, like ours, is to go in a particular direction, we welcome everybody who goes in that direction and who believes in the methods we use. We do not believe in violence and other similar things; one may agree on a programme but may differ on that matter, *i.e.*, the methods.

QUESTION : Besides measures such as bank nationalisation, your ideas on privileges and princes' purses would help promote equality. How would you raise massive resources that you require to bring in social justice ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : That is what our Five Year Plan is supposed to do. The whole Plan is there to raise resources and then to deploy them in such a way that there is greater development, greater production which, in turn, is supposed to raise more resources and create employment and so on.

QUESTION : Apart from the Five Year Plans, will the Congress Party put up before people a specific plan and a target date for solving the unemployment problem ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No problem can be solved overnight, and certainly not a problem as complex as unemployment or under-employment. In the last months we have made several statements. We have outlined certain programmes and projects which can help reduce unemployment. Firstly, the Plan itself. All development works provide employment. But over and above this, we have got special plans. There are plans to help young people to get self-employed. Then there are plans for drought areas, for the marginal farmer, for the farmer with dry land, and so on. There are many such projects. And then we took a decision at our last Congress session to provide minimum employment to, say, about a thousand persons per district. Now that programme is being worked out and I hope it can be implemented very soon, perhaps by April.

QUESTION : Your party is contesting all the 520 seats of the Lok Sabha. Would you feel inclined to leave some seats which are now held by

reactionary Opposition to be fought by some Independents and progressive elements?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I cannot say that I have gone through and looked at all the plans, and we have not made up our list of candidates or anything yet.

QUESTION: After dissolution of Parliament, all powers are vested in the President. You are responsible to the President. Are your colleagues responsible to you or to the President? Since after the dissolution of Parliament your colleagues cease to be Members of Parliament, what is their position and what is their status?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Their status is exactly as it was before. They are Ministers of the Government of India.

QUESTION: In other words, it is not a caretaker Government.

THE PRIME MINISTER: It certainly is not a caretaker Government.

QUESTION: You told us that no arrangement has been possible with regard to broadcast on the radio by various political parties. This press conference, I take it, will be broadcast by radio. Will it be possible for the PIO to arrange similar press conferences with leaders of other parties in Parliament so that they may at least be equated with the leader of the Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think it is the Election Commissioner who goes into these things.

QUESTION: One of the reasons why you have decided to go to the people is that you do not want or you want to get rid of the present position in which the party in Government is dependent for its existence on certain elements like the Communists, Socialists and regional groups.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Your point is that we do not want to be dependent on them.

QUESTION: That is one of the reasons.

THE PRIME MINISTER: That is a negative way of putting it. The positive way is we would like to have a bigger majority.

QUESTION: Are you addressing this press conference as Prime Minister or as leader of a party?

THE PRIME MINISTER: As Prime Minister.

QUESTION: Suppose you win sufficient majority, what will be your first major steps in Parliament?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I do not think I can announce steps here.

QUESTION : There have been reports that Pakistan has been massing its forces on the Kashmir border. Is it true ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think there is any massing of forces.

QUESTION : Do you visualise the fall of S.V.D. Governments in Bihar and U.P. before the poll day ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You will learn these things through the press.

QUESTION : By next April, India and very likely Pakistan too, will have a new Government. Don't you think that formation of freshly elected governments with fresh mandates in both the countries might help bring about a new rapproachement for the first time between the two countries ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have always stood for normalisation of relations. We will be very glad if some kind of normalisation can take place. I do not think it is specially dependent on our elections.

QUESTION : What is the age group of your party candidates ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have not drawn up the list as I said a little while ago.

QUESTION : Are you confident that the poll will be peaceful and there will be no major untoward incident, particularly in West Bengal ? What special measures are being taken by your Government to see that everything goes well ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I said earlier that every possible precaution will be taken, but there is no doubt that it is not an easy situation there.

QUESTION : In a fortnight's time you would be meeting Prime Minister Heath of Great Britain. Do you think the plans of his Government to sell arms to South Africa endanger the future of the Commonwealth ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, it does, because a large number of countries in the Commonwealth have strong views about it.

QUESTION : Do you propose to take any steps to implement the 10-point programme before the elections, for instance, nationalisation of general insurance or such other measures ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : When one plans to nationalise something, one does not announce it at a press conference.

QUESTION : A short while ago there was a meeting of the Opposition leaders and there they said that the Prime Minister is changing her constituency from Rai Bareilly to Gurgaon.

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, I am not.

QUESTION : Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad is joining your party. It means that you have already lost Jammu and Kashmir.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Certainly not lost.

QUESTION : Do you think that there was any difficulty from the Plebiscite Front and also because of the State Government facing certain difficulties in enforcing certain restrictions on the Plebiscite Front regarding contesting elections ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not a question of difficulty. It is a question of a party being against certain basic matters in the Constitution. If they stand for secession of any part of India, then it is not just a difficulty. It is a very serious thing.

QUESTION : As I understood your Christmas-eve broadcast, you have put the issue before the nation straight—socialism *vs.* reaction. I take it that you seem to be depriving the other socialist parties of their main plank. Was that your intention ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No. It was not.

QUESTION : Would you kindly say something on elections in Pakistan because two types of forces have come up there : Pro-Indian forces in East Pakistan and anti-Indian forces in West Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think I should comment on an internal matter of another country and we have to see how it settles and what policies they pursue.

QUESTION : In your earlier replies you seemingly cast a doubt on the holding of elections in West Bengal. You said : 'If elections were held in West Bengal'. Would that be a right interpretation ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I did say 'if' because we are going into the matter.

QUESTION : In view of the present law and order situation in some parts of the country is it intended to provide any security for the protection of the candidates ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We will have to if the candidates want it and if we think it necessary.

QUESTION : On the advice of the candidates ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it depends on the situation. I mean, if we feel or some other persons draw our attention to any such danger, then I think security should be provided.

QUESTION : Last month, you introduced a certain radical overhaul of the Secretariat. But how is it that that bastion of the establishment of Finance Ministry is still unaffected ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Finance Ministry had some changes earlier.

QUESTION : You have been having long talks with the leaders from Telengana. I understand that Dr. Chenna Reddy has been summoned by you for further talks. Have you got any particular formula which you think could solve the problem ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Do you not think that I should discuss it with them first ?

QUESTION : Has the Government made any special study of the Naxalites, their sources of money and inspiration and their ideology, etc. ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Some sources of inspiration are quite clear. It is difficult to say whether they get any money from outside. The whole movement is rather a mixed up one, because a lot of people are taking cover of Naxalites who may not be politically motivated.

QUESTION : You have been talking about the difficulties of Muslims and there are certain difficulties, *e.g.*, position of Urdu, communal riots. Would you spell out what your Government would like to do to remove those difficulties ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : So far as Urdu is concerned, I think something should be done because it is a language not only of Muslims but also of a large number of people in North India. As perhaps you know very well, even the entire controversy between Punjabi and Hindi was being conducted in Urdu from both the sides. So I think the language should be encouraged and, as provided for in our Constitution, provision to teach it should be made wherever people want to learn it.

There are certain other grievances which are specific to them. But many points are common to all communities, *e.g.*, there is unemployment amongst all communities. So the problem has to be viewed from both aspects. Some problems are specific to Muslims, while other problems are specific to other people, like backward people, Harijans and Christians and so on. So all genuine grievances must be tackled.

QUESTION : What about Muslim University at Aligarh ? There has been an agitation among the Muslims that the special character of the Muslim University of Aligarh is sought to be changed or it is being made secular. That constitutes a major grievance of North Indian Muslims today.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is true that the Aligarh University was established specially by the minority community. But, I think it is in the interest of the minority community that certain changes should also take place and we must find a balance between the two. I do not think it is too difficult to find it because it is not at all a question between Hindus and Muslims. Here it is a question also between progressive younger Muslims and so on. It is more complicated than it seems on the surface but we should certainly try to evolve some formula which will satisfy the people there and I do not think it is so difficult.

QUESTION : You have asserted that you are not a caretaker Government but a regular Government. How would you legislate ? Would you legislate through ordinances ? And if so, would these have to be ratified by the new Parliament after the elections ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think although we are not a caretaker Government, normally when you are on the eve of elections, you do not issue ordinances unless it is absolutely necessary. If such an occasion arises, certainly it has to be ratified by Parliament.

QUESTION : What in your opinion was the positive achievement of your party after this split on the basis of which you can take a fresh mandate from the people ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There are very many positive achievements. The economy is in a far better shape today than it was. Although the number of the unemployed is great, unemployment has been reduced. Employment has gone up by something like 2.5 per cent over the last year or even the two years previous to that. And then this nationalisation of banks, for instance, has opened out opportunities for giving loans and credit to many sections of the people who did not get it before. Obviously everybody cannot get a loan. Sometimes a complaint is made that so and so has not got it, but a very large number have got it. Young unemployed people and many other groups have also taken advantage of this in some cases and production has also gone up.

QUESTION : In the previous General Election, Harijans were prevented from casting their votes. What arrangements do you propose to make this time so that they could vote freely ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is true they experienced some difficulty. Arrangements will have to be made so that they as well as others could vote freely.

QUESTION : What is the latest position about princes ? Would they continue to get purses and fight the elections and would the Government watch helplessly ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously since the Supreme Court has said they should get the purses, they will presumably get them.

QUESTION : One of the achievements you mentioned is the bank nationalisation—but after that certain other measures have been proposed, for instance, ceiling on urban property, and Shri Chavan said in the Patna session that he was consulting the Chief Ministers to bring about a legislation. Has any progress been made in this respect?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As you know, this is a State subject. A certain amount of ceiling has already come about in the Budget which I had presented. The taxation there on property does constitute some kind of a ceiling. But with regard to the other thing, we are in touch with State Governments and so on.

QUESTION : You talked about vested interests. Are you aware of them in your own party and would you eliminate them while nominating candidates for the next elections?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The question is who is prepared to go along with a particular programme. If there are certain measures, radical measures, they affect everybody, including those who are in the party, and if they support them, it means they are for them.

QUESTION : You said that the economy is in a far better shape today than it was perhaps one or two years ago. But, as we know, exports are up by only 3 or 4 per cent instead of 7 per cent, industrial production is only 4 or 5 per cent higher instead of 8 or 9 per cent, engineering goods production has gone down, prices have gone up and they still continue to rise; unemployment, of course, you know what the situation is, our income is not going up; and you yourself agreed that the Budget situation is very difficult...

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am very sorry I did not say the Budget situation is very difficult. Don't put words in my mouth. The economy today is much better than it has been. We have been through an exceedingly dark patch after the drought and I think we are emerging out of it. The figures of industrial development which you mention are not final. They are only interim and they do not take into account the small-scale industries and many other factors. Nobody is saying that the situation is ideal but we are emerging out of a dark period. It is true that there are other difficulties such as investment is not what it should be and I think, that is very deliberate. It is not because of anything wrong with the investment climate which, as everybody says, is excellent but because deliberately they do not want to invest. These are difficulties which we face and we are going to face them and come through.

QUESTION : You have just now listed bank nationalisation as one of the main achievements of the party headed by Shri Jagjivan Ram. Are you aware that after bank nationalisation, there is a very long waiting for cashing of a cheque. Upcountry cheques which were being encashed after seven days now take one month for encashment. Do you also own this as part of the achievement ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You can look at a thing any way you like, but obviously if more people go to a bank, more service is needed. Sometimes there are delays but it is a very wrong way of looking at it. There may be certain deterioration in some places but one can find that anywhere. Can you tell me any one industry where it is not ? When there is a major changeover it is a difficult period for that project or institution but I cannot accept the delay as a general rule. The banks are certainly providing service to many many people who did not get it before and I think that counteracts any little extra time which you may have to spend there.

QUESTION : The representatives of the princes met you after the Supreme Court verdict. Do you expect that as a result the problem of their privileges and privy purses would be solved ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is difficult to say now because privileges is a separate issue. Some issues fall under the purview of the Supreme Court while others do not.

QUESTION : Will your party seek election loans from nationalised banks ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Thank you for the suggestion. I never thought of it before.

QUESTION : Do you agree with the view that defections have fouled public life, undermined stability and brought democratic institutions into ridicule ? If the answer is 'yes', and since you say you are a regular Government, would you be willing to issue an ordinance to end defections in the new Parliament so that the system can be put back on the rails ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Perhaps you know that there was a proposal to bring a bill against defectors and we wanted to rush it through in the last Parliament but although the Opposition parties said that was a good thing, they raised certain other quite impossible conditions. So, it could not be done.

QUESTION : Is this poll indicative of any solution of the border dispute between Mysore and Maharashtra ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I doubt it.

QUESTION : What prompted you to place the report of the Mahajan Commission on the Table of the Lok Sabha just when you knew the House was dying?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Firstly, the decision to dissolve Parliament had not been taken or even discussed at that point. Secondly, I just realised it had not been placed on the Table of the House, I thought it had been. And that is what the Mysore Government had been earlier wanting us to do.

QUESTION : Is the decision left to the Parliament or the Centre itself will take it?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The final decision has to be taken by the Government. Even the States' Reorganisation Commission report was first placed for consideration before the House and the Government took its view only afterwards.

QUESTION : There is an impression that it has been done to placate Maharashtra which has sent quite a number of M.P.'s to Parliament.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Quite honestly we thought we were placating both sides.

QUESTION : Is it true the holding of West Bengal Assembly elections was mainly due to some peace moves by the Naxalites to you or to your Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Peace moves? Please let me know if you have any such information. I have not received it yet.

QUESTION : Having elections consecutively for two years, for the Parliament now and later for the Assemblies, will certainly tell upon the State Government Administrations and affect development plans. What are the compelling reasons to have separate poll for the Parliament and the Assemblies?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no compelling reason as such. After all in the United States they have elections. Presidential election is separate and other elections are separate. I do not think it is any more strain than that.

QUESTION : My colleagues from Calcutta have told me that they feel CPM will sweep the poll in West Bengal and come out with thumping majority. What will be your attitude towards that Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, they had headed a Government before. So the situation will be the same.

QUESTION : Is lack of investment deliberate? Do you think it is an attempt on the part of big business houses to force you to change

Government's economic policy? What could be the motivations for the capital strike?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I won't go so far as to call it a capital strike. But I do think that part of the hesitation is to see whether we can change our policies. We have in the last year liberalised considerably and made things easier by granting licences, we have made it much quicker and so on. There is really no reason.

QUESTION : Don't you think as Prime Minister you should welcome the private sector in coming to invest because it will help expand public sector?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am afraid you have got our policies wrong. I think perhaps we should have an education of the press. The Government of India stands for a mixed economy. There are areas very clearly demarcated for what can come under private enterprise and what comes under public sector. We do want private enterprise to spread more. We do not want it to be confined to a few families. We want other people to take it up, the younger people or older for that matter, so that the base is much wider.

QUESTION : The Rashtrapati Bhavan communique says you mentioned to the President your decision to go to the polls on the 24th. So whatever consultation that took place in the Congress Working Committee and the Parliamentary Board was all an exercise after your decision.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We had talked amongst ourselves, my senior colleagues and other colleagues, both in the Working Committee and the Cabinet. We had discussed this matter before I went to the President.

QUESTION : Do you say that West Bengal may not go to the polls?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not say anything about it at all.

QUESTION : Did you suggest that West Bengal may or may not go to the polls?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have not said anything clearly on it. Now I think we really have to finish on this.

CORRESPONDENT : We wish you a very Happy New Year.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Thank you very much. May I also wish all of you a very Happy New Year and I hope a less jaundiced view of the Indian situation. I did not mean that all of you have that view but sometimes to provoke an answer you seem to express such views at press conferences. But, as you know, I am one of those people who enjoy criticism and battle because it is a part of life and adds interest to life.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think this is rather a difficult question, because all over the world technology tends to produce the same kinds of industrial goods. It is changing living patterns also and I think every country is trying to maintain its individuality. In each society every individual is fighting to retain its individuality. Certainly in India, our effort is to find out whether we can avoid some of the mistakes which advanced countries have committed in the course of industrialisation or not. We see from the newspapers that many people in these advanced countries now find that mere material possessions do not bring inner satisfaction. Perhaps that is why there is so much restlessness amongst the young and other sensitive people. It was our good fortune to have achieved political freedom under the leadership of people who were not only deeply committed but also had great foresight. So the entire meaning of the Indian experiment is to achieve progress without violence. And also to see how we can retain what is good and of value in our tradition while taking advantage of science and technology. Science and technology are not ends in themselves; they are only means by which you can do something. We hope to use them in the Indian context so that we remain Indian, India retains her identity and yet is able to progress. It is not at all easy but this is what we are trying to do.

QUESTION : Would you like to finish by some questions which are more personal? You have given yourself an education both Indian and Western. In the two cultures, what are the works which still retain your preferences?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think I have my roots deep down in India and in India's culture because my whole education and upbringing was to that end. I belong to a family which was deeply involved in the welfare of the entire people and the country. But at the same time I was brought up to regard myself as a citizen of the world. So I do not really see cultures as very much different. They are different but you can always find common things as well. Hence I do not like something merely because it is Indian or not Indian. I like some things that are Indian and some things that are not Indian. I think that is a part of one's personality. For instance, I like music.

QUESTION : What sort of music?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I like practically every sort of music—folk music and some of the classical music, Indian as well as European.

QUESTION : What about dance? For instance, I know that you belong to the Manipuri Group of Santiniketan.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am afraid I started by learning ballet but later on I did learn Manipuri dancing. I have never done anything much

about it. But I do enjoy seeing dance and I was mainly responsible for starting this folk dance festival which we have here.

QUESTION : Do your political activities leave any place for your personal life?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that political life, personal life, outdoor life or life of any other kind, is all one and the same thing. Life is one and not a number of things cut up into several parts. Hence one can have a personal life even when one engages in politics. And even when one is at home with the family, one can still be engaged in politics because one does discuss politics, and everyone is interested in it.

QUESTION : Do you have time to receive friends and to read?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, I read a lot. I read while I am travelling in the plane, in the car, everywhere. And, yes, I do receive my friends, my family and others.

QUESTION : Among the works of Western musicians and writers, are there any which you like particularly, which have a special place on your bedside table?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Nowadays I read a lot about contemporary problems appearing in the newspapers. I also read books. Recently, I have been reading the book by General de Gaulle which he had sent me only a week before his death.

QUESTION : Do you have a favourite musician among Western musicians?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, among the classical musicians I like Beethoven and Bach. But, as I have said, I also like folk music, and songs like those of Joan Baez.

QUESTION : What is the hope closest to your heart at the beginning of 1971 for yourself and for India?

THE PRIME MINISTER : For India, my hope and task is to improve the condition of our people. Formerly, though the people were very poor, they thought that poverty was a state of life which God had given them and they could not change it. They were poor but they were also contented, if you understand what I mean. Now they know that these conditions can be changed, that they have the right to change them and with freedom and the regeneration of the country and all the modern development they can be less poor. Naturally, they are impatient. Though a lot has been achieved it looks very insignificant when compared with the task that has remained unfulfilled. So, I can only hope that we will advance a few steps on this long journey.

QUESTION : You recently said in your broadcast : "Time will not wait for us."

THE PRIME MINISTER : But that is true of everybody because science is changing life so fast that one almost has to run even to remain in the same place.

The People's Victory

QUESTION : The great electoral victory that you have achieved recently has galvanised the Indian body politic. New hopes and aspirations have risen. What is the direction that you envisage for this renewed dynamism in India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is the victory of the Indian people. They worked hard for it. Reactionary forces and their agents were either deliberately making misleading statements or were so completely out of touch with the mood of the people that they were unable to see the truth.

Our people yearn for socialism, for the fight against poverty to be intensified, for inequality and disparities to be lessened. They understand the need for a Government at the Centre which is totally committed to these objectives and which has the strength to chalk out policies which will realise them. This is the meaning of the generous majority our people have given us.

QUESTION : In a way the election results have vindicated the broad outlines of your internal and external policies. However, the extent of support you have received testifies, in our opinion, that these policies are expected not only to continue but also to achieve new resilience and new forms of expression. Does this mandate—unprecedented in parliamentary history—presage the recasting of the ideological framework and of the political organisation of the Congress Party? In which way ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our policy was a well thought-out one to meet the vast problem of India's economic backwardness. The needs and the problems of our people are, by and large, still the same. However, we are now aware that we must move faster and that as we go along, we must take advantage of the advances made by other countries. Freedom was the first stage in our journey. Socialism is the second. Our socialism is the product of our experience.

Interview published in *Al Ahram* of Cairo, March 28, 1971

What does resilience mean? If you mean buoyancy and recuperative power, we are already experiencing it. If it means resiling from any of our pledges, then I would not use that word. The basic framework of objectives cannot be changed, but within the framework we should be prepared to find valid and workable solutions to new situations. A common failing of those who swear by inflexible ideologies is that they think that all situations can be fitted into their Procrustean bed. They are, therefore, forced to shut their eyes to the many changes which are taking place in the world, new socio-economic and psychological forces which have been set in motion by the evolution of science and communications and the phenomenon of a shrinking world helping an enlarging consciousness.

Millions more of our people must be made productive partners in our economy and political life. We must enable them to benefit by the new technologies which can give them a better chance in life. Structural changes must be made in education, administration and in the entire process of assessing people's needs and of responding to them. Most of all, we have to involve young people and give them a feeling that they cannot be bystanders or mere followers but partners and even leaders. The Congress Party has an important contribution to make in this regard.

In the last eighteen months, after the split in our party, the Congress has, in fact, revitalised itself and begun once again to walk in step with the people. It is now time to consolidate this gain and to reorganise the party so that it remains the voice of the people and can function efficiently. Self-renewal is the key to any party's survival and vitality.

QUESTION : There is a general consensus that the electoral revolution that has taken place in India is relevant not only to your country but also to the Third World in general. What the elections have shown, in our view, is that the people are committed to radicalisation with consent and socialism without coercion. If these conclusions are, at least tentatively valid, it is evident that India is embarking on an experiment which is not only unique but also potentially universally valid, that is, socio-economic transformation with insured continued popular participation, in other words, bringing into the living organic unity what was previously considered a duality, namely, democracy and socialism. How does the Congress Party, the vehicle of this electoral revolution, envisage that the similarly situated political forces in the Third World could avail of this experiment?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Thank you for your warm sentiments, but it would not be right to make more claims than those to which we are entitled. We believe that ends and means are a continuum. For us, socialism is an objective as well as a policy. We believe that socialism

can be achieved through democracy. Our electoral victory has vindicated our faith. If other developing countries can benefit from our experience we shall naturally be glad. However, it would be for them to decide whether our methods are of relevance to them.

QUESTION : The Congress Party, which has been the movement for national liberation, has now decidedly become the instrument of socialist transformation. To what extent is there continuity in the party, and to what extent will there be change in its structure, institutions and ideology ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This question has been roughly covered in my answers to the earlier three questions. You have correctly brought together the two ideas of continuity and change. We have continuity in our basic principles out of which our domestic and foreign policies have emerged. Sometimes it is represented even in individuals. In the newly convened Lok Sabha, we have people who had worked with Vithalbhai Patel, C. R. Das and my grandfather, not to speak of Mahatma Gandhi or my father. But there have been great changes. Although vestiges of feudalism are still visible and have to be fought, and the bulk of our people still live in villages, India is no longer a mere agrarian or feudal society. We are also a dynamic and growing industrial society with all the problems which industrial societies have to face—labour relations, problems of material balance and forward planning, constant evolution of new technological patterns a step ahead of obsolescence, training of self-reliant technicians and managers in adequate numbers as also the problems of pollution and waste.

QUESTION : You have rightly indicated recently that categorising movements between Right and Left no longer gives precise connotation in terms of political description. If this classification is approximating the stage of obsolescence, what political classifications would you suggest for the struggle that takes place between the forces of change, progress and evolution and the forces that seek to arrest them ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Unfortunately, much of politics has got confined to a game of attaching labels. Quite often one finds that the conservative of one land is more radical than the radical of another. This is even more true of India with its multiplicity of parties. Some parties call themselves revolutionary or socialist or belonging to the people, but there is little revolution, socialism or real connection with the people in many of them. Labels which originated elsewhere and in other times are misleading. However, there is no valid test—whether a person and a party stand for unalloyed private profit, irrespective of what happens to the bulk of the people or whether they stand for the conservation, development and utilisation of national resources and economic forces for the benefit of the many. The test cannot be merely

economic in our society with its long and unfortunate legacy of communal and caste conflicts. Another key test is whether a person and a party are truly secular, believing in equal rights for all citizens, or whether they believe in imposing their own beliefs on persons belonging to other castes, religions or languages and also in others having fewer rights than themselves. By this test you will find that a true democrat must be both secular and socialist. Otherwise, this claim of believing in freedom is hypocritical.

QUESTION : The intellectual ferment and the vitality that has been observed in the Indian body politic constitutes undoubtedly a leverage for India's position in the world. India's fundamental policies on world problems might not necessarily change. We think they will inevitably assume a new dimension of authority—the authority of dynamic consent of the people. Channels of communications that might have gone rusty, particularly between countries of the Third World, might be enlivened again because parasitical opposition to these policies has been curtailed and proven unrepresentative, and these policies imply more apparently not only direct popular support on the part of the Indian people but also a measure of popular involvement. These policies, whose foundations were laid in the late '40s and the early '50s are in need of restatement in the early '70s. You have been and are today more than ever in that position which can initiate the process of restatement.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not for me but for others to speak about what India means to the world at large. This is of importance even to the Third World. In fact, in Lusaka all of us moved away from the very expression 'Third World'. We are One World. And if we reject the right or claims of the first and the second world to carve this globe into spheres of influence, logically there cannot be a third world. We should really be One World of numerous nations growing, evolving and, as far as possible, avoiding confrontation and conflict. We found that some of our own ideas about the manner in which the world should reject the old pattern of big power dominance, and the conflicts inherent in such dominance, found resonance in the minds of several other nations, which were thinking along similar lines. Common historical experience and common vision of the future have established greater kinship among the non-aligned countries, primarily of Asia and Africa.

QUESTION : In spelling out a foreign policy, one encounters two main areas of crisis, namely, Indo-China and West Asia. These are crisis areas where big powers are involved. At the same time, these areas are within the Asian world. These are crisis areas also because the national will of the indigenous population is being frustrated and prevented from self-realisation. Reassertion of the authentic national

will in these two crucial areas of Asia necessitates a further intensive commitment of the Afro-Asian world to the movements of liberation. However, in the past decade in particular, the crises in these areas have become more acute and dangerous. India's position has been consistently responsive to the legitimate aspirations of the peoples in these areas, whether they be the Vietnamese or the Arabs. How do the forces of renewal in India envisage the role that India can play in extricating these areas from their criticality and enabling them to rejoin the process of active development and contribution to peace?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our views on these two troubled regions have been mentioned in my Government's basic policy statement in the form of our President's Address to the joint session of Parliament. We welcome and fully support the statesman-like, courageous and wise initiative taken by President Anwar Sadat and the Arab world towards a just solution of the vexed problem of West Asia. These moves provide a basis for a fair and enduring solution. As regards Vietnam we favour a multi-national agreement or convention involving all the nations of the region.

We are totally opposed to the infusion of outside military force or to any kind of presence of a foreign power in any area. We oppose any action which abridges or impairs the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. The alteration of boundaries or any expansionism is totally unacceptable to us. We favour the path of settlement through negotiations. India will certainly do whatever she can to express her solidarity with and support for the peoples defending their sovereignty and integrity.

QUESTION : Much of the energies of the Afro-Asian world have been dissipated by conflicts and suspicions amongst themselves. In an era when the advanced and developed countries are gravitating towards greater political, economic and even cultural co-operation and co-ordination, would this not perpetuate in one form or another the polarisation between the developed and the developing world? If so, the major challenge and perhaps the top priority that becomes clear is how to harness Afro-Asian energies in order to bring the Third World into an even situation with the rest of the world in as short a period as possible.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Several interests which do not like our coming closer together are at work in the world. Unfortunately, although we all have won our political freedom from colonial powers, some of these powers continue to have a preponderant influence on educational systems and communication media. Afro-Asian nations have recognised this danger clearly. At their meetings, the non-aligned powers have expressed their resolve to fight such pressures and interference, and to

develop more direct, country-toc-ountry, intellectual exchange and bilateral as well as multilateral economic arrangements. I should like more Indians to study Arab writers and thinkers in the original and not be content with understanding the Arab world through intermediary "experts". We are not moving fast enough in trade and economic co-operation, possibly because of set trade patterns with the old colonial countries. We must get out of such grooves.

The Task Ahead

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS has been debated for three days. Many Hon. Members have spoken and I am grateful to those who have supported the motion and to those who have offered useful suggestions.

I am glad that several Members saw in the Address the beginning of a great renewal. With the accession of strength and faith from a fresh mandate given by a new generation, we are on the threshold of a new beginning. Our people have proved that the dark forebodings of pessimists at home and abroad were the mumblings of false prophets.

I must hasten to add that I look upon the massive support of the electorate not as an achievement but as an opportunity. The President's Address has indicated some of the steps which the Government propose to take to make use of this opportunity. These steps and many others will have to be translated into operational programmes. In the meanwhile, the Government welcomes constructive criticism which will help improve our programmes.

In my election speeches, which unfortunately Shri Vajpayee does not seem to have read—I repeat in every single speech—I have said that the road ahead is long and full of hardships and those who supported us should be prepared for hard work, for difficulties and perhaps even for danger.

I have carefully followed the speeches of the Hon. Members. I was touched by the great solicitude shown by Shri Fatehsinghrao Gaekwad for the plight of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and Smt. Gayatri Devi's concern for the poor. It seems easier to shed tears than privy purses. I assure them and the House that these vestiges of feudalism cannot last long.

I welcome the endorsement of the need to prevent pollution of air, water and soil and the imbalances of nature around us. I myself have been deeply interested in ecology since long before that word became fashionable in the Western world.

Speech in Lok Sabha on Motion of Thanks on President's Address, April 2, 1971

The complaint of some Members that AIR and TV were used by the Government for party ends need not be taken seriously. I had broadcast only once and that was to announce the dissolution of Lok Sabha.

Complaints against the Election Commission have already been dealt with by my colleague, the Minister of Law and Justice.

It was natural that in a debate of this kind much should be said about poverty. Our poverty is long standing. I have not been awakened to it today as some Members of the Opposition are apt to say from time to time. If I may say with some hesitation and deep humility, it was because of this awakening and concern that my family decided to give up most of its property and to change its entire mode of life in 1920-21.

Much has been achieved since Independence. There is no doubt that today a large number of people are better dressed and better fed than before. How do we judge the poverty of any area? We should judge it against the conditions which existed in that particular area earlier. Is it the claim of any Hon. Member that less has been done, for example, in Rajasthan or in Madhya Pradesh or in Orissa in the last few years than was done, say, in a century of princely rule? Yet the fact of poverty remains and vast numbers do lack their basic requirements. Also, the needs of our people are increasing and will continue to increase as our development plans go ahead.

The Hon. Member, Shri Vajpayee, spoke tauntingly of what he called our "war on poverty". But actually this was the title of his manifesto. Compared to the glitter of the Jan Sangh manifesto, our own was matter-of-fact and down-to-earth.

It was remarkable how our people showed their keen sense of discrimination when they refused to be attracted by the stalking golden deer, the *Swarna Mrig,* of the Jan Sangh or to be led astray by the outworn economic theories of the Swatantra Party dressed up in elegant phrases.

We have had a number of elections before this general election. Some of our candidates had the bicycle as their symbol, others had the coconut tree or some other emblem, and yet most of them won the elections. I should also like to say that something rather good happened because we took the cow and the calf as our symbol. It was proved that it was not a religious symbol, but a symbol of the prosperity of village and town people. It is after seeing the manifestos and the performance of the various parties that the people have taken their decision.

The Hon. Member who sits opposite me, Shri Gopalan, in his long indictment of Governmental policies referred to some Central projects. There was not, and there cannot be any discrimination or deliberate neglect of Kerala which is one of the most beautiful parts of our country

and one which has had many problems. It is true that the Precision Instruments Plant and the Photo Chemicals Plant which we had proposed to set up there were not taken up for implementation. But this was because, on reassessment, it was found that the demand for the products of these plants was not good. Government have to make a constant reappraisal of industrial and other programmes, and have to adapt them to the needs of the situation.

However, in regard to the Cochin Shipyard, Shri Gopalan has failed to keep up with the recent developments. An agreement has already been signed with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, covering the preparation of designs for the Shipyard, and for consultancy services for its construction. The project will be completed in five years and is estimated to cost Rs. 45.40 crores. Rs. 3 crores have been provided in the 1971-72 interim budget.

Shri Indrajit Gupta referred to monopoly houses and the issue of new licences to some of them. This matter has been agitating some of our own Members on this side also. Neither the Monopolies and the Restrictive Trade Practices Act nor the industrial licensing policy rules out the grant of new licences to business houses. They only define the limits and conditions, subject to which these houses would be allowed to expand further.

The decisions taken in individual cases do not involve any deviation from the policies which have been clearly spelt out. The policies seek to reconcile a number of objectives—the promotion of industrial growth and employment opportunities, accelerated development of backward regions, expeditious development of core industries and the attainment of economic self-reliance.

It would not be fair to view the grant of licences to the larger industrial houses in isolation from other decisions of the Government, for instance, the reservation of larger fields for small-scale industries, the exclusion of larger industrial houses from the middle sector and the expansion of the public sector as well as other policies designed to broaden the base of entrepreneurship.

A young Member from our side, Shri A. C. George, made several concrete suggestions, in particular, regarding housing in urban areas. We have already made a beginning in this direction with the setting up of the Housing and Urban Development Finance Corporation. We shall endeavour to expand the role of the Corporation in the next two or three years.

There is also need for a new look at rural housing. I think that it would be very useful if our architects give thought to new and inexpensive designs for rural housing, which would make the best use of locally available materials.

I now come to the amendments of which there is a large crop. Some of these refer to rising prices and the need to stabilise them. The

House knows how deeply concerned I am, and indeed all my colleagues in the Government are, about this matter, and that we are deeply aware of the consequences which would follow if price stability is seriously impaired. Much of the increase in prices during the past year is because of the failure to raise the production of commercial crops.

Foodgrain prices have, on the other hand, been generally quiet, reflecting our success in raising production in that area. Hon. Members know that because of the drought, we have had to bend all our energies to increase the production of foodgrains. There is no doubt that during this period the other crops did not get the kind of boost or help which they should have.

I think the Minister of Food has already told the House that we intend to adopt a range of measures to raise the productivity of such crops. We also intend to curb speculation.

In an interdependent economy, a price rise in one sector soon spreads to other sectors. For example, the rise in the prices of industrial raw materials pushes up the prices of manufactures which in turn leads to the demand for higher prices for farm products. The wage cost also tends to rise. Thus, what is called for today is a certain restraint and willingness on the part of the community not to press for short-term compensations.

We intend to protect the interests of the weaker sections who suffer most when prices go up. The public distribution system is aimed at serving this purpose.

I am sure Hon. Members will appreciate that a part of the price increase in recent years was due to our anxiety to assure the farmers a reasonable price for their products. However, it is important that in this process the interests of the small farmers, the landless labourers and the other poor people who live on the land and who do not have surplus products to sell are not harmed. It is for the Government to reconcile the interests of the consumers and those of the producers. Only in this way can a price policy be successful. We must work for the genuine welfare of the farmers and at the same time we must also ensure that certain sections do not unreasonably exploit the rest of the community. The welfare of the nation as a whole must, at all times, take precedence over that of an individual segment. We should remember that other countries including many developed countries are also experiencing rising prices in varying degrees. Of course, there are greater difficulties for us because of the lower standard of living of so many of our people. But some pressure on prices is almost inescapable in a growing economy.

We have to recognise and accept the fact that in a developing country such as ours, which must increase the pace of investment, we cannot afford to adopt a deflationary policy of budgetary surpluses coupled with measures for keeping the level of investments low.

So, while implementing a plan which is large in relation to our resources but not large enough for the needs of our people, some upward pressure on prices is inevitable. I would, therefore, request Hon. Members not to politicise this issue excessively.

Another matter which came up for criticism was the grant of industrial licences in the period immediately preceding the general election. My colleague, the Minister of Industrial Development, has already answered a specific question on this subject. Nothing was done in a hurry or outside the normal procedure, and it does not seem strange to me that we should be accused of not holding up licences which had been cleared in the normal course, and at the same time be blamed for delaying them.

Even during the election, when I was in Bombay, the complaint was made that the country's economy was suffering because Government was not granting licences fast enough. So obviously, this complaint is part of the smear campaign of the so-called grand alliance before, during and after the poll.

There was an increase in the number of applications for industrial licences in the calendar year 1970, reflecting an improvement in the industrial climate. This is as it should be. After June 1970, when the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act came into force, Government had to evolve policies and procedures to harmonise the objectives of industrial licensing with those of the MRTP Act. After Government had laid down the guidelines for the disposal of applications attracting the provisions of the MRTP Act, applications falling within that category were considered for further processing. The formalities and procedures followed by the Government for the grant of licences during the period preceding the poll were exactly the same as those that were being followed earlier, and, as I just said, there was no relaxation of any accepted policy or normal standards of scrutiny in regard to these licences.

The other amendments seek to emphasise the need for the nationalisation of the remaining banks, of foreign trade, of major and basic industries and so on. Last year, I had explained Government's general approach to these and similar demands for nationalisation. Government are not afraid of nationalisation. At the same time, they do not consider nationalisation to be an independent objective by itself. Decisions on nationalisation must fit into the general scheme of priorities of our economic programmes.

The direction in which the Government want to proceed is quite clear. We visualise a growing and dominant role for the public sector. We want the public sector to be able to influence and control the pace and direction of investment. Our available resources should be deployed in the best possible manner. Any proposal for the nationalisation of an industry or activity must be subjected to two tests : Firstly, is it

necessary from the point of view of enabling the public sector to attain a dominant role and to occupy a key position in the economy; and secondly, does it further our social objectives? The nationalisation of banks satisfied both these tests.

Similarly, when we find any industry or unit operating in a manner which is detrimental to our national interests, we shall certainly not hesitate to take it over. But we should not be deflected from our priorities. Our priorities, which are known to the House—but I would like to reiterate them—are at present the accelaration of development and the augmentation of employment. Whatever resources we can mobilise should be canalised as far as possible into further investment in new productive activities in the public sector. In the next few years, we should be engaged in a relentless battle against poverty. We should not dissipate our energies and our resources in diversionary battles which can only make a marginal contribution to victory on the main front.

The subject which was mentioned by almost every speaker, one which has caused deeper and more widespread concern than any other problem facing our economy today, is the question of unemployment. This problem is not unique to India. The UK, the USA and other developed countries are all facing similar situations. It is not difficult to understand why unemployment has assumed such large dimensions in India. Firm figures are available only in respect of the organised sector, and in this sector the rate of growth of employment opportunities was somewhat satisfactory in the first half of the sixties, being 6.8 per cent in the Third Plan period. But this rate started declining in 1964-65 and by 1966-67 had slumped to 0.8 per cent. During 1967-68 it was almost negligible. This slow growth of the economy, particularly in the industrial sector, was responsible for the sharp decline in employment opportunities.

In his speech Shri Krishna Menon quoted statistics of unemployment. In India the most serious part of the problem is not open and wholetime unemployment, but underemployment, and this is why it is difficult to quantify the problem. Hon. Members know that some time ago the report of an expert committee, presided over by Prof. Dantwala, pointed out this fact. In the absence of reliable figures we should not allow ourselves to be intimidated by uncertain statistics.

I entirely share the concern voiced in this House and outside about this problem. To keep human beings idle is to waste a rich national resource, and I am particularly conscious of the serious hardships which our educated young people are suffering. Many of them come to see me.

We have mentioned the word "alienation" in the President's Address. Perhaps the most dangerous of all alienations is the feeling of disenchantment among able-bodied young men and women who are deprived of productive employment. This is an economic tragedy and

also a human tragedy. We cannot preach about our concern for our fellow-men if our social arrangements have no place for them.

People get alienated if they do not feel wanted. But there are other kinds of alienated individuals also, e.g., the Naxalites for whom patriotism is a bourgeois enthusiasm, the superficial cosmopolitans who are too cynical to appreciate the qualities of our people and our country. There are also some of our highly trained specialists and others who would rather opt for better opportunities and higher salaries abroad than face hardship and frustration in creating better conditions for their own descendants. I sincerely hope that in the end India will win back to its fold all those who are feeling frustrated or alienated.

Some Members have referred to the need for allowances for those who are unemployed. I do not think that subsistence allowance to the unemployed is an answer to the travails of our youth. Let us not make these young people pensioners. Let us not accustom them to doles or subsidies. Let us try to provide them with opportunities in which they can find fulfilment. For this we should mobilise all the resources we can and raise the level of investment in the public as well as the private sector. The reappraisal of the Plan should give our development programmes an employment bias. A climb-back to the ascending path of economic growth and vigorous implementation of the Plan will contribute to a significant expansion of productive employment on a durable basis.

But I am not one of those who subscribe fully to the view that if we take care of the Plan, employment will take care of itself. I am fully aware that when unemployment is acute and widespread, we must have special measures to deal with it. Programmes with high employment potential have to be identified and given a special push. Quite a few schemes of this nature have been incorporated in the Fourth Plan as recast and presented to this House last May. The House is aware of the details of the schemes relating to small farmers, sub-marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural works in areas prone to drought. These schemes have already been taken up for implementation in large tracts distributed all over the country, although they may take some time to gather momentum. A provision of Rs. 235 crores is envisaged for these special programmes during the Plan period. Additionally, projects for small farmers and agricultural labour will receive support from financial institutions to the extent of about Rs. 300 crores. Similarly the total financial support for dry land farming programmes is expected to be about Rs. 150 crores. In the budget presented last week the Finance Minister has indicated a provision of Rs. 50 crores for a crash scheme for rural employment.

I know that almost every Hon. Member has taken exception to the smallness of this sum. I should like to remind them that the programmes which come under this crash scheme are only supplementary to other

programmes meant to create additional employment. Employment opportunities are provided by the entire economic system, and you cannot put the whole of the problem on one side and only one of the several measures evolved to solve it, on the other. I have announced in my public speeches that the programmes would start soon. Shri Vajpayee felt that the entire Rs. 50 crores would be spent on the mere planning of it. I should, therefore, like to tell him that all the planning and other preparations have been completed and the programme would be started in a few days.

We want to make this programme the nucleus of a more comprehensive programme. These programmes are oriented to create more employment in the rural areas. But the works which are envisaged will also absorb the educated such as technicians, engineers and other educated unemployed.

But we are conscious that there is need to devise yet other programmes to absorb the educated unemployed in larger numbers. For this the Plan outlays must be increased in sectors such as education and public health. Unfortunately most Members demand big prestigious projects for their areas instead of helping to strengthen these other services. A higher rate of industrial growth through the maximisation of investment in the public and private sectors is by far the most effective answer to the question of educated unemployment. The President's Address has indicated that we propose to set up task forces to identify the various impediments to the expansion of industrial production and to propose suitable changes in policies and procedures.

This leads me to another related issue of national importance, and that is the question of higher levels of investment, whether in the public or the private sector. This can come about only as a result of an all-round improvement in efficiency and productivity. Concern for higher productivity should become almost an obsession with those engaged in productive processes, whether they are managers or workers, because only by augmenting productivity can we enlarge the surpluses available for investment. This is an obligation which the employed owe to those who are yet to be employed. The employed should not become an instrument for the exploitation of the unemployed. As my colleague, Shri Khadilkar, has already told this House, Government propose to hold discussions with trade union leaders as well as with representatives of management on these and other issues to seek their co-operation and support in ensuring increasingly higher levels of employment at rising levels of productivity.

Several Hon. Members have spoken about the law and order problem in West Bengal. Our youngest Member, Shri P. R. Das Munshi, made a moving speech based on personal experience. It brought home to me once again and to us all the difficulties of young people and the awesome character of political violence in that State. The Government are

determined to curb violence whoever is responsible and whatever the motive behind it.

Shri Gopalan took umbrage at the use of the expression 'politics of murder'. But I am sure we will all agree that murder cannot be sanctioned or sanctified even though some have made it their political creed.

We have been taking all appropriate steps to stop this menace and will continue to do so. The situation in West Bengal cannot be dealt with by the police alone. We are conscious of this and Members also have drawn our attention. Other measures are needed and they are not being neglected.

The greatest emphasis has been laid on the revival of Calcutta and its surroundings. The development of other parts of West Bengal is equally important.

During President's rule, immediate steps were taken to bring land reform legislation more in tune with the aspirations of the people and the requirements of social justice. We are urging other State Governments to adopt similar legislation.

Some Hon. Members have referred in their speeches as well as in the amendments to the question of Centre-State relations, particularly the financial aspects of this relationship. But I was surprised that these issues should be raised by those who call themselves Marxists, who, I thought, were the votaries of centralism. Is it because they are no longer an all-India party that their mental horizons have been scaled down to a provincial level? Or perhaps a weak Centre fits in with their present strategy?

It is not for me to say what is good for them, but when votaries of Marx constrict their mental horizons there does seem something wrong in their understanding of a universalist methodology.

The issues pertaining to Centre-State relations have been debated at length on many occasions in this House as also in the meetings of the National Development Council, the State Chief Ministers and other ministers. They have only recently been studied comprehensively by expert bodies such as the Finance Commission and the Administrative Reforms Commission.

I think our Constitution has visualised fruitful roles for the Centre and for the State in its scheme for distribution of powers. It embodies financial and other provisions to deal with problems as they arise. In particular, the Constitution provides for a periodical review of the financial relations between the Centre and the States through the Finance Commission, which is an autonomous body. Under the awards of the Commission, substantial resources are being transferred from the Centre to the States.

Hon. Members are aware that a successful federation cannot exist merely on rules. It can be successful only if there is full co-operation.

A number of difficult financial issues do arise from time to time and from all States, regardless of the party or parties which happen to form the Government at that time. So, the problem is not one of the unwillingness or discrimination on the part of the Centre but rather of how the Centre and the States can jointly endeavour to raise the maximum possible resources to meet at least the minimum needs of the people. I should like to emphasise that all those interested in national unity and welfare should look upon the relationship between the Centre and the States as one not of confrontation but of partnership and co-operation in the great task of nation-building.

The President has invited the Members of the House to lend their support to the efforts which we have outlined. I repeat that invitation. Nobody says that the task is easy, but neither should anybody say that this Government and this House held back from this great endeavour. Common concern for the country is also a part of democracy. Let us certainly criticise one another in the House and outside, but let us also work together for a common purpose, for the all-round growth and prosperity of our country.

The Call of Change

I SHALL NOT take much time of the House. Indeed, I would not have spoken at all, since all relevant and some irrelevant points have been made in the course of this debate which has been, except for some aberrations, of a high order, as befits the occasion.

I would like to support what our Hon. friend Shri K. Manoharan has said : today all of us remember and miss our bright-spirited colleague, Shri Nath Pai, whose Bill focussed our attention on this necessary constitutional change. I am sure if he had been here, he would have made an impassioned speech on the subject.

I am intervening because I feel deeply and sincerely that this is a special moment.

In his otherwise brilliant speech, Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray had a dig at non-lawyers. Far be it from me to scoff at lawyers, when there are so many distinguished ones in the House. The legal profession has given some of the best minds and some of the greatest patriots to our country. I myself started life in very legal surroundings. My grandfather, himself a lawyer of repute, attracted many luminaries to our house. But, over the years, one heard fewer arguments of

Intervening in debate in Lok Sabha on the Constitution (24th Amendment) Bill, August 4, 1971

jurisprudence and more and more about the problems of the people, the reality of the situation in which they found themselves, which was very far from the law as seen by lawyers. So, Shri Manoharan and I have at least one thing in common, which is that neither of us is a lawyer. While he was daring enough to venture into the sphere of law, I shall keep aloof from it. But I should like to answer only one point which does not strictly come into this debate but which he mentioned, namely, the question of Centre-State relations and especially a phrase which he used when he said that every State must be an equal partner. I should like to assure him that every State is an equal partner. Today, whatever inequality there exists is due to many reasons; it is not due to the Centre or the attitude which the Centre takes. In the eyes of the Central Government, every State is equal and the Centre does its very best to give fair treatment to every single State, and we shall continue to do so. Naturally, we are always open to suggestions and we always discuss matters about which a State has any grievance; and this discussion is a continuing one. There is hardly a day when we do not have a visit from a Chief Minister or some ministers or officials from one State or another over some real or not-so-real grievance.

During this debate, it was interesting and educative to listen to our constitutional experts. But as a non-constitutional expert, as a non-lawyer, I must say that it seems to me that the question at issue is not merely a legal or a constitutional one. The constitutional amendments which we have introduced embody and reflect the urges of our people. For some time there has been a deliberate inflation of fears which to me seem to be unreal. A controversy has been generated as regards the supremacy of Parliament against the supremacy of the Constitution as if these two were distinct concepts, mutually exclusive and even perhaps antagonistic. Those who describe the issue in this manner conveniently forget that our Constitution was drafted on the fundamental assumption that our people owed unalterable allegiance to the principles of democracy. This faith in our people permeates our Constitution.

Several Hon. Members have spoken of the confrontation between Parliament and the judiciary. There need not be a confrontation, and I think that to create an atmosphere of confrontation does not do us much good. I do not think that there is any real confrontation either, because each institution has its assigned place and role. We all know that there can be no third chamber and that no Constitution can be frozen into a static mould.

What do we see when we look at the world around us? It would not take us long to discover that many an institution has collapsed, many a Constitution has been scrapped because it ceased to be an effective instrument for orderly change. That our Constitution and

our democratic institutions have survived, when all around us there is a climate of tension and violence, is a tribute to the faith of our people in democratic ideals and also to the flexibility and responsiveness of our Constitution and our political institutions to the urges of our people.

While introducing this Bill, my colleague Shri H. R. Gokhale spoke of the arguments of those who opposed this Bill as being based on fear and nervousness, not on facts. I should like to dispel that fear and nervousness in the minds of our minorities insofar as their rights are concerned. I believe that protection to them can be guaranteed only by this Parliament. Mere constitutional devices cannot give guarantee. History is replete with examples of constitutions being overthrown or thwarted. Therefore, a wider and deeper democracy, a wider and deeper commitment to secularism is a more durable guarantee of the rights of our minorities. My endeavour has been not to defeat parties but to educate the public and strengthen the people so that they themselves will not permit any curtailment of their rights. The protection of the rights of the minorities can be ensured only when the majority itself is convinced that its well-being and progress is linked with a sense of security amongst the minority communities. In the ultimate analysis, it is only a sensitive and strong public opinion which can give real protection to the minorities.

The major premise of democracy is the will of the people as expressed through Parliament. As Prof. Dandavate said in his excellent speech, if our democracy had gone berserk and had become an instrument of oppression, it would have failed and something else would have taken its place. If such turbulence were to take place in our country, holding the Constitution against the flood waters of right reaction or of violent revolution would not stem the tide.

Shri Shyam Nandan Mishra used a very meaningful phrase: 'If liberty dies in the hearts of man'. The same thing has been said in the Bible: 'We are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' So the strength can only be in the people. If we have any strength, we get it from the people and it is up to them to see that we do our duty by them and fulfil our promises to them.

Some people laughed when Shri Zia-ur-Rehman quoted an Urdu verse. But the message was clear and true enough. There is an unending attempt by vested interests to divide the people and to mislead the minorities. I am confident that our people are committed to democracy. They understand and respond to the need for a secular approach, the need for change within a democratic framework, and the need to prevent narrow vested interests from obstructing the processes of change. We all know that change is a fact of life, whether we like it or not. We all know that the subtlest and cleverest arguments cannot bind us to the past.

Shri H. M. Patel spoke of reasonableness *versus* radicalism. If you look at the circumstances of life as it is in India, I see no reason in a denial of radical change. Whatever is made rigid ceases to be living and organic, and many become less and less reflective of the needs of a vital and dynamic people.

So, what are the choices before us? Can we cling to the *status quo*? There is a crisis in the social order not only in India but in every country of the world, and the choice in every country is whether changes can come about peacefully or whether they must be driven to violent means.

A little while ago, when one of our colleagues was speaking, I heard several Members from the Opposition say 'He is twisting the meaning.' I think all those who have read newspapers in the past few months and all those who have followed the election campaigns know where the twisting has taken place, how everything we have said has been twisted and misconstrued. One of the words which has lent itself to this misinterpretation is 'commitment'. It is a good word and no matter what anybody says about it, we believe in commitment, and we shall continue to believe in it. I think in today's world this is a word which has great significance for the future.

What are our commitments? We are deeply committed to changing the condition of living of millions of our people, the vast majority of whom live in great poverty. When we talk of the most urgent problems in the country which are the removal of poverty and the lessening of disparities, our slogans have been made the butt of jokes and of ridicule. Any subject, any question, any debate has evoked the taunt, "What about *garibi hatao?*" Surely, poverty is too agonising a state to be joked about except by those who have no idea what it is and have no real sympathy with those who live in the state of poverty. If you want to look at the question seriously and sincerely, we know that the poverty of ages cannot be wiped out in a few weeks, a few months or even a few years. Anybody who pretends that he can do so is obviously trying to mislead the public.

We have never said that we can achieve this by a miracle, we have never said that it can be done by magic. We have always said that certain steps have to be taken, deliberate, determined steps, and by those steps we can remove, we will remove, the poverty of this country.

But this also requires a change in social outlook. There is talk of compensation. Even today we have heard some of it. While my colleague was speaking, I heard Shri Piloo Mody say something about *chori*. He knows that this is a subject about which I feel very strongly, and I would like to put my views before the House as I have put them on previous occasions. Compensation for what? When we talk of compensation, it is compensation for land, compensation for a palace or a big house. I should like to ask Hon. Members, what about

compensation for injustice? What about compensation for forced labour, for the eviction of landless people, for land unfairly grabbed? What happens when a mill is closed, its machinery run down, its reserves eaten away, even provident funds diverted to private purposes? A small man's business is closed and a partner driven to the street and other such iniquities of the capitalist system?

I remember there is a small group of people in Bihar. They are called *Tana bhagats*. They are very small in number, simple and sincere. They were passionately devoted to freedom and were among the first who came forward in the freedom struggle. The British took away their lands and today we cannot give them that land. These people who were given that land by the British regard it as their own property and they will demand compensation. Is this the sort of compensation that we should give? It is the *Tana bhagats* who should get compensation for the land taken away from them. There are so many cases like this. I do not want to go into the question of princes because that is coming up later, but there is plenty to say on that subject. Some of it I have referred to but there is more which any research can reveal.

We believe that the necessary social, political and economic processes which are involved in changing poverty must be carried out within a democratic framework. The vested interests have, as usual, raised a hue and cry, either through lack of understanding or deliberate mischief. As I said earlier, they have misinterpreted many of the words which we use. I talked earlier of commitment. What I mean is that we are committed to the upholding of the freedom of speech, of assembly, of worship of every citizen of this vast and varied land. Our commitment to secular democracy is non-negotiable. There is nothing negative in our approach. I am not against a class or a section of society. I am for the Indian people. I know that they cannot be strong while poverty is deep and widespread. I know that they cannot be united while there are disparities and while all sections, including the minorities, do not have a full sense of security and a full sense of participation in the development of the country. Democracy is not worth much if it does not involve all the people.

I can assure this House and the country that our commitment to upholding in every possible way the fundamental rights of our citizens remains absolute. Even when we speak of imposing certain restrictions on property rights, our intention is not to abolish property. Only where property rights are in conflict with public purpose the public purpose must hold sway. Our people understand this. In the last elections every possible attempt was made to scare the people and to mislead them into believing that all property would straight away be taken away. Those who indulged in such propaganda miscalculated

and underestimated the wisdom of our people, a wisdom based not on formal education but on personal experience.

Some of us have joked and some have shown temper and some have sincerely pleaded their cause, but I would urge all Hon. Members to approach the issues involved in our amendment with calm and sober reflection. These amendments have significant social and political import which we must try to understand in all seriousness.

The measures which we have taken and are taking are milestones in the progress of our democracy and are intimately related to the well-being and progress of millions of our people. They have come to be regarded by the people as marking a new stage in their struggle to build a more egalitarian, more humane, more just society. As their elected representatives, it is our duty to reflect their urges. It is in that spirit that I commend to you the acceptance of this Bill, by responding to the call of change and the call of the future which has strengthened the faith of our people in our democratic institutions and in the supremacy of this Parliament which is an expression of their will, and also in the sanctity of our Constitution.

During this debate, there have been many quotations, most of them from the United States. In the Oxford History of the American People, I came across an extract from the writings of William Channing, which I should like to share with you. I quote :

> "There are reasons, in human affairs, of inward and outward revolution, when new depths seem to be broken up in the soul, when new wants are unfolded in multitudes, and a new and undefined good is thirsted for. There are periods when the principles of experience need to be modified, when hope and trust and instinct claim a share with prudence in the guidance of affairs".

Need for Unity

THE MONTH OF August has a great significance in the life of our nation. Every year we meet here not merely to see each other but to salute our flag which is a symbol of our independence. It is also a symbol of our heroes who laid down their lives for independence and of those who are willing to sacrifice their lives even today.

Many of you who have assembled here and millions of others in their homes, fields and factories today want to know how far the country has moved towards its goal and how far from it it still remains.

Free translation of speech in Hindi from the ramparts of Red Fort, Delhi, August 15, 1971

Truly speaking, the journey of a country never ends. However fast and long we may move, the distance always remains to be covered.

Many significant things have happened in our country during the last year. First of all, I must thank you for proving wrong what many of us here and abroad were saying about India and its people. In the biggest election ever held anywhere you have shown that the people of this country are fully aware of their rights and their duties. Despite many a difficulty, you did not desist from exercising your vote even at places where there was risk to life. You did not vote for a person or even for a party but you voted for the progressive programmes and policies which had been put by us before you.

Since then, as you know, we have been trying to do things and have taken some preliminary steps towards achieving those objectives which we had placed before you. Poverty is a terrible condition which brings frustration to the people and weakens the country. Therefore, our first task is to remove poverty. We have to remove social and economic disparities to achieve our objectives. As you are aware, we have taken some significant steps in that direction and are striving to remove obstacles in our way.

In the last session of Parliament we passed a Bill for amending the Constitution. This disturbed some people. There was some misleading propaganda to the effect that the land and other properties of the people would be taken away. Some members of the minority communities felt that their rights might be affected. I have said it before and I wish to reiterate my assurance here today once again that we will not take away anything from anyone. We only wish that the benefits of affluence which some of us enjoy should also accrue to those who have nothing so that the strength of the nation grows. There is already a ceiling on land which varies from State to State. We hope this problem will be reviewed and appropriate action taken to give relief to our landless farmers and other weaker sections of the rural community so that they too can play a useful role in the life of the community. They have to be partners in our efforts to improve life in our villages. There is also a proposal to put a ceiling on urban property. We are, therefore, determined to implement our programmes one after the other. Some of these programmes have already been implemented, while others are still to be implemented.

After the General Election, when your representatives assembled here in Delhi, you had, like us, very high hopes. We thought that we would be able to make progress rapidly. However, suddenly and for no fault of ours, we were burdened with a problem which we had never imagined. But you know that the people of India have been able to carry many burdens and will continue to do so in future as well. We know that the inner strength that our citizens have, whether they are soldiers or

civilians, old or young, will enable us to surmount all the difficulties that may come in our way.

I do know that quite a few things have happened that have disturbed you. At the same time many things have happened that have strengthened our hopes. The brave manner in which our people faced many difficulties, carrying various burdens and coming to each other's help, is a matter of pride for all of us. We, as citizens of India, have to see that we defend not only our own rights but also the rights of those who are unable to raise their voice. This, obviously, is not a Government responsibility but a responsibility of every citizen. As you know, we still suffer from the age-old disparities and inequalities. These disparities give us a bad name and weaken the country.

The removal of economic disparities is, of course, the responsibility of the State but it is the people who have to remove social inequalities. The great responsibility of uniting India and strengthening it lies with the people.

Another problem which we, and particularly my sisters, face today is of rising prices. The price spiral affects all of us and it should be our endeavour that the prices of essential commodities remain at reasonable level. Why do prices rise ? Sometimes, when a commodity is in short supply, there is a rise in its price and one can understand it. But many times when a particular item is taxed, other items which are in no way related to it also register rise in prices. Who raises these prices and why ? Obviously, they are the unscrupulous dealers. You have to be alert and organise yourself to see that this does not happen in your locality. You must realise your responsibility as citizens whether it be about price rise or any other matter.

As you all know, India has faced many challenges. But the challenge that confronts us today is such as has never been faced by any country in the world. All these years while we had been striving to give our people their rights, things had been going on just the other way across our borders. Elections were held there just as elections were held in our country. As in India people there too came out in large numbers to vote but whereas we have been trying to fulfil our promises, a great tragedy has happened there. As a result of the atrocities inflicted on them over 7.5 million people, many of them wounded, sick and starved, had to leave their homes and take shelter in India. We have always kept our doors open for refugees. But they are not merely refugees; they are partners in a movement which is very significant. It is a movement similar to the one we had in our own country, and also in many other countries to secure the rights of the people. We cannot overlook the heavy price these people from Bangladesh are paying for the freedom of their country.

We have thus to keep the wider issues in view and surmount all the difficulties that may come in our way. We cannot overlook the bigger

issues just because there are some difficulties. We have to face these difficulties and do our utmost to overcome them. We must also be aware of the factors on account of which we in this country have adhered to the principles of democracy and to our constitution and have been trying to give concrete shape to them for the good of our people at a time when nations around us have bid goodbye to democracy and constitutions. We must continue to maintain our traditional values. We have to safeguard our freedom and democracy and make them really meaningful for our people

As you know, it has always been our policy to carry our people with us. Our foreign policy has always been of seeking peace and friendship. We hate war and do not indulge in sabre-rattling. We do not raise slogans which can hurt others. It is because we know that the real strength lies not in words but in our strengthening the country both economically and politically. This is how we look at things. We do not threaten anyone nor are we scared by anyone's threats. We are confident that India can and will face any emergency with courage and determination.

You are aware that there have been floods in some parts of the country and severe drought in some others so that even drinking water is not available at some places. Despite all this, enough food has been produced in the country. There is some shortage of pulses and oilseeds. On the whole, there is no shortage of foodgrains. But we have to feed not only our own people. Just now, we are also feeding a large number of people from another land.

Every lover of freedom and of humanity is bound to raise his voice against events in Bangladesh. India has to see whether the steps that she takes or the slogans that are raised here strengthen the people of that country. I assure you that India and her people will always support the cause of freedom everywhere. The people of Bangladesh have our full support. This is time for us not to feel disheartened, however great the crisis. There never was any reason for feeling disappointed. We have proved that we have faith and self-confidence and that we can stand up to any crisis, and make whatever sacrifices are necessary. There is no reason for us to doubt that we have a bright future.

As we see today, a wave of change is sweeping this country and also other countries. No one can remain unaffected by this new wave of change. This wave will engulf all of us. However, we do not have to fear it because we are swimming with the current. In fact, we are giving a direction to this current and we know that we are ready to face whatever the future may bring us.

On this auspicious day our fullest sympathies are with those who have to undergo suffering either because of floods or drought or poverty or any other kind of injustice. I say to them : Be courageous and lend us your hand. We will do everything to help them and take our

beloved India forward. For all of us this is the time to be ready to face whatever difficulties, sufferings and dangers there may be.

The people of India may be poor or illiterate. But this has been a land of heroes and such has been its history. There is no reason for us to fear or to withdraw from the path we have chosen. Only one thing we have to keep in mind—that we adhere firmly to our traditional policy of secularism.

Recently, we entered into a treaty with the Soviet Union. Some people think that as a result of this treaty there has been a change in our policy. I can assure you that there has been no change in our policy because it is the right policy. It is not as though we cannot ever change our policy. But the policy we have so far followed is the one most suited to conditions that have so far existed and is based on principles that we value most. Today we see that many countries, whether they admit it or not, are inclined towards this policy. In fact, for countries like India no other policy can be of any good. Therefore, we have to stick to the basic values whether they flow out of our traditions or from our present-day politics.

In our day-to-day work we do make mistakes. However, we should be bold enough to accept them and always ready to correct them. We have made many changes in our policies and would continue to do so whenever necessary so that we are able to put our poor people on their feet and make India strong. World history tells us that a country does not progress through the barrel of a gun. A country makes progress only when its people are served well, when they are strong and when the Government is run with their consent.

Whatever our party or political ideology, we should be united for the defence, unity and territorial integrity of our country. Today we should have only one slogan and that should be : Let us be one, let us be courageous and let us march forward.

Whether in uniform or without it, all of you should regard yourselves as soldiers of the land and be determined to lay down your lives, if necessary, in the cause of the country. We are all soldiers today and shall fight for freedom and the advancement of humanity.

A Grave Situation

QUESTION : Would you agree that Pakistan is poised menacingly on our borders and there have been a number of violations, air and land ?

From replies to questions at a Press Conference, New Delhi, October 19, 1971

If you agree with me, would you also consider cancellation of your foreign tour?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The answer is 'Yes' and 'No'. You all know—in fact, we get a lot of our information from you—that on our borders there is a massing of Pakistani troops and threatening noises have been made for quite some time now from across the border. But as of now my trip stands.

QUESTION : When do you propose to declare emergency because of the situation?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't know.

QUESTION : Based on your information from both sides of the border, how would you assess the likelihood of war in the near future?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, nobody can prophesy this. We can only say that we have been doing and we will continue to do everything possible to avoid an armed conflict. But, as the first questioner said, the situation is a grave one and all along the borders troops have been brought closer to the border on the other side, with the result that naturally in the interest of our own defence we have to also look to our interests.

QUESTION : May I draw your attention to the interview given by President Yahya Khan to a French paper in which he has said that he is prepared to discuss with the Indian leaders?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have not seen that particular interview. But the question is : What is there to discuss between India and Pakistan? As you know, the problem is not an Indo-Pakistan problem. The problem is between the military regime of West Pakistan and the people and the accepted elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh. Any solution which is found must satisfy the people of Bangladesh and, as I said, the people whom they elected not too long ago to represent them.

QUESTION : Would you like to make any comments on the four-point conditions placed by the Bangladesh Government for the political solution? Do you think these conditions are reasonable for an amicable solution?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The problem is their problem. It is no use my commenting on what they say and what they do not say.

QUESTION : Have there been any suggestions from the great powers, notably the US and the Soviet Union, as to how to meet the present situation? If so, what is our attitude?

THE PRIME MINISTER : So far there have been no specific suggestions. As you know, everybody admires our restraint. But, as I said the other day, we get the verbal praise, and the others who are not restrained get arms support.

QUESTION : You just now said everyone admires our restraint. But how long are we going to restrain ourselves because 9.5 million people have come into our country ? Our economy is in the doldrums and the people are restive really.

THE PRIME MINISTER : To take the last part of your question first, I think except for a few politicians or parties which are trying to incite the people, by and large the people of India are united and I think they realise that the Government is tackling the problem in a sober and balanced way and the Government will never let down the interests of the country or the people.

QUESTION : During your forthcoming talks in Washington, would you impress upon Mr. Nixon to stop supplying arms to Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I do not know what you mean by the word 'impress'. Obviously, when one goes to a country, one of the main purposes of going and meeting the leaders is to try and give them a better understanding of the situation in our country and how we see things, because every country sees things from a particular angle. Now, those countries that are far off may not have been able to visualise the real conditions here.

QUESTION : As is well known, the signing and ratification of the Indo-Soviet Treaty has been hailed throughout the world. How do you assess the Treaty's contribution to the ensurance of peace and security in Asia ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have already expressed myself on this subject many times. Any treaty which is aimed at something positive, that is, peace, friendship, co-operation, does create that atmosphere. This treaty is not against any country or any region and, therefore, I think it has helped to strengthen us and strengthen our friendship.

QUESTION : It is not yet clear to many in India what exact solution the Government has in mind about the Bangladesh problem.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think these things can be spelt out in very precise terms.

QUESTION : Considering the high cost of relief operations in regard to refugees and considering the danger that there may be a very huge deficit created, do you think there will be a supplementary budget to tax people so that the deficits may be narrowed down and price structure may be maintained ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Perhaps you are all aware that the Finance Minister had a meeting with the Chief Ministers and they tried to devise means for further mobilisation of resources.

QUESTION : You might recall that you had said that within six months the Bangladesh issue would be resolved. Do you think that the period is over or would you need more time?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is one of those typical press misstatements, because at no time have I said that the problem would be over in six months. When I spoke in Parliament, I gave a figure that six months would cost us so much. That does not at all mean that it will be over in six months. I took both the figures of the cost as well as the period of six months from, I think, some team which had come here from outside—I forget which it was.

QUESTION : Would you like to give a time?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No.

QUESTION : Gen. Yahya Khan has been maintaining from the beginning that there should be an Indo-Pakistan dialogue. Now, after moving the troops to the border, he has in fact created a tension between India and Pakistan. Would you say that he is succeeding in his aim of bringing about, if not a war between India and Pakistan, at least a dialogue?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is rather intriguing that you should put dialogue and war as almost synonyms, because there is a very great difference. As you know, it is we who have been wanting to say that all Indo-Pak problems can be discussed and perhaps suitable solutions found by negotiations and talks. But this does not include Bangladesh because that, as I said, is not an Indo-Pak problem. There are many other problems which have existed. You know about certain unilateral steps which we had taken with regard to the return of cargo and so on after the fighting in 1965. But we had no response from them. So there are many such points which could have been taken up and which would have helped in the normalisation of relations.

QUESTION : Charlie Chaplin and Andre Malraux, two great men of Europe, have paid rich tributes to you in their memoirs. One of them awaits your visit to France. What do you think of Andre Malraux's offer to take up arms to defend the cause of Bangladesh?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Naturally, one can only admire somebody who is moved to action by the situation there.

QUESTION : Pakistan has usually been saying all the time that while they would like foreign agencies like the UN etc. to be involved in the

solution of this problem, and specially the refugee problem, they allege that we have been refusing it. What is your reaction? Gen. Yahya Khan said the other day also that he was willing to involve the UN with these operations.

THE PRIME MINISTER : First of all, there is a very great difference as to what is happening on that side of the border, that is, in Bangladesh, and on our side of the border. We already have ten representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Relief. The border and all the refugee camps are perfectly open for the Press people and for Members of Parliaments who have come from many different countries ranging from Japan on the one side through Europe on to Canada, the USA, Latin America, New Zealand and the Middle East. All these people have visited and are visiting the camps and the borders. Obviously, there is nothing that we want to hide or we can hide in the sort of society which we have in India.

Therefore it is a valid question : Why do we object to the United Nations' formally sending observers? Well, because we see no need for them. What is the purpose of their coming here? It is said that they will come and see why the refugees are not returning. Now, it seems to me a rather ridiculous question when every day 35,000, 40,000, 42,000 are coming. This is the reason why they are not returning. Quite honestly, if you put yourself in a situation where you have escaped to avoid atrocity, to save your life, and sought shelter and are living in the most difficult conditions, not at all in comfort of any kind, well you can only go back if you are convinced that the situation has changed. But when more people are coming with the same sort of atrocity stories, you cannot possibly go back.

So, the first thing for the United Nations, if it wants to do anything, is to see that conditions are created within Bangladesh which will guarantee the return of the refugees in safety and dignity. Then as the next step they could approach us and say : "Look, we have done this. Will you allow us to come and persuade your refugees?" At this stage certainly the matter could be considered.

QUESTION : With the situation developing as it is today, what would be your strategy—defensive or offensive?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that strategy is hardly discussed at Press Conferences, if you will forgive me.

QUESTION : According to newspaper reports the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, has said on October 5 about treaties : "In a nutshell our position is to take these treaties on the basis of some adjustment...we are actually accepting these treaties." Don't you think that this is a definite advancement from the earlier Chinese position?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know which earlier Chinese position you are referring to, because I think that there has been a very gradual change of attitude for quite some time. I do not think that this is a sudden spurt.

QUESTION : Do you think India and China can exchange full-fledged ambassadors ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no reason why they should not.

QUESTION : When are you going to grant *de jure* recognition to Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know... When I think the time is ripe for it.

QUESTION : There is a great deal of fear in the West, and possibly in India, with armies on both sides, of an accidental war starting. Is there any safeguard to prevent an accident like this happening ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : In answer to a previous question, I have already said that we certainly do not want to provoke a war or do anything because of which a war situation may develop. But this is not a one-sided matter. As somebody has said, you cannot shake hands with a clinched fist.

QUESTION : Would it help to diffuse the present confrontation with Pakistan if any third country like Yugoslavia tries to mediate ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : On what subject will any country mediate ? This is what I have not been able to understand. There is a liberation struggle in Bangladesh. What is the point of mediating with us ? That problem has to be solved there. We are only concerned because of the struggle; because of the atrocities, 13 per cent of the population of Bangladesh is now on Indian soil.

QUESTION : President Yahya Khan is reported to have offered mutual withdrawal of troops from the border. Would you be prepared to accept that ? Or is it the position, as the Defence Minister was quoted as saying the other day, that Indian troops will not pull back from the border unless the Bangladesh problem is settled ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It seems very simple and plausible to say that Pakistan troops will withdraw. But the situation has not begun a week ago. It has been an escalating situation and, as I said, the Pakistani forces all along the line, their Hate India campaign, their call for a war of "jehad" on the basis of religion—all these things have to be considered. You just cannot ignore them and say : We will remove troops. Furthermore, Pakistan's sort of line of withdrawal is very close

to the borders whereas ours is very far. All these things have to be taken into consideration.

QUESTION : Is there anything that the great powers, the Soviet Union, the United States, could do to help soften the tension between this country and Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : They can help to solve the problem in Bangladesh.

QUESTION : In view of the threatening posture of Pakistan, what type of defence preparedness would you like the civilians to attain ? Should we not activise the Central Citizens' Council and such other organisations with a view to galvanising our efforts to defeat the enemies of the country ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I already spoke on this question in Simla. By the way, the Central Citizens' Council has been in existence and it has been working in times of flood or drought or other such calamities. But we do need greater discipline amongst our citizens and their involvement in whatever is happening. I think that all our people's organisations, non-political especially, should help the Citizens' Council or in other ways try to see to it. The most important thing to my mind is that whenever such a situation arises, there are some anti-social elements who either try to spread rumours which will lead to a communal situation or give rise to hoarding, and these anti-social activities must be dealt with very severely.

QUESTION : Did you have some discussions about your assessment of the Chinese situation, the Chinese policy, and what is President Tito's assessment of Chinese policy and do you come together on some joint assessment ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I can only say that our views were broadly similar.

QUESTION : After hearing the recent broadcast of Gen. Yahya Khan, do you think he has any chances to attain his plan for handing over power to materialise ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is again a question for the people of that region, but I think the setting up of a puppet government is not going to be a solution.

QUESTION : The Bangladesh people have declared unequivocally that they want independence and by your answer now it seems that you want that Pakistan and Bangladesh have to settle it among themselves. Do you think there is a solution possible in this position taken by Bangladesh and Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Even if they have independence, it is a settlement with Pakistan. Is it not? That is a different way of arriving at a settlement, but it is a settlement.

QUESTION : What is the priority for your Government as far as the refugees are concerned? Is it to get more aid from the international community or is it to force Pakistan to create political conditions so that the refugees could return to their homeland?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have asked for aid only because this financial burden of looking after over nine million people is a tremendous one. But we are quite definite in our mind that these people are here on a temporary basis. We cannot allow them to settle in India. Therefore, the sooner they can go back, the better it is, and we think that the sooner they go back, the less chance there will be of any kind of conflagration.

QUESTION : About the assistance we give to the freedom-fighters in Bangladesh, may I take it that it will not be stopped under external pressure?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The freedom-fighters have many resources. There are a large number of Bangladesh citizens all over the world who are helping with money and other resources.

QUESTION : Can you describe to me what kind of gesture Pakistan can possibly make as a first step towards reducing the concentration of troops on the Indian side of the border?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The first step is to stop their atrocities in Bangladesh and try to create conditions where the elected representatives are accepted—the representatives, who were elected perhaps by the biggest majority ever in a free election. This election was won under President Yahya Khan's military regime. So, there can be no doubt that it was a fair and free election. I think that that election cannot be ignored when you are thinking of any solution.

QUESTION : Recently certain disclosures have been made in the US Congress about some clandestine arms deals between Pakistan and the United States. Are you going to take up this issue with America, because certain arms have been sent contrary to the embargo and the assurance given to the Government of India?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Such things, if true, are always taken up by the Foreign Office.

QUESTION : The Defence Minister said the other day that if Pakistan forces war on us, we will not hesitate to occupy Pakistani territory and will stay put. Will you assure the nation that even if there is another Tashkent Agreement, we will not do that?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I never answer hypothetical questions.

QUESTION : In view of the fact that we have taken sufficient steps to meet the Pakistani threat, are there any indications in the last few days that Pakistan is revising her attitude, that is, President Yahya Khan's interview with *Le Monde* and the discussions he is supposed to have had with President Podgorny in Teheran ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have not seen his interview. I have no indication whether his views are changing.

QUESTION : There are some misgivings already in the press and in political parties that the Indo-Soviet Treaty will lead to some sort of curtailment of India's nuclear development programme. In this connection, would you tell us what exactly is the progress in studying the feasibility of underground nuclear explosions for mineral exploitation, etc. ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Firstly, the two things are not even remotely connected. You said something that there are some misgivings. I would like to repeat what I said earlier : There are no misgivings in the public mind. There are some interested newspapers, some interested political parties who are trying their very best to spread such rumours. But I do not think the public of India is going to give credence to them. No foreign country can curtail any of our programmes or prevent us from doing what we consider to be in the national interest. I have said this I do not know how many times and I am prepared to say this as many times more as you like and no kind of provocation from these parties or these news papers is going to make a difference to my language or to my stand.

QUESTION : May I change the subject ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : That is not my service. The floor is yours.

QUESTION : In this Ganguli episode, will you please tell us who is to be blamed more—the Chairman or the Minister ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no question of blame. Obviously, the services are there to carry out certain programmes. These are not little empires of people.

QUESTION : Do you approve of delinking of Shri Ganguli's coach at Serai Rohilla ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am not interested whether it was or was not. I do not know what happened. I am not at all interested.

QUESTION : There was a headline story that Shri Chandrasekhar's election was a little bit of a setback to you personally. How far is it true ? I was not there, I don't know.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think you are fully capable of assessing the situation without being there. But I think that there is no question of setback to somebody's personality. I do not know how you can give a setback to a personality anyway, because my personality is in my hands. Nobody else can change my personality. Whether my personality grows or is diminishing depends on my actions, not on what somebody else does. So far as Shri Chandrasekhar's election is concerned, it was a free and fair election. He has won it and we welcome him as a member of the Election Committee.

QUESTION : What steps does the Government propose to take to check the steep rise in prices ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There are two sides—the question of demand and the question of supply. On both sides, particularly we are adopting policies—fiscal and otherwise—which we hope will make some impact.

QUESTION : Can you not resort to price freeze ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The whole question is being gone into in great depth in consultation with various people, States and so on.

QUESTION : What is your assessment on the general economic situation in the country and the impact of the refugee problem on the fulfilment of economic programmes of the country—first of all, the Fourth Five Year Plan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously, the strain on our economy is an extremely severe one and we are trying our best to see that the Plan goes through. But it is a very very difficult situation.

QUESTION : Would you meet the Pakistan President if you could avoid war by it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You see, I am prepared to meet anybody if thereby something is solved. But here is a question which affects some other people. It is not affecting India or the Indian people, basically I mean. This is a side-effect of the problem. You can't say it will solve the fringe of the problem when you are not tackling the cause of it.

QUESTION : What can you say about the prospects of ensuring peace and justice in the Middle East and Indo-China ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : In Indo-China the situation is changing. But in the Middle East, it remains just as grave and it is ironic that while there are so many steps for *detente* in Europe, the conflicts in Asia continue and grow.

QUESTION : What is the Government's intention regarding legislation about diffusion of press ownership ? Is it likely to come in the next session ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We cannot say whether it is likely or not, because it has to be fully gone into. Some difficulties have been pointed out. But Government is committed to doing something about this problem. As you know, there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction on this account.

QUESTION : In view of some of the measures you have taken to improve the situation regarding science and technology in the country and to give employment to technicians and engineers who are already unemployed in many cases, would you tell us whether the steps are adequate enough to ensure technology to grow and solve the unemployment problem of engineers ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Nobody has said that the unemployment problem will be solved. All we can do is to take some steps towards its solution. That is, step by step you employ more people and gradually the problem is solved. I think that our employment programmes have made some impact but it is difficult to have the full picture until a little later on.

QUESTION : Is your Government thinking in terms of putting a freeze on wages and income to meet the present economic crisis ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have answered this. As I said, we are looking at it from all angles as to what is possible and what will help in the present situation.

QUESTION : Now that you are going on a foreign tour and if there is going to be a war against India, would you give an assurance that security of the country is safe in the hands of the Army ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The country is perfectly safe in the hands of the Army and, if I may say so, of the people themselves. Our people have shown maturity and soundness of attitude which, I think, is rare in the world. I think they can be trusted to look after this country with the help of defence forces and all of us.

QUESTION : Are you going to introduce any legislation on the Monopoly Press Bill ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is a draft bill. It is under consideration and has to be discussed further.

QUESTION : Will you put an end to this speculation about Cabinet reshuffle ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think I should deny you that occupation. You seem to be otherwise not too occupied because this question crops up every month or so.

QUESTION : We heard about the proposal to bring legislation to ban some of the communal parties. We would like to know at what stage that is ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I myself do not know.

QUESTION : What is the Union Government's assessment of the military chances of the Mukti Bahini ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Mukti Bahini may not have the military strength of the West Pakistani armed forces in Bangladesh. But they have with them the entire population of Bangladesh. I do not think anybody can underestimate the flame of freedom which is burning in the hearts of the East Bengal people. History has shown that such battles for freedom may have a setback but they are always won.

QUESTION : Despite professing dynamic non-alignment, how is it that you have not still established full diplomatic relations with North Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think this is at all involved with non-alignment or dynamism of any kind. I think we are very closely in touch with both these countries. We have good relations with them. We have a similarity of outlook on many questions and our relationship has been becoming closer. As to recognition, it again is a question of timing.

QUESTION : I would like to go back to the Ganguli episode. Do you think that the Union Railway Ministry has handled the Ganguli episode the way it should have been handled ? Are you quite satisfied ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The question is not whether it has been handled properly or not. In human relations there always is room for improvement, no matter at what level or at what stage. The whole country is facing a very difficult and grave situation which we have been discussing in this Press Conference. Now, this is the time when there must be extremely good coordination amongst all the people concerned and the Railways have to play a very important part.

QUESTION : Would you kindly assess your talks with President Tito ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As you know, President Tito is an old friend of India, and we have had extremely close relationship with him for many many years. We have worked together closely on problems of the non-aligned countries, and so any visit of his to this country is welcome, and to us is most useful. We have had very friendly and cordial talks covering a wide range of subjects and, as somebody has remarked here, we, each of us, gave an assessment of our view of events as they were unfolding in the world.

QUESTION : As regards the draft bill for diffusion of ownership of newspapers, is the Press Council going to be consulted before it is introduced in Parliament ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Honestly, I do not know. But even after it is introduced in Parliament, there is room for consultation. It does not close the consultation.

QUESTION : What do you hope to accomplish in your talks with President Nixon ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : These visits are not undertaken to accomplish anything. You do not have a set goal which you must attain. I am going to the U.S.A., as to the other countries on my itinerary, in response to long-standing invitations. The main purpose is an exchange of views. Today the world situation is changing quite fast and I think it is very important for Heads of Government to keep in personal touch with the thinking of other leaders and other countries. So far as I am concerned, this is my only reason.

QUESTION : What is the situation on India-China border ? Is there any concentration of Chinese troops on our border ? My second question is : Did you receive any reply from Premier Chou En-lai ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have not received any reply and I do not think there is any great concentration. There are some Chinese troops along the Tibetan border. I think this is really the last question. So you think deeply before you put it.

QUESTION : On the eve of your visit to these countries would you like to say, has there been any material change in the attitude of the international community in general and the countries you are visiting in particular *vis-a-vis* Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know what you mean by "material change". I do not think there has been any material change. You know war is such a terrible thing that every country would like to avoid it, especially since one does not know what it will lead to. There has been a tendency lately of fighting, once it began, to go on and on and involve more people and more countries also. I am not saying any of this will, or even may, happen but only that every country in the world does feel that this is a situation which if it can be avoided should be avoided. We entirely agree that everything should be done to avoid this situation. But since we are facing the consequences of what is happening in Bangladesh, since we have not only the tremendous economic burden when we are least able to bear such a burden and when it is not only an economic question but it is creating other tensions—social tensions, political tensions—in an area of our country which is

very sensitive at the best of time, which is full of problems at the best of time, we have to view this in perspective keeping in view our national interest, the peace, the security and stability of our eastern region.

QUESTION : Will you tell us about the latest situation on the border ? Is it really very very grave ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know whether you want me to give a list of exactly what troops are amassed there. Because, if so, I am not going to do it.

QUESTION : The High Command of your party has been bringing about certain structural changes in the party for the last few months. The Assembly elections are due in March. Of late, we read reports which are similar to developments which were the hallmark in the old party, that is, differences between this group and that group have already started. Do you, as the unchallenged leader of the party, feel satisfied that the party will be able to put its best foot forward within a month or so, because the tickets, etc. will start in another month ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, as we know, no matter how solid a party is in any country, there are group rivalries, there are personal ambitions; this is just part of political life in a democratic system. I do not think that this necessarily weakens the party. I personally have no doubt that the party will stand solid at the time of elections and will sink its differences and that all people will work together, not merely for the elections which are just a means but for implementing the programmes and pledges which we have made to our people.

India on the Move

IT IS A pleasure to be in Belgium and have the opportunity of meeting its leaders. I thank you for your invitation and your gracious hospitality.

My visit to Belgium has rekindled old memories. I was under ten when I first came here and experienced the thrill of my first flight from Ostend to Dover, and that was an exciting experience. My next visit was in connection with a Conference of the International Union of Child Welfare. The city was in a festive mood then, for it was the time of the great Brussels Fair which was an example of the energy, the

Speech at dinner given in her honour by the Prime Minister of Belgium, Brussels, October 24, 1971

organisational ability, the meticulousness and the sense of purpose which have made Belgium what it is.

The history of Belgium is one of great achievements. The cathedrals and noble town halls of the Middle Ages are part of the world's heritage. In later years came the great tapestries, and those immortals of the art world—Brueghel, Rubens and Van Dyck. My own discovery of Maurice Materlinck opened a new world for me, giving insight into the wonderful organisation of the lives of insects and arousing my interest in nature, which is a continuing delight.

A few months ago, we welcomed Their Majesties the King and Queen of Belgium. Their dignity, sincerity and sympathetic understanding made a deep impression on our people. Their visit was brief. But perhaps they had a glimpse of what we are trying to do against tremendous odds. To bring a better life to a country as vast and ancient as India, steeped in poverty and bound in tradition, in a system which is perhaps the freest in the world, can never be easy.

Many have criticised our ways and our endeavours. It was said that no people could win independence through non-violent means. Yet our leaders' faith in our people proved that their way was the right one for India. Doubts were then expressed whether India could remain united and whether democracy could take hold and survive in an undeveloped country where literacy was low. In the fifth elections to our Parliament this year, 152 million people went to the polls and exercised their right to vote, even though in some places there was threat of violence. They showed maturity and discrimination. Similar doubts were expressed about the process of democratic planning. Our plans have had their ups and downs, but they have given us direction and we have moved steadily forward.

Just two or three years ago, foreign experts were prophesying that we would never be able to feed our growing population. It was in the very years of unprecedented and severe drought that we introduced our new agricultural strategy and today in spite of floods in the north and drought in the south, we have produced 108 million tonnes of foodgrains, making India self-sufficient in this sphere. Our industrial production has trebled. In 1951, 23 million children went to schools. Today their number is 80 million. We have two-and-a-half million university students. Unchanging India is on the move.

Although our achievement has not been insignificant, we are only too acutely aware that we have barely touched the fringe of the problem. Our people still live in several centuries and the poverty of ages cannot be removed in a few years. In our planning we are endeavouring to combine progress with social justice. Through our programmes we are attempting to help the weakest in any section, the small farmer, the small industrialist, the new entrepreneur, so that little by little inequality can be lessened.

It is ironic that just when we had at long last reached a point for rapid economic advance, suddenly and through no fault of ours, a tremendous burden fell upon us. India which is one of the poorest countries in the world, has the additional burden of looking after thirteen per cent of the population of East Bengal which is now on Indian soil. Thus, what was the problem of another country has now been deliberately converted into a problem for India. This is not just an economic question. It has deep political and social overtones and is a real threat to our security and stability. It is the world's responsibility to create conditions in which there can be a lasting and acceptable solution.

I am grateful for the generous gesture which you have just announced. Mr. Prime Minister, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I invite you to drink to the health and long life of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Belgium, to the prosperity of Belgium, to the health of the Prime Minister and to friendship and co-operation between our two countries.

* * *

IT IS A privilege to come to this ancient and famous university. I thank you for the honour you have conferred upon me.

In its history of more than six centuries, your university has embodied the spirit of the Czechoslovak people and left its mark on events. We in India have a special affection for the university because of its contribution in making India known to Europe. I recall in particular the names of two Indologists who taught here—Winternitz and Vincent Lesny. Professor Lesny was a friend of Rabindranath Tagore and of my father. By sending me books on Prague, he aroused my interest in your beautiful city when I was a small girl. I met him only once much later and was impressed by his scholarship and his deep attachment to the great human values which transcend geographical boundaries and the limits of time. I hope there are many in Czechoslovakia who still nurse friendship for a country which is geographically far and so different from your own.

I first came to Czechoslovakia with my father in my student days during one of the dark periods of European history, when the forces of evil were about to invade your land, bringing terror and destruction. For me it was a political education, giving me an insight into the labyrinthine way of international diplomacy, and acquaintance with well-known personalities. I got a glimpse of the manoeuvres behind the scene which were to influence the geography and the future course of history in this part of the world. An important truth etched on my mind : How much depends on courage. You regained your freedom

Convocation address at the Charles University of Prague, after receiving the Degree of Doctor of Laws, Prague, June 19, 1972

through great sacrifices. Not long afterwards my own country liberated itself from colonial rule.

India is technologically backward. But it was not always identified with poverty. From the earliest centuries the prosperity of India brought traders to our ports and its philosophical and scientific knowledge attracted scholars to our universities. Were you to see the illustrated treatise on surgery written by a famous teacher in the University of Taxila about twenty centuries ago, you would be impressed by the number and variety of the surgical instruments which were then in use. Scholars from all parts of India came to study Buddhism in the ancient University of Nalanda.

India's riches—the product of its earth and the skill of its craftsmen—drew Europe to our shores, resulting in a subjugation which brought about economic, social and political degradation. Something akin to the spirit of the "good soldier Schweik" sustained our people through the long difficult years when we pledged to fight for our freedom so that the people of India might enjoy the fruits of their toil, and have the necessities of life and full opportunities of growth.

This darkest period of our history produced an astonishing number of great and brilliant men and women in many walks of life—not in politics alone but also in literature, in philosophy and in social reform. These were the stalwarts who led our renaissance, our revolution and our liberation.

This year we celebrate the twentyfifth anniversary of our freedom, yet we feel that the struggle for the freedom we had envisaged is not yet over. We have still to overcome the economic and cultural consequences of colonialism. The necessities of life and full opportunities of growth have still to reach every section of our society.

These have been years of travail but by dint of hard work and determination we are attempting to benefit from modern knowledge without losing our distinctive personality or diminishing that which has given Indian civilisation its amazing strength and continuity over thousands of years. During these years we have laid firm foundations for progress.

Can you imagine the magnitude of the task of improving the levels of living of 550 million people and the scale of the effort required? But through our plans of economic development, we have faced this very challenge. In this task of transforming our subsistence economy into a modern economy, we have profited from the skill and knowledge of Czechoslovakia in machine-building and machine-tool making.

I do not wish to dwell on the vast changes which have been effected in India during the short period of 25 years of our independence, but would rather speak about the ideas and values which we cherish. Being human, we may not always be able to live up to them, and when we

fall below standards, we have a sense of guilt, but these ideas remain our inspiration.

Tolerance has run like a thread linking the different phases of our civilization. By tolerance we mean the acceptance of reality in its manifold forms, a distrust of over-simplification, a respect for other people's beliefs, indeed, a recognition of the right of all living beings to their place in the universe. For us there can be no true progress if we are alienated from this tradition. These must be the roots of our development.

Our concentration on the welfare of our people has not been without interruption. Four times in the last 25 years, we have been invaded and forced to defend our freedom, and to divert a larger share of our national income from development. Pressures have been exerted to involve us into other people's quarrels. But we have kept aloof from these confrontations and have ourselves remained in the camp of peace seeking friendship with all countries regardless of their attitudes and systems of Government.

Our struggle for freedom was distinctive in many ways. It contributed a new dimension to contemporary thought. No nation can live by the experience of others. Some ideas must be borrowed, but if they are not fused with a nation's own ideas and adapted to its needs, they will remain lifeless appendages. We adopted the concepts of nationalism, rational progress and socialism from European thought, but Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru reinterpreted them in our own idiom and remoulded them in the light of India's long historical experience and philosophical exploration. The major achievement of these men, so different in temperament but so united in their purpose, was to release nationalism from chauvinistic limitations and to raise socialism above doctrinal particulars.

Our philosophy accepts the equality of all individuals but in actual fact, over the centuries, our society became rigid and stratified, not only denying equality but introducing certain customs which were barbarous and inhuman. It was natural that our national movement should be part of a social revolution in which there was systematic assault against all such evils. By giving life to the aspirations which had lain dormant in the hearts of people, Mahatma Gandhi was able to convert millions into active partnership in the freedom struggle. The participation of women in large numbers and at all levels paved the way for their position and contributed to public affairs in post-independence India; Mahatma Gandhi became the symbol of the urges and limitless energy of our nation. He was the crest of the wave but the people themselves were the wave. The idea of non-violence was not unknown in the world but it was the genius of Mahatma Gandhi which gave it life and translated an abstract principle into a powerful political weapon.

Many in our country and in other parts of the world doubted the ability of a suppressed people to fight imperialism by non-violent means. In our circumstances it was the only way. We proved that a people's best weapons are its determination and unity.

After the attainment of freedom again there were people who doubted the successful working of our political system in a country so vast and varied, and the consolidation of unity with so many religions and major languages. We feel that our diversity adds to the richness of our cultural life and is an added source of strength to our unity. We have found that the best way of keeping together different segments of society and of countering centrifugal pulls is by the willingness to sit together to discuss problems and to remove basic causes of suspicion or fear.

There have been many prophets of doom. They forecast that we would not be able to work planned development in our kind of system. But three Five Year Plans have been completed and we are about to complete the fourth. European experts predicted that we would not be able to feed our growing population and that there would be dire famine in the early seventies. Those were the very years when we achieved record harvests and self-sufficiency in cereals.

These experts and others have been wide off the mark because they try to explain every society from the European point of view and have tried to fit India into their preconceived theories and models. They do not take into account the extraordinary resilience of our people and their deep reserves of faith and fortitude.

We in India have consciously attempted to avoid an extreme position, we have to take note of the many varieties of every situation, the nuances of shading in the chairoscuro. We try to keep in mind one of the greatest truths proclaimed by our forefathers : that truth is one but the wise describe it as many. This belief that there can be various paths to reality is the basis of our policy of co-existence. Every nation should have the right to follow its social system and must make allowance for the right of others to follow the truth as they envisage it.

A large number of countries in Asia and Africa as well as from other parts of the world, have adopted a foreign policy similar to ours, subscribing to peaceful co-existence and non-alignment with blocs. It is now more clearly appreciated that world order depends on co-operation and on the recognition that every small country has equal rights and that the world is larger than the largest nation.

The size of a country is not important. A small country was once able to overrun us. There are examples of small countries successfully resisting and thwarting the will of mighty powers. A classic example of this is the struggle of the Vietnamese people, which has demonstrated the limitations of power. We have the greatest sympathy for the agony of the people of Vietnam and admiration for their unparalleled heroism.

Nearer to us, sacrifice and suffering conquered brutality and oppression in the emergence of Bangladesh. Every country must have many shining examples to show that the spirit of man is unconquerable.

In the long perspective of history, the descriptions "affluent" and "backward" do not make material difference. Man is not just statistics nor can a nation be assessed by figures of per capita income and number of cars per population, for these do not give the true picture of progress or of the fundamental changes which are taking place. International averages may often be irrelevant to the specifics of local situation. India should be judged not by the living standards of affluent countries but by what she has been able to achieve and by the size and temper of the struggle she is waging against tremendous odds. We are concerned not merely with material goods and services, urgent as they are, but also with the quality of the men and women who will use them.

Quality is not to be judged by wealth or rank or the present conception of efficiency, but by the quality of the mind, its sweep of comprehension, its depth of compassion—by its maturity and sense of responsibility. In the midst of vast changes which are taking place in our own contemporary world, when science and technology are stretching man's reach to the moon, there is an uneasy feeling that ignoring the experience of the past years and the increasing evidence of restlessness we may once again continue along what seems to be the easier course of a one-dimensional economic material advance.

I sincerely hope that as centuries-old centre of learning, this great university will send into the wide world, men and women imbued with the spirit of humanism dedicated to the unceasing quest for knowledge and understanding; inspired to fight injustice and always to hold aloft the banner of the brotherhood of man.

Indian Democracy

I AM GLAD to have this opportunity of addressing such a distinguished gathering which includes many specialists on India. I am confining my remarks to one theme—Democracy in India.

During our struggle for independence, it seemed that freedom itself would be fulfilment. But when we achieved it, we knew that every completion is a beginning. For us, this was the start of a great experi-

Speech at the Royal Institute of International Relations, London, October 29, 1971

ment in the creation of democracy in an ancient, complex and vast country.

The story of Indian development is not without significance for the rest of the world. How could it be otherwise when it encompasses the aspirations and struggles of over 550 million human beings? Political theorists with their neatly labelled indices have sometimes spoken of democracy in India as a futile quest. To them democracy could only be a two-party system worked by those who were educated in a particular way. Perhaps as advanced people of the West of a generation ago had protested that the colonial countries were not ready for freedom, so it was said that the under-developed societies of Asia and Africa were not ready for democracy and could achieve order only under dictatorship of some kind or at most a controlled or guided democracy. Can democracy be guided any more than freedom? Is not guided democracy a contradiction? Perhaps these questions are irrelevant for it now seems that in some countries the word 'Democracy' was used as a shield for reaction and the subversion of freedom. But we did take democracy seriously. To us it conveyed the equality of all people to participate at every level in the functioning of Government.

In the choice of political institutions, it is not inevitably the past that is decisive, but the changing conditions of the lives and attitudes of people and the capacity of those who are in positions of leadership to involve the largest number of people in the political process.

The British ruled over as for two hundred years. Little did those early colonizers realise that along with their flag they brought the seeds which would destroy their rule. Macaulay, who pleaded so passionately for western education, did not quite foresee that he was undermining the edifice he was so anxious to perpetuate. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought ancient India face to face with the imperatives of the contemporary world. And we quickly absorbed all that was relevant and significant in Bentham and Mill, in Rousseau and Voltaire, down to Marx and Weber. All this was grafted onto the Indian ethos. We then had Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru, to mention only a few.

Our democracy is dedicated to planned economic development, the peaceful transformation of an old social order and the uplifting of millions of people from conditions of social, economic and technological under-development. Thus, what we are attempting in India is not mere imitation of the Westminster system but a creative application of meaningful democracy to the vastly different economic and social problems of India.

Democracy was not entirely new to India, for its roots could be found also in our old panchayat system. This system probably came into being because the village and the people were too distant from

the centres of political power. Today this ancient institution has been transformed into a new organ of self-government at district and, what we call, block levels as a link between the Government's programmes and the people.

The concept of the rule of law and the British pattern of administration may have helped to keep order in the country, but much in these institutions has remained static and without changes. They are becoming stumbling blocks to democracy and to progress.

There are forces in our society, as in others, which pull in opposite directions. The competitiveness of democracy and of contemporary living seems superficially sometimes to have strengthened the hold of caste, religion and region, and these are now exploited for social and economic gain. But this is a passing phase and these differences cannot weaken India's fundamental unity or the basic sense of Indianness which is a powerful binding factor. Paradoxical though it may sound, we believe that the functioning of democracy itself can remove these obstacles on the democratic path.

Education has expanded tremendously. Today the number of children in schools has gone up from 23.4 million in 1951 to 83 million. But I am sorry to say that we have not done as well as we should have in our programmes for adult literacy. Without being able to read, a person's world is a limited one, for he cannot share the knowledge and companionship that come with books. We must, and we are, doing more for primary education, to strengthen secondary education and for adult literacy programmes.

At the same time I cannot agree with the common belief in the West that literacy by itself gives greater wisdom or understanding. Our people, illiterate though they may sometimes be, are the inheritors of an ancient culture and philosophy, which have sustained them through the vicissitudes of their long history. Indian voters have shown extraordinary insight and understanding of what goes on around them. If some are misled by false propaganda or diverted by irrelvant factors their number is not larger than those of their literate—even educated—counterparts in other countries. The Indian voter knows where his interests lie and has exercised his right to vote with great political sophistication in spite of the competitive political platforms of numerous parties, even in the face of threat, and violence. It is because of this basic soundness of our people that democracy has taken root in India.

Long before Independence, the Congress party had committed itself to certain programmes. Indeed our leaders had made it clear that we were fighting not only against foreign rule but against all that was evil in our society, against injustice and poverty and social inequality. Our system must, therefore, cater to the genuine needs of ordinary people without neglecting the long-term development of

the country. Development adds a new dimension to the challenge of democracy.

Three distinct streams of thought have combined to produce what might vaguely be called the Indian approach to democracy. There is a stream of liberalism and parliamentary democracy, which emerged out of the British system—parliamentary institutions, political parties, free elections, fundamental rights and freedom, the rule of law etc., of which formed the political core of our democratic system. Parliament is the commanding centre of our political system, and Government's responsibility to the legislature at the Centre and in the States is beyond dispute.

In modern society, freedom cannot be the unrestricted play of individualism nor the apotheosis of private interests and private enterprise as against social interest and the public good. Freedom lies in a delicate and continuous balancing of the rights of the individual with the rights of society. Our Constitution and our actual political practice provide a larger degree of freedom than is obtained anywhere else in the world. We stand for the freedom of the Press, but we do not accept the proposition that the freedom of the Press means the freedom of industrialists to own the Press, or that the right to property should also stand in the way of progressive and necessary social legislation to lessen glaring inequalities of wealth and bring the reality of economic freedom to larger sections of the population. We have taken action to eliminate these anomalies. We have sought to amend the Constitution in order to give substance to democracy.

The second major stream is that of socialist thought with emphasis on social democracy and economic planning and development. Our nationalist movement had interpreted political independence and democracy in terms of the welfare of the common man. After Independence, this interpretation became the predominant content of our democratic system. Indeed, the entire apparatus of democracy is geared to social and economic development. In Europe, democracy as we know it, followed the Industrial Revolution. In India democracy with its freedom and pressing popular demands came first, and the process of industrialisation, economic development and major welfare schemes have to be operated in the face of diverse and contradictory pressures.

This baffling combination makes our task more difficult and because of the absence of organised propaganda, our achievement appears less spectacular than the accomplishment of others by different methods. But we think that we have gained something in the longer run, not so much in glittering material terms but in terms of human values gained, in terms of human sufferings avoided, and in terms of the enduring and harmonious development of the individual and the society. I do believe that real and lasting social transformation,

encompassing attitudes of mind and ways of living of millions of people, can be effected only by peaceful means.

The third stream has emanated from Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violent revolution. The impact of Gandhian thought and method on democracy in India is indirect and impalpable, yet subtly pervasive. It has supported and enriched India. This whole experiment, this endeavour to combine freedom, socialism and the methods of peace in an immensely complex situation is taking place in India not in isolation from the rest of the world, but in the midst of international co-operation and in the glare of world-wide publicity. International co-operation is a constituent element of India's effort in building a progressive economy and a democratic society. This is why ever since our independence we have put forward the idea of world peace and world co-operation as an enlightened national interest of India.

We believe in and we have strictly adhered to the principle of non-interference. But can this be one-sided? Today there is interference in our affairs, and the stability, progress and security of our country are gravely threatened. As a result of the tragic events in East Bengal, nine million people have poured into our territory, creating a situation which seems to surpass the convulsions of Partition. The crisis in Pakistan is a deep one and the spectre which haunts that unhappy country cannot be exercized by the usual recourse to blaming India. Two questions arise. First, whether religion by itself can form the basis of a nation-state in our times, especially when the state machinery is impervious to the ordinary laws of political development and cultural aspirations. And secondly, whether some action other than that of the bayonet is not necessary to win loyalty. We in India are restrained and calm in the face of threat and provocation, but we are bound to protect the interests of our country.

No country, least of all one as vast and varied as India, can be classified under one label or another. It seems to me that even those who claim expert knowledge of India are often wide off the mark in their assessment of Indian events.

Many specialists tend to fit facts into a preconceived framework of theory about caste and models of development which have little relevance to reality. Even in Britain which has such close historical ties with us, there is a wide gap in the understanding of the forces which have shaped our recent history and which are influencing us today. To have a worthwhile dialogue such an understanding is vital. Britain and India must both replace the old myths by a more rational approach. Given the necessary intellectual efforts on both sides, I am confident that India and Britain can have creative and purposeful relations. It is the hope of bringing about such relations that brings me to London and to this Institute.



Visit to Laccadive Islands, October 10, 1969



With children, who won bravery awards, New Delhi, January 22, 1970



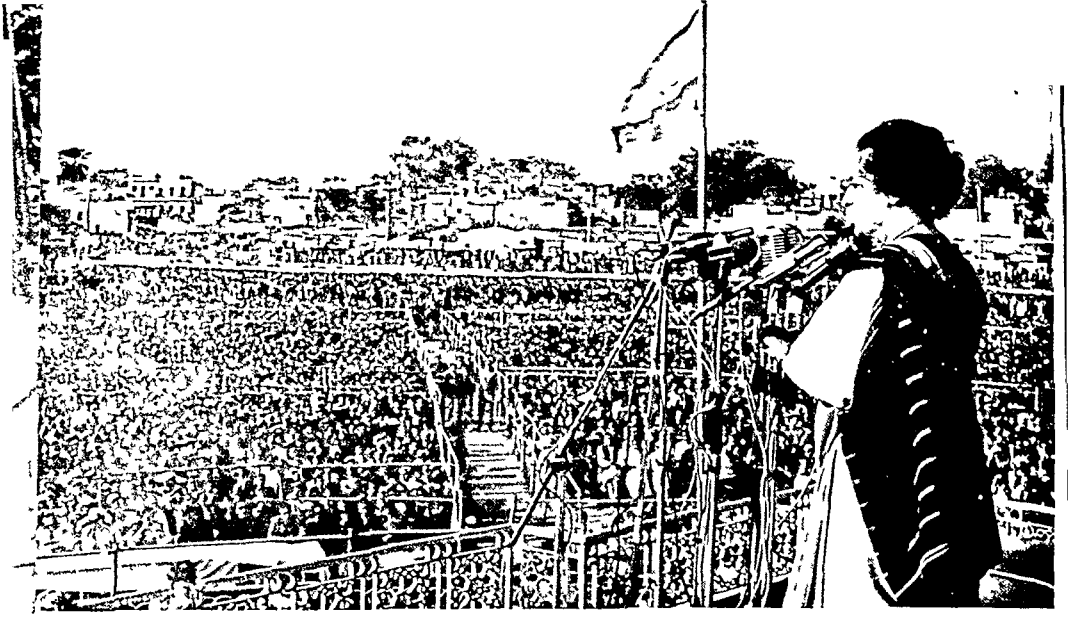
At Santiniketan Convocation, February 2, 1971



Acknowledging greetings from people on her victory in the General Election, March, 1971

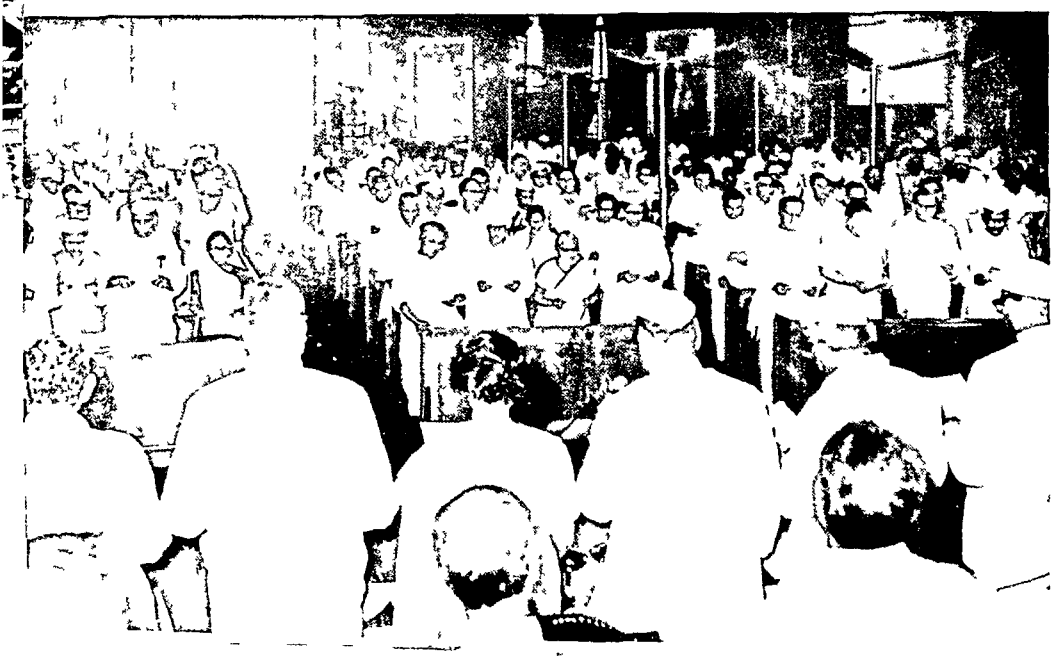
With members of the victorious Indian Cricket Team, New Delhi, September 12, 1971





Addressing a public meeting at New Delhi, December 12, 1971

Taking pledge at the midnight session of Parliament called to celebrate Silver Jubilee of India's Independence, New Delhi, August 14-15, 1972



Unity in Diversity

THIS IS A very awe-inspiring moment for me because I have never spoken in a Cathedral before. And the audience is so mixed that it is difficult to know just what to tell you about India. Obviously those who have come from India and have some basic knowledge about what is happening there would like one kind of speech and those perhaps who are not so closely in touch would like another kind. But even those who are from India may not have been in touch with what has been happening there since last year.

You all know that India is a very ancient country. Although since our Independence we have been trying desparately hard to modernise our society, we still live in several centuries and there are many different levels of development in different parts of the country. We have a highly developed society such as those of our scientists, those who work in the fields of atomic energy and alongside we have tribal societies who still live in another age. But all these and many different people in between are what go to make the Indian Nation.

Sometime people who live far away whether in the United States, in Europe or other parts of the world think that merely because we have several religions or sixteen languages or other points of difference between us our unity is threatened or there is some danger to it. But this is not true. We have great diversity but we have equally great unity. In fact, we feel that it is the very diversity of the country which gives strength to its unity. There is, or rather I would say, there always has been a basic unity; there has been a basic feeling of Indianness which joins together Indians of different religions and different languages and even different races.

Today the unity is stronger than ever before because today's unity is caused by our democratic functioning. In India democracy does not mean merely giving a vote once in five years or whenever there are more elections in between. It means trying to participate in what is happening in the country. I do not claim that everybody is participating today but it is our effort that our society should be such that all sections of the people would have the opportunity to participate.

Now obviously, this can take place only with some of the basic problems, the basic difficulties which face the people, are solved. India's major problem which has been there for centuries, and remains today, is the problem of poverty and of economic inequality. We feel that democracy cannot be real for our people unless poverty is lessened and that is why we say that we are a secular socialist democracy. The word 'secular' does not mean that we are anti-religion.

Speech at a function organised by the Indian Students Association of Washington, Washington November 5, 1971

On the contrary, it means that the State has equal respect for all the religions of the country and that a citizen has equal rights regardless of his religion. The State as such does not have a religion of its own. Obviously it cannot. If a State has a religion then those who did not belong to that religion would not feel that they were equals. Similarly in the economic field, we believe that it is only through socialism that we can bring about that sort of equality which is essential to a real democracy.

Today under our Constitution all citizens are equal. But we know that, in fact, it is not so. A person who is poor although he has the same rights, in practice he cannot enjoy those rights. He does not have the same rights, he does not have the same education, he does not have the same nutrition, he does not have the same employment opportunities and he does not even have the same rights legally because the other person can employ a far better lawyer and so on.

Wherever there is such great inequality there is bound to be tension in society and that is why in order to make our democracy meaningful to the people, in order that there should be a sort of peace which will allow fast economic progress, we have to fight with poverty. But our way has been a democratic way and a peaceful way. We think that the changes which must come and which will come whether we want them or not should come peacefully. Either we help to give direction to the changes or the changes will come in spite of us and, therefore, they may come violently and they may cause a great deal of disruption. Now, any kind of change does create difficulties for somebody or other—even the smallest change. It is for society to have the strength to get over these difficulties in a friendly way and in co-operation with each other. Our way of bringing socialism is not to have a uniform pattern, it is certainly not to compel people to do anything. It is not even to take away things from those who have but we do have rules and regulations to see that those who have do not increase their economic power at the cost of others.

Perhaps you heard of the violence we had in some parts of the country. You may also have heard of the word Naxalite which is what we use for some of our extremist elements. How did this grow? Because in many parts of the country there have not been proper land legislation and where there is legislation it had not always been implemented. So, in one part of the country certain extremist political elements, who are able to exploit the feelings of the people—and in this area there happen to be rather backward tribal people—lead these tribal people, attack the landlords of that area with bows, arrows and spears, kill them and occupy their land. Now that is one way of doing things. The other way is that we see that there is injustice and, therefore, we have such laws to say that each person can own not more than a certain area of land or urban property or whatever

it is. And so certainly a person suffers a little bit but he does not really suffer that, because even within that limit he is very well off. And this is the price we pay for peace and economic development and we all know the experience of this country and of other countries is that it is only when opportunities are spread out amongst people that society itself can be strengthened and these tensions are lessened.

We speak of freedom and of democracy but these words today do not mean just what they meant some years ago. For instance, when the word democracy first came into being it did not mean that everybody had the right. It meant that there were a few privileged people who had the right and the vast majority of people who did not. But through the ages the meaning of the word changed and nobody today will accept that limited meaning and today all the protest movements in the world are because some group or the other feels that those people, whether they are black or brown, whether they are women or young people, are not enjoying their rights which should be theirs under democracy. This is why these protest movements begin and gather strength. So, in India we are trying to evolve a way in which we can change the society so that little by little those who have been under-privileged through the ages are able to be equal citizens. Firstly, I think this is necessary for human dignity, for democracy, for freedom. But apart from that, from the very practical point of view it is equally necessary. Because if it does not happen then there will be tension and nobody will be able to prosper and will not have the kind of stable society in which there can be economic progress.

India has in the past years progressed a great deal. From Independence right up to 1962, our progress was quite spectacular. In 1962, we had a conflict on our borders with China and our attention was diverted from development to defence and a lot of money which should have been used for very essential roads, schools and other items, was used to strengthen our army because uptil then we had just not given a single thought to the defence of the country.

In 1965, we had another conflict, this time with Pakistan and we had barely recovered from this heavy expenditure when we had terrible drought. For three years it hardly rained and suddenly we were faced with near-famine conditions. But it speaks of the courage and endurance of the people and their will to co-operate that even though the situation was so dark we were able to prevent death through famine. Of course, the United States helped a great deal, other countries helped, other voluntary organisations helped and this is the period in which we were able to initiate our new strategy for agriculture. In those days I came to the U.S.A. in 1966 and the main question asked was : 'Can democracy survive in India ? Can you possibly feed this growing population ?' Afterwards we even saw headlines : 'Can India survive ?' You all see that India has survived, democracy has streng-

thened greatly and today our production of cereals like wheat and rice is fully adequate to feed our entire population as well as to have buffer-stock in case of future needs.

But, of course, the situation is never so simple and we now have a new sense of security. Our agricultural production, as I said, is very good. Formerly, we were paying attention merely to what people would eat. Now we are able to do research in other farm projects which are called 'cash crops'.

In industry also, our production has trebled. The number of children going to school is now very much greater—about 80 million. Our experience has been that every problem solved means a set of new problems, sometimes the same in different shape and sometimes quite different one. Now because education has expanded and industry has not kept pace, we have a very serious problem of what we call the educated unemployed—young people with degree and not enough jobs for them. Some of the fault is of our education because it is of such a general nature that our young people are not really prepared to face the challenges of the contemporary world. And also, most of them would like to have a secure job whereas gradually they must be much more resourceful, take initiative and try to find, make opportunities and openings for themselves.

Today we sometimes have many areas where there is shortage of teachers, of doctors and even of engineers and at the same time there are engineers, doctors and teachers who are unemployed because many of our young people do not want to go to the villages or to the mountains or to the forest areas. So, many conflicting situations have existed, but I have no doubt that this is a part of the phase of development through which we have to go and just as we have been able to solve other problems these problems will also be solved. So far as employment is concerned we have what we call crash programmes—that is, we give top priority to certain schemes. They are not going to employ everybody but even if it makes a small dent in the number of unemployed we feel something has been achieved. So, India is going ahead in every direction.

Our last elections have given the country a new sense of unity, a new sense of cohesion and a new direction. What was extraordinary about these elections was not that a political party won a big majority but that the ordinary people—people who had never bothered about politics, people who had not voted sometime in earlier elections—took this as their campaign. We had many young people who worked all day in factory or in office or somewhere else and who gave us their mite. They would come straight from work and come to the party office, work till one o'clock, two o'clock at night. We had many people like taxi drivers, truck drivers, scooter drivers who either gave free service to our workers or helped in some other way. So, in

a way the whole population became involved and this shows that at a time when there was tremendous propaganda against us, because some of the biggest money powers were against us and a lot of money was used against us—people in India made up their own mind about what they thought was the right direction and they were not put off by threats or even in some places by violence. So this is what shows that democracy is strong and people have faith in their own capacity to do things and to solve problems.

Now, today the crisis is quite a different one. It is not a usual economic crisis or a political crisis or even a social crisis. It is a crisis for which we are not at all to blame. We have no hand in it. We had no warning that such a situation is going to arise. Across our borders, just as we had elections, elections took place and just like in our country the majority voted for one particular party, there also in Pakistan the majority—and not only in East Bengal but in the whole of Pakistan, both parts of Pakistan, the majority voted for one party, the Awami League, and one leader who is Shaikh Mujibur Rahman. But whereas in our country democracy took the normal course and our party came into power, there they were not allowed to do so. And under the guise of negotiations troops came from the other side and on 25th of March a reign of terror was let loose as a result of which vast numbers of refugees have poured into India, a part of India which was most complex from social point of view because there are many different tribals, there are many small States, there are many tribal people. Politically it is an area from which our extremist parties have been born and are active and there is a great deal of violence and in this area have come, as I said somewhere, that it is as if the entire population of Michigan State was to suddenly come to New York State. You can imagine the difficulty of coping with it and this is in India which is one of the poorest countries of the world.

So, the financial burden is immense. But we are not really worried about the financial burden. When you have been poor and you learnt to endure drought, famine and all these conditions, you have the strength to bear an extra burden. It is not going to be easy, it is going to delay our programmes and our progress but it is something that ultimately we can bear. What worries us is the social and political tensions which have come and most of all the fact that for the first time after Independence there is a very grave threat to our security, to our stability and even to our integrity. Now this is a situation which no country can tolerate. We want well-being of our people, we want higher standard of living, but we cannot have it at the cost of any part of our freedom. So this is a difficult problem we face.

At this moment I do not know what is going to happen. We have done everything possible in the past and we shall continue to do everything possible to avoid a conflict—or a great confrontation. But

in a way there is a conflict. There may not be war in the accepted sense of the word but we feel there is an aggression on our country by the manner in which refugees are coming. The problem which has been deliberately created and it seems that one country, a neighbour country has very conveniently solved its own problem and just pushed all those people whom they did not like, who did not vote for them in elections, on to another country. So thereby they solved some of their problem by removing these people bodily and secondly making us much weaker because of enormous burden which has come on us.

Now, in this situation naturally any country would like understanding and support. But India is big enough, India is strong enough, India is united enough to face its problem on her own.

I have not come on this trip to ask for help. In fact, even when I came in the time of drought I never said that we wanted help. I have come, firstly, because in response to a very kind invitations given a year ago and also because vast changes are taking place in Europe and in Asia and it is important to know what the leaders of Government and leaders of important nations are thinking and what their assessment of various situations is and also I would like them to know my assessment of the situations in my area. I just said that we think that, whatever the hardships, we have been through tremendous sacrifices before and we can sacrifice today. But what we would like the world to know is that what happens to India is not merely of importance to India, it is not merely of importance to Asia, we think it is important to Europe and to the rest of the world. It is too large a country to be ignored. Today what is happening is that in most countries people are still working or thinking along the old line of balance of power. When the country was partitioned into India and Pakistan it was an unnatural partition. We knew it was bound to create problems but we accepted it because it seemed to be the price for freedom and we thought that even if there were problems and difficulties, at least we will be able to go ahead and do something for the part that is ours. And in spite of grave provocation we have never interfered in what is happening on the other side. Our tribals have been armed and trained in China and in Pakistan. They have been encouraged to fight and to disturb the peace in our country. We did not complain to any other nation. We dealt with these problems on our own and we have solved them one by one by talking with our people, by trying to find an answer to their difficulties, not by suppressing them.

In 1965, how did the war start? We did not start it. It started because thousands of infiltrators were sent into Kashmir thinking—they believe their own propaganda—that the people of Kashmir were not with India and therefore if people came from Pakistan the local people would help them. But it was not true and so it did not happen. The people, the ordinary people whether they were peasants or the

nomadic tribes, they immediately faced the situation and it is because of their help and support that we were able to control the situation. In the first week we had no army there at all. Having had the Chinese aggression in 1962 all our forces were at that time concentrated on Eastern borders. I am giving this only as an example. They are trying to do the same thing this time. We have news from Kashmir that there has been some infiltration and we are perfectly capable of dealing with it. So the war does not necessarily mean that the two armies stand opposite and shoot. It is just as much aggression when you send people across to disturb.

There is a situation in East Bengal and we have been told that if we do not give support at all and we do not show our sympathy to the people of East Bengal the question will be solved. What is the reality? The reality is that here are a people—75 million people—whom we did not encourage at any time, with whom we had no contact at all before this trouble, but today who are strongly imbued with the spirit of nationalism because of the difficulties which they have gone through, because they proposed various solutions but all these were brushed aside and the military regime of West Pakistan thought that they could suppress them by sending their army over. Their army has been active many months but they have not been able to suppress the movement because the guerillas and the base of the guerillas are the para-military forces of East Bengal. They are not Indians. They are the people who were there before in East Bengal, and perhaps you all know this is the only time in history when the nation is to a man united. We boast of our unity in India but we do not have that kind of unity yet. To a man, from the Chief Justice down to the smallest man, they are united.

Today the guerillas are functioning there. They may sometimes come on Indian soil and I have no doubt that they do because we have no control over the border—it is far too big a border. If we could have sealed it we would have sealed it off and not allowed all these refugees to come. But when I took up this question with our military people they said even if we put the whole army there we will not be able to do it. The only way you can stop them coming is to shoot on the first sight and obviously this is not something which we do. So this is the situation there. The guerillas are supported by the entire population inside. Most of the action is not taking place near the Indian border, it is taking place in the centre, in the most heavily fortified places where there are most concentration of West Pakistani forces. That is where the guerilla action is taking place—that is where the local people are giving full support although they know that every time there is guerilla action the whole villages are razed to the ground. Even then they give that help. There must be

something which is moving them. And when a man is moved by this sort of spirit there is nothing on earth that can crush it.

We all know through history that men have been killed, men have been wounded, crushed and suppressed but the spirit of man and the ideas of freedom, of human dignity have never been crushed in the history of man. We have been through this in India and every country which fought for freedom has been through it. It is this spirit of man which has helped man to progress and to rise to new heights. India certainly cannot be a party to the suppression of this spirit of freedom and human dignity. Nor do we believe that peace can be bought by such suppression. Perhaps you can delay freedom but you cannot prevent it.

India believes in facing the reality of any situation. These many years we stood for the admission of China to the United Nations. China was not friendly to us. China attacked us but we kept to this position because we felt that facing the reality that China exists, a very large area, a very large population, it was unreal to say that it should be ignored. And now we find that the nations—many nations—who were opposed and who blamed us for this policy have today changed their mind. So this is a situation where we all must see a reality. And only by facing it can we then try to seek a solution which will be lasting and durable. We feel that no solution can be durable unless the people of East Bengal themselves accept it and that means their elected representatives. It is not a solution to say that so many people who were legitimately elected are no longer members and we will elect new ones. And I believe that 55 or 58 (some such number) have already been declared elected unopposed in the place of members who are alive, whose seats are not vacant. Some people may call this as a civilian Government but we do not accept and I do not think anyone in the world who really wants to face the truth can accept it as a true Government which will be accepted by the people and which can deliver the goods. So this is a very difficult, complex situation on our part of the world. We feel that if anything happens which threatens stability of India it will affect peace in the whole world.

You have given me a very patient hearing and I have great pleasure to have this opportunity of saying a few words. I bring to you the greetings and good wishes of the people of India. They have very great friendship for the people of America and I would say that we have no animosity even against the people of Pakistan or even of West Pakistan, because we feel that by taking a wrong path they are jeopardising their own future not just what happens in East Bengal but even what happens in West Pakistan. It can only remain strong if there is some contact between the Government and the people and if the people of the different provinces feel that they also are a part

of development, they have a say in what is happening in the country, which they do not so far have.

One more thing I would like to say. When we achieved freedom the struggle was all over the sub-continent. But in India those who fought for freedom won the elections and formed the Government. But in Pakistan those who had fought for freedom remained in prison and it was those who had worked for the British, whether as bureaucrats or in the army or in other form, and who had opposed the freedom movement formed the Government. And it is in this that the seeds of conflict and the seeds of future weaknesses were sown from the very day of the birth of the country.

Abolishing Feudal Privileges

I DO NOT think that any elaborate speech is expected of me. The principle underlying the Bill has been argued here before and accepted with overwhelming majority. It was fifteen months ago that I had moved a Bill to abolish the purses and privileges and as I have said just now, it won more than two-thirds vote in the Lok Sabha, and in the Rajya Sabha it failed to secure the required special majority by a fraction of a vote. But that was a mere technical failure. The will of the people was not in doubt.

We, therefore, gave effect to it by Presidential Order on September 6. This was taken to the Supreme Court which set aside the Presidential Order on December 15. On that very day, I told the House that the Government stood committed to the abolition of privy purses and privileges through appropriate constitutional means.

This decision was reiterated in our election manifesto and it secured the overwhelming endorsement of the people of the country. So, we have come before the House in fulfilment of a pledge.

Some changes have been made in the Bill as presented to the House this time, keeping in view the observations of the Supreme Court.

This is the third batch of Bills to amend the Constitution. The purpose of all these Bills, as the House knows, is to narrow the disparities in our society. Since freedom, we have been setting right the old disparities and social distinctions one by one, and this is yet another step towards the creation of an egalitarian society.

The House is aware that there is a great deal of feeling in the country against inherited special status, against privileges unrelated to

Moving the Constitution (26th Amendment) Bill in Lok Sabha, December 2, 1971

function or responsibility, against exemptions and facilities enjoyed without adequate reason. We have adopted a series of measures to remove such vested interests. Absentee landlords have been eliminated. The economic power of the merchant princes is being checked. It is but fair that the feudal princes also be asked to shed their special privileges. I hope that the princes will view this in a historical perspective. A levelling process is at work in our society, a process which is abolishing divisions and class distinctions. Certain forces are irreversible and inexorable. We can choose to ignore them and resist them and be swept aside or we can recognise their reality and attempt to give some direction to them.

I do admit that a large number of princes have acted with foresight and have adjusted themselves to changes, and I should like also to acknowledge the patriotic spirit with which they acted to facilitate the political integration of the country after Independence. Later, there were earnest attempts to persuade them to voluntarily abrogate their privileges. The response from some was prompt and encouraging; a few others were not equally responsive. They failed to appreciate the fact that when a moment is not seized, it would not come again. I am not trying to apportion blame. I would have been happy if the problem could have been solved through discussion. We did have some, but there seemed to be such a gap between our thinking and theirs that one could not see any common meeting ground, and the solution could not be indefinitely postponed.

I should like to say again what I have said earlier that there is no personal animus against any individual prince or even against the princely order as such. Our quarrel, if one can call it a quarrel, is against a system that no longer has relevance in our society, or for that matter, in any society.

A great community of equals is being created in our country, and I would invite the princes and princesses to join this community unencumbered by a sense of past authority. There was a time when superiority could be measured only by rank or by wealth. But today the scope to show one's worth is very much vaster, in fact I would say, practically unlimited. I feel that by taking away the privy purses and privileges which I do not think add to a person in any way, we might be depriving the princes of some pomp and luxury, but I think we are giving them the opportunity of being men.

This Bill represents the spirit of history. I commend it to the House and request my Hon. colleague, the Law Minister, to deal further with it in the remaining stages.

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SO MUCH HAS been said on this subject and so much important business is there before the House that I do not want to say anything at all. All our views are known to the House and the nation. And this was one of the items which we had put before the electorate and on which, I think, the response of the people had been very clear. Since then there has been a new situation in the country. In Bangladesh and along our western borders and in some places beyond the western borders, our valiant forces are today fighting to defend the integrity of India and the values for which India stands.

War, in my view, is an unmitigated evil; yet it does generate a spirit of comradeship. This is because neither bullets nor bombs nor the mud of the battlefield distinguishes between one man and the other, between the rank of a person and the wealth of a person or the birth of a person. Today our valiant forces are fighting as equals and without distinction of religion, class or status. At least one among them, to my knowledge, is a 'prince' and many people of other categories.

The days are gone when birth was the chief road to distinction. All over the world today, distinction comes from achievement, and I believe that the highest privilege to which one can aspire in our country should be the privilege of being an Indian, a free Indian, a democratic Indian, not higher or lower than any other Indian, and this is the type of society which we are trying to establish. We have not yet succeeded but this is what we are trying to do step by step. I have often heard—even yesterday when the Constitution (Twenty-fifth Amendment) Bill was before this House—people say that so many things have not been done. We too are poignantly aware that many things have not been done. Many inequalities and injustices do exist. But at least those of which that can be removed little by little, step by step, we are trying to remove. There is no use wailing on the evils of the past society because in olden times all societies were marked by heirarchy, and so was ours. We had an added disadvantage of caste which introduced further divisions, but the march of history has seen the abolition of the feudal order. In other countries, the old order—the ancient regime, as it was called in Europe—was abolished with much violence. Here in India we won our freedom through non-violence and our social revolution is also being achieved non-violently. Whether it is the abolition of untouchability or of absentee landlordism or the princely order, all these things are being done democratically, peacefully and with the consent of the people. This should be a matter of satisfaction to us all.

As I have said on numerous occasions, we do stand for change in society. We think the change could be more rapid, more widespread

Moving the Constitution (26th Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha, December 9, 1971

than it is at the moment, but at the same time we believe that change should be peaceful. We also believe that if the forces of change are obstructed you do not stop change; you merely obstruct the peaceful and orderly transition. So, our attempt at bringing about social change—and this includes the abolition of privileges being enjoyed by the princes—should not be regarded by them or by anybody else as an indictment of the princes as individuals or as a group. The princes acted with practical good sense when the country was politically integrated. Even in this matter which concerns them so intimately, some have displayed a proper understanding of the issues involved. They have recognised that the times have changed, and they have seen the wisdom of trying to meet the change half-way. It is my belief that to allow such an anachronism to continue would be as much an obstruction to them as to our society as a whole. The princes are Indians as the rest of us are. They are citizens as the rest of us are, and we owe a duty to them as they owe a duty to our society and to the country. So, at this moment of danger and difficulty facing the country, let us not dwell on the past but look to the great and pressing needs of the present and to the future which beckons us and which we have to build together. I commend this Bill to the House. I invite the princes to join the elite of the modern age, the elite which earns respect by its talent, energy and contribution to human progress, all of which can be done only when we work together as equals without regarding anybody as of special status.

I request the House to pass this Bill.

A Year of Grim Challenges

QUESTION : I would like to know whether your assessment during tour abroad and meeting the Heads of States, including that of the United States, and the reactions after Pakistan declaring war on us were different.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I would say that on the whole they were accurate; of course there was some little difference.

QUESTION : Do you see in Mr. Bhutto's latest utterance any indication of a change towards the acceptance of the reality? And could you assure Mr. Bhutto that you accept the independence of Pakistan as it stands now so that peace talks could start?

From replies to questions at a Press Conference, New Delhi, December 31, 1971

THE PRIME MINISTER : Mr. Bhutto has made very many statements, and not all of them saying the same thing. But I do not know what you mean by saying "do we recognise Pakistan?" We do recognise Pakistan but we also recognise Bangladesh.

QUESTION : Now that a brilliant victory has been scored by India over Pakistan, and you are being hailed as Empress of India, Bharat Mata and Durga, what have you decided (*a*) about the captured areas being returned to Pakistan, (*b*) repatriation of Pakistani prisoners-of-war, (*c*) getting back Pakistan-occupied areas in Kashmir and (*d*) getting back our jawans and officers, if any, who are in the custody of Pakistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER : To all these questions, I do not think I can give any answer now, because it is a matter for negotiations. So far as territory is concerned, our stand has been quite clear. The whole idea of cease-fire line was to maintain peace and security. Now we have to see whether this has been attained. And, I think it may be necessary to have some adjustments, but it is all a matter for talking over. I don't think that I can give a categorised answer.

QUESTION : Before the war some western powers were saying that they would press for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Now the war is over. Have you any information if any of these powers has done anything to secure the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman? Secondly, since Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the President of Bangladesh, under what law can the President of a foreign country be kept under detention?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think your question is a very pertinent one and it is for the United Nations and all the international community to give an answer to it. So far as the efforts to release Sheikh Mujib are concerned, we are certainly making every possible effort and I think that many other countries also are doing so.

QUESTION : What is your assessment of the present military situation on Indo-Pakistan borders; Is it an uneasy cease-fire, with bleak prospects of a truce agreement or is it indicative of some lull before a big storm that is to come?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is very difficult to say. As you know there have been breaches of the cease-fire.

QUESTION : Earlier there were statements in Delhi about movement of Chinese communist troops during the war. Have these movements continued? Have they caused any concern or anxiety to the Government of India?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think that there is any sizable movement. There was some movement but I don't think that there were threatening movements.

QUESTION : Indo-American relations have suffered quite a setback in the past two months. How do you see the future relationship and what do you think America should do to try to patch them up again ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, if they have had a setback, it certainly is not due to us. We have done everything possible to be friendly, and because we value friendship with America we would very much like our relationship to be friendly again. What can be done, I think, it is easier for you to figure out. A certain situation exists and one must see and one must recognize the reality of it. Also much of this depends on whether the U.S. Administration wants friendship or not because that is the first question which you have to ask them. So far as the people are concerned, I must say that they have shown the greatest understanding and sympathy throughout this very difficult period and a very large portion of my mail is from American citizens, from quite old people—I mean from an old lady of 85 to Class III of some schools. Also, I must say that the American media, news media have also given a correct picture of what is happening. I thought, the realities were obvious not merely to us but to most of the world. The realities are that a situation was created in Bangladesh, whereby the Pakistani army sought to annihilate an entire population, an entire people, 75 million of them. This was regarded by the world community as an internal affair, although even according to the United Nations it is not really so. You cannot annihilate the whole people and be allowed to do it even if it is in your own country. But the world community chose to see it as an internal problem. Well, very soon this problem overflowed into our country in the shape of over 10 million refugees, who were wounded, starving, ill. They spread a certain amount of disease in the beginning. We had tremendous financial problems, to feed them and give them shelter, and then they created administrative problems, social and political problems, and most dangerous of all, a danger to our security. Now this was the situation then. We were told by all other countries that they were doing everything possible to help towards a peaceful solution. We have not been able to see to this date what exactly was done to this end. Nobody has really been able to point this out to us. If it was a question of talking to the Pakistan Government, well, nine months is a pretty long time; and if they are not going to listen in nine months, what guarantee was there that they were going to listen in the next month or two ?

Now the present reality is that a new country, a new State, has come into being. Its name is Bangladesh. It has a Government and it is working hard and fast to bring about normal conditions, and it has, by and large, already succeeded.

QUESTION : You have mentioned the problems presented to India by these millions of refugees. But millions of them are so happy here and

they are so well looked after that they do not want to go back. How are you going to encourage them ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am afraid you are not very well informed because firstly, although we did our very best, I do not think anybody can say that they were very comfortable here. You have only to see the TV films taken—perhaps by yourself—of the conditions in the camps.

The question is whether they want to remain in India and not go back. I do not believe that it is true. I think the great majority of them do want to go back. They said they did not want to go back at a stage when they were sure that they would be killed when they returned. They could not foresee a free Bangladesh presumably at that time and, therefore, they were not sure of their future. Today when they see that there is a stable government, they see that things are returning to normal, already 260,000 have gone back and we think that most of them will have returned by the end of January and certainly by the end of February.

QUESTION : Could you give us some idea of what Mr. Nixon wrote to you in his recent letter ? Has he tried to justify his blatantly partisan attitude during the India-Pakistan war or there is some change in his attitude ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not see what purpose is served by continuing this sort of polemics. Had Mr. Nixon wanted his views to be made public, he would have given his letter to the press.

QUESTION : Is the Government of India likely to take a fresh look at its relationship with the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, in view of their attitude to (*a*) the war thrust on India by Pakistan, (*b*) the reaction of Egypt in particular to Mr. Bhutto's emergence as President of Pakistan and (*c*) the attitude of the Arab countries towards Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : If you follow all that has been happening in India and how we formulate our policies, it is not a pendulum that swings from side to side. We base our policies on certain basic matters, ideas, ideals and so on and there is no cause for us to change our policy. So far as reviewing it or giving it a fresh look is concerned, that is done constantly by our Foreign Office. As you know, even with China, our attitude remained consistently the same regardless of their attitude towards us.

QUESTION : The self-styled President of Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto, is every day threatening another war with India. Do you expect any such war in future ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is wrong to say "self-styled". He has been sworn in as President. Some of his speeches have been

threatening and some have also made some friendly gestures. It is very natural that Pakistan should be in a traumatic stage. I am sure as they return to normal and calmer thinking, they will see that it is in the long term interests of us all that India and Pakistan should have better relations.

QUESTION : What will be the eventual outcome of Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh ? Do you think there is a possibility that they might wind up as evacuees in India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no chance of that at all. There were a few reprisals right at the beginning. But the situation has been in control now for quite a while. Well, if I may say with due respect I think that was a rather mischievous sort of question, because one of the Western press tried to show up and printed these rather terrible pictures of a few people being killed. I am against anybody being killed and certainly against people taking the law into their hands and so on. But one must view things in perspective. When a million people were killed, when on the eve of surrender, 218 intellectuals were brutally murdered, tortured in front of their families, their children, their daughters, their wives, we did not see these pictures appearing in many newspapers. Twenty people were killed afterwards. I agree that they were brutally killed. But there is some sense of proportion between twenty and over a million people, and I think that the restraint which the people of Bangladesh have shown in this matter is quite remarkable.

QUESTION : Would it help if Mr. Nixon was to visit India and Bangladesh to see the reality for himself ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is for the President to decide himself.

QUESTION : How will you assess the Indo-Soviet relations in the present year ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Indo-Soviet relations have been good and I think that our friendship has deepened. This gave us tremendous moral support during the critical period.

QUESTION : In view of the stand taken by the United Nations to keep the Indian Ocean free from the foreign ships, what stand are we going to take on the presence of the U.S. 7th Fleet in this area ? Are you going to take this matter back to the United Nations ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think it is still there. Is it ?

QUESTION : There was an earlier question as to whether the Nixon Administration wanted to improve relations. The Nixon Administration has called India the aggressor and Mr. Rogers has in a recent press conference said he has no reason to apologise for that statement. Could

you tell us what your views are of the Nixon Administration's policy? What do you think is their view about India?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I think specially since you come from New York yourself, you are able to answer all this. I don't think it is proper for me to go into it. I think what has been said and how it tallies with what has actually happened, it is there for all the world to see and people's saying things does not change the situation. You can say something for one year, for 10 years, or a hundred years but the reality of the situation is not going to change just because you happen to be a big country or a rich country. The reality remains, as the U.S. has discovered in other parts of the world, by the way.

QUESTION: What do you think can be the general outline of peaceful settlement with Pakistan and what would be the means to bring it about?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Talks with Pakistan. And what the outline will be, can only emerge out of that.

QUESTION: In view of our recent experience and also the renewed emphasis that you have recently laid on the need for self-reliance and reducing dependence on foreign aid what re-adjustment or re-orientation of policies and attitudes are necessary for the people and the Government to achieve these targets?

THE PRIME MINISTER: So far as re-assessment is concerned, it is happening all the time. Your life is not in compartments. You do not say from Monday to Tuesday I do something else and from Wednesday to Friday I do something else. It is one continuous thing. You are re-assessing your policy every single day and if a change needs to be made, it is gradually made all along the line. Our desire for self-reliance is also not new but now we are in a better position to work towards this. We can do without aid now, whereas earlier we could not, even though our desire was to do without aid.

QUESTION: What would be your comment on the resumption of American bombing on Democratic Republic of North Vietnam?

THE PRIME MINISTER: The question was about the bombing of North Vietnam. I share the world's horror at this, coming so soon after President Nixon's statement, I forgot the exact words, something about bullets and shells being not the way to bring about peace.

QUESTION: Has your Government made an assessment of the economic needs of Bangladesh? If so, how big a hand can India lend to Bangladesh?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Our people have been working with the Bangladesh experts and Government for some time on this. Whatever we can do and what the Bangladesh people could like us to do, we shall

try to do. Fortunately, the damage to the economy of Bangladesh is not as great as we had feared at first. The tactics as well as the rapid advance of the Indian Army also helped to mitigate the damage. There has been damage to communication and so on. Our railways have done a very good work in trying to re-establish the links and our Army has done a very good work in re-building of bridges and so on. It is certainly a big task but it is a manageable task.

QUESTION : How do you view the prospects of peace in the world and in this sub-continent, particularly in 1972 ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We all desire peace. We can achieve it by working for peace. There are different kinds of peace. There is peace of the graveyard too and I do not think any of us wants that kind of a peace and when some nations were telling us that a solution was possible in Bangladesh my fear was that they were envisaging that kind of a solution, that is, if the people were annihilated there would be no problem.

Obviously, we could not accept that situation. There can be peace when people allow other people to live their own lives and everybody is concerned for the rights of the human being, for human dignity, human freedom and the voice of the under-privileged.

QUESTION : Will the Government of India now tell the United States to refrain from arming any neighbouring country in view of the fact that the U.S. arms were used only against India by Pakistan, failing which it will be considered as a hostile act or an unfriendly act ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : A hostile act or an unfriendly act has a specific meaning in international language. But we do regard this as not friendly to India. It has happened before and we have heard indications that it may happen again.

QUESTION : Has not the time now come to say goodbye to U.S. aid and ask all the AID agencies functioning here to wind up their show ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I would like to make one thing clear. With the growth of knowledge and so on, somehow the people instead of becoming clearer about language, seem to be blurring it more. Aid, as you all know, is not aid at all; it is a long-term credit, and India has so far paid back every cent, penny, paisa of what we owed to other countries; so it is not really aid as such; it is merely a loan. As I said before, we are trying to be fully self-reliant; with every passing year we do more things ourselves; we have greater know-how, and greater capacity. And today if countries want to stop their so-called aid, we will have hardship in some areas; there are some specialised areas where we may not be able to manage by ourselves immediately

but it is not going to push us back. We can manage. It will mean greater hardship but it is something that we can manage.

QUESTION : I am asking a supplementary question. Recently Americans loaned submarine *Ghazi* and that was used against India. Do you not think this unfriendly action, and should not India protest about it?

THE PRIME MINISTER : What is the point of counting all the unfriendly actions? As you know all these things have their own reactions. It did us no harm.

QUESTION : Pakistan was supported by America and China, two nuclear power countries. Are you thinking of reviewing your atomic policy and planning to produce atom bombs just as a deterrent against possible threats from those two nuclear powers?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think it is necessary. I think we were able to deter people quite sufficiently without.

QUESTION : During the recent Bangladesh developments we witnessed that the international community is completely indifferent to the sufferings of the people. Now, there does not seem to be any indication of any international effort to help them rebuild themselves. Do you feel that in recent years there has been toughening of international relations, a certain heartless attitude of the big powers in dealing with each other and with other nations?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not true to say that no nation is trying to help them; I think they are having talks with some countries which are wanting to give help. I do not know whether the world is more callous than before or not; it is very difficult to measure the degree of callousness; but they have shown a lot of callousness in the Bangladesh situation as well as other situations around the world.

QUESTION : Has any country like France or Britain offered you their good offices to start peace talks with Pakistan and to get Mujib released?

THE PRIME MINISTER : These are two separate things. So far as talks with Pakistan are concerned, I think this should be dealt with on a purely bilateral level. I believe some countries—I do not know exactly which at this point—are trying to get Mujib released.

QUESTION : Some time back, somewhere towards the end of November, it seemed that we were very close to restoring some part of our relationship with China. How do you view our relationship with China in 1972?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I hope it will get much better. I do not think it has deteriorated, by the way. I think the Chinese reaction was exactly as I expected; neither more nor less.

QUESTION : Will there be any changes in the Indian Five Year Plan because of the war ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There has been a re-appraisal of the Plan. I think we do have to look at our priorities again, because this has been a heavy financial burden. But it is too early to say whether there has to be any great change or not.

QUESTION : Following the death of Dr. Sarabhai, will our atomic energy and space research programme suffer a setback ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Dr. Sarabhai occupied a very important place and he was a very fine person, a very fine scientist as well as a fine man. So, naturally, his death is a loss to Indian science and to the country. But no country is really dependent on any person and I am sure there are many very bright young people and more will be coming up as time goes on.

QUESTION : Ideologically, how do you see the Chinese and American support to the military regime of Pakistan ? Is it not a collapse of Chinese interpretation of Marxism and American understanding of democracy ? It is more pertinent in the context of India combining politics with modernity.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Each country looks at these questions from the point of view of, what it considers, its own interest. Some countries also have a picture of what they consider their global interests. We in India also look at things from our own interest. We are not trying to be holier than other people. But we believe that our interests are so closely tied up with our ideals that if we separate them our interests will not be well served; and that is what we have stood for, our voice has always been raised for freedom, democracy and the rights of the common man. Now what other countries do, I do not think it is fair for me to dilate on.

QUESTION : Regarding self-reliance in economic policies, don't you think that in the present mood of the people some radical and concrete measures are required instead of continued assessment by the various Ministries and departments ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think the two are contradictory. I think that radical measures can be and are taken even though Ministries make the assessments.

QUESTION : In view of your observation that India and Pakistan should remain at peace with each other and also in view of the latest statement of Mr. Bhutto published this morning, would you like to renew the country's offer of "no war pact" with Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't know whether it is necessary to make a formal offer of a "no war pact", but I think we have made our views very clear that we don't believe in war, and that if India and Pakistan were to give up thought of war and co-operate peacefully it would be of mutual benefit.

QUESTION : In view of Pakistan's continued hostile action, would you consider reimposition of contraband control as was done by the U.S.A. as a measure of defence, on October 22, 1962, with reference to Cuba even though there was a thing like Bay of Pigs disaster, or is it your judgment that adoption of U.N. Resolution declaring the Indian Ocean virtually as an area of peace would be good enough ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The resolution is good, but obviously one has to work to implement it. India has always believed that Indian Ocean should be an area of peace and we shall do everything possible to keep it so.

QUESTION : Going back to the question of self-reliance will it be correct to say if the United States offers economic aid again, your Government will reject it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It depends on what the help is for, and what the nature of it is and the conditions and all kinds of things. As I said, we do plan to cut down on foreign aid, no matter from where, and it is only for certain very special things that we might accept help.

QUESTION : With the conclusion of negotiations between the two Germanys, how soon will you recognise G.D.R. now ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I will let you know as soon as we take a decision.

QUESTION : The Opposition parties are critical of the move to put off the budget session by one or a few more months and they say that the ruling party is afraid of facing the poll after imposing very heavy taxes. What is your justification for putting off the budget session ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have not put it off at all. It usually is either in February or March. When there are elections sometimes, it is a little later. And, election date is not fixed by us; it is fixed by the Election Commissioner.

QUESTION : There was some controversy about a particular treaty between the United States and Pakistan, you said. Is there any treaty between them that is unknown to us ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : If it is unknown to me, how can I say ?

QUESTION : You said about China that the reaction was expected; nothing less, nothing more. But did you expect Yugoslavia and Egypt also to behave in the same way?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think the first resolution of the United Nations was necessarily against us, because when a problem is put, talking merely of a cease-fire and so on, a lot of people get taken in by it, and many countries have problems in their own countries, and naturally they do not want it to affect them.

QUESTION : Some political parties have made a suggestion that the state of emergency now in force should be lifted before elections are held to State Assemblies. Do you think the time has come to consider this suggestion to lift the state of emergency?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This suggestion was mine, not that of the Opposition parties. On the contrary, they thought that the emergency should continue. We thought that if we had some powers whereby, if necessary, emergency could be put in some limited areas in the country, then it would not be necessary for the whole country to be under emergency. But the Opposition did not like this, and they themselves said that 'it is better that you continue the emergency'. That is why it is there. But we do not want to continue it any longer than is absolutely necessary.

QUESTION : Is there any change in your desire to hold elections in West Bengal in view of the fact that you have not been able to get a decision from the Opposition?

THE PRIME MINISTER : These matters are in the hands of the Election Commissioner. We have put our views and presumably the Opposition parties will put their views. But I think he has certain difficulties at this moment.

QUESTION : Referring to China, you said that its conduct has been neither more nor less than what was expected. Would you say the same of the Japanese Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I can only say we had hoped that some of these other countries like Japan would have taken a more realistic attitude.

QUESTION : I am referring in particular to the Japanese Government's action suspending aid and now offering to resume talks. Don't you think this very insulting?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think they are just being realistic. Once they realise that their previous position was not the right one, they now take the right one. What response we give is for us to consider.

QUESTION : Some of the very countries which have publicly been very critical of us and have been talking of our being in occupation of East Pakistan are now suggesting privately that we should keep our forces in Bangladesh for quite some time, presumably to safeguard their own properties and investments there, whereas we are preparing to thin out our forces and withdraw them. Would you like to state your policy on this matter ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our policy is regardless of whether people are criticising us or are praising us. Our policy is based on what we consider the right thing to do. I think it is right for the Indian army to move out as soon as it possibly can. Already quite a large number have come out and the others, I hope, will come out soon. As I said, earlier there was some fear about the non-Bengalis who are resident there, about their safety. But I think the Bangladesh Government is in full control of the situation.

QUESTION : What form will aid to Bangladesh take ? Will it be government to government aid or will private investment be allowed as so many of our industrialists seem to be too eager to do ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think this is for the Government of Bangladesh to decide what kind of help they want. But I might say, if I may share a secret with so many people, that those of our people who went there have come back full of praise for the new young people they have in their Secretariat and so on. They say they are of a very high calibre, well trained, very intelligent and dedicated. I don't think they will want very much help from our side.

QUESTION : In the recent war with Pakistan we have seen very old and friendly countries never cared for us at the time of real need. What will be our reaction for our future relations with them ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I said we are not at all bothered whether other people care for us or not, whether they abuse us or flatter us. All these things are superficial things. We are concerned with what we consider to be in India's interest and in the interest of world peace and we shall pursue that path whether we have people with us, or whether we are alone. I have said this many times and I shall continue to say it because that is the stand of the Government of India and I think, of the people of India.

QUESTION : Would you clarify to the people in India whether the Pak-occupied area of Kashmir is linked with the withdrawal of forces when you negotiate with Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think the people of India have full faith in me and they do not need me to clarify anything to them.

QUESTION : Do you propose to have a mutual defence treaty with the new Bangladesh Government to safeguard their security ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think you must have seen today there was a report about a speech or statement by the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. He said there in no need for us to have treaties. Should there be a need, we will consider it then.

QUESTION : Mr. Bhutto had said that he was working on a Summit meeting between India and Pakistan. Would you think that a Summit meeting at this stage would be advisable ? If so, what should be its agenda ? And also what preparation is needed before that Summit meeting could be held ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that one can decide at what level the meeting should be just now. As I said that when the situation is more settled in Pakistan, then these things can be worked out.

QUESTION : Have you any fear that the personality cult in our country might receive a further boost as a result of recent developments ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not have any fear at all about anything.

QUESTION : In the morning newspapers you might have noticed a new type of influx—some people joining your party from Cong (O). It seems if this goes on unabated, the party might grow even bigger than what it was before the split. What are you going to do about it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : What is important is not how big the party is but whether all these people who are coming in will sincerely abide by our programmes, our policies and the kind of functioning we want to have in this country.

QUESTION : May I ask in this connection, whether you would forgive those people who actually expelled you from Congress and take them back if they wish to return ? I am told that some feelers have already been thrown through some intermediaries that they would like to come back.

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no question of forgiveness because I never held any resentment against them or anybody. I think that life is too short to waste on such unproductive emotions or feelings. But so far as people's coming back is concerned, it depends on whether their coming back is going to strengthen the party and strengthen us in what we want to do.

QUESTION : Don't you think that you are going to State elections too soon with two unhealthy trends which might develop out of it ? One is that your party may, on the ground of a national victory sweep the

polls and to that extent weaken democracy, and, secondly, the national rallying point which you have become could have been utilised for a period at least to channel our energies to productive purposes and that trend may suffer because all political trivialities will now crop up.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is a funny way of strengthening democracy by not having elections. If elections had not been due, I would not have held the elections earlier. As a matter of fact they are even now being held a little later than they should have been because they should have been in February. While the actual fighting was on, I did not think it possible to hold elections. But when we consulted the Opposition leaders, several of them said that elections should not be postponed beyond March, and I felt well if you can't hold them in February, it is unlikely that you will be able to hold them in March. So we were for postponement but most of the Opposition parties were not. And now that there is a cease-fire, there is no actual fighting, there is no good reason not to hold elections, especially because in India, because of weather and so on, it is not possible to hold them in every month. If you have the monsoons then large areas cannot go to polls. So we are restricted in the timings. Therefore, it is a good thing to hold them.

The other statement you made is equally astonishing, which is, if you have elections, the Opposition parties will not help in economic programmes. I think it is a very sad commentary on them that when they see that the need of the nation is for economic progress, they should offer an excuse, elections or any other excuse, or take a contrary line. I doubt if it will help them or the country; but postponing the elections is not going to help.

QUESTION : Will you state that during these elections the DIR will not apply to Opposition parties who might be criticising your party or the ruling party?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It certainly won't be applied for criticising us; it will apply only if it is in the national interest.

QUESTION : You did not give your own opinion whether you think that return of some of the old stalwarts will strengthen the party in implementing its purposes or will weaken it. You left it rather vague.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Because surely we were not discussing it personality by personality; so you can only give a general answer. The policy of the party in taking back people from the Congress, who were in the Congress earlier, is to view each case separately.

QUESTION : Madam Prime Minister, this year two events have happened. One is winning the elections and the other winning of the war. Which is your finest hour?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am one of those people who enjoy a challenge and these were indeed great challenges. But I do not think life is ever without challenges. It is only when I am dead that you can see which was the finest hour.

QUESTION : Have you received any specific feeler from Kamaraj to get back? We learn that in Madras both the Congress parties' rank and file feel that unless they come together, they cannot fight the D.M.K.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have not received any.

QUESTION : The year 1971 has proved a lucky year to the country under the great leadership of Mrs. Gandhi. In that light, I would like to know how we should celebrate 1972 tonight so that it may bring more luck and prosperity.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Firstly, I do not believe in luck. Luck comes only to those who have the character to attract it and who have the character to hold it. It is not something that by chance flutters in through the window. You have to work jolly hard. And I think the best New Year resolution you can make is that everybody should work hard to create the type of India which we all want.

QUESTION : You have been talking of cutting down imports. Have you decided to completely stop import of Hollywood films, some of which are your favourite also?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am surprised that you know which are my favourites. I have not seen a film for a long time now, unfortunately. I don't think it is a good thing not to see them. But it just has happened.

QUESTION : The question remains unanswered.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is for the Minister of Information and Broadcasting to say.

QUESTION : You are the Minister.

THE PRIME MINISTER : She is the *de facto* Minister.

QUESTION : Shri Bansi Lal said in a public meeting yesterday that you have become so popular all over the world that if you stand against Nixon, you will defeat him. Any comments?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think politicians talk too much.

QUESTION : Do you envisage any difficulties in the supply of international aid to Bangladesh due to the failure of other countries to recognise the Government of Bangladesh? In other words how will this aid be channelled in, if there is no formal recognition between the United States and the Bangladesh Government or between any other country and the Bangladesh Government?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think the United States itself was not recognised for many years after its Independence, I think, seven years. The U.S.A. did not recognise the Soviet Union for 16 years; it still has not recognised China; they still have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. I do not think any of this has prevented their having every kind of relations, contacts, trade and everything.

QUESTION : May I have this opportunity on my behalf and my colleagues to wish you a very happy and glorious new year and pray for many such victories for India under your great and dynamic leadership ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Thank you very much. Any more questions ?

QUESTION : When are you likely to visit Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : When the Government thinks it is the right time—the Bangladesh Government.

QUESTION : What happened at the committee that considered the question of newsprint ? Different versions have been given; what is the position ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do think that there are far too many advertisements in newspapers. If they have so many pages, we should get more news, or articles or things which are more of interest to everybody. I think you seem to have run out of questions.

QUESTION : Some people have been urging that we should demand reparations from Pakistan for the war it treacherously thrust on us. Could we have your views in the matter ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no doubt that Pakistan did commit aggression on us and the matter can be considered.

QUESTION : During all your speeches you have been emphasising the moral aspects of the war. This was probably the only just war in the history of mankind as far as I understand history. The western newspapers and most of the western politicians are looking at this war only from the military aspects; they are not looking at the moral aspects of the war. Is it not that something is wrong with their attitude ? Is it not that the time has come when they should change their attitude to see the happenings in this part of the sub-continent in a different perspective ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We believe in co-existence. I do not think it is for us to say what other countries should think and what they should do, except when it concerns us. I do not think it is true to say that this is the only moral war. I saw my friend here shaking his head. He is probably thinking of the American War of Independence. There

have been many wars of independence; there were many other such fightings which had every good reason and the morality behind them. But while the moral aspect is very important and the question of ideal is very important, I think we should give due credit to the achievement of our armed forces helped by the para-military forces such as BSF and others. They really did a superb job. As many outsiders who know more about military strategy than I do have said that they did it with the minimum of damage. Somebody who was living in Dacca, a foreigner, has told us that he himself was pilot in World War II and he has seen other fightings in other places but this is the first time he saw pilots actually risking their lives in order to see that they hit the target and not anything besides it. I think that the moral aspect is important but I think the preparedness of the Indian army and the leadership as well as the quality of the Indian jawans is something that needs our praise.

QUESTION : Could you sum up India's present position in the international community?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know what you mean about present position. Our position is the same. We do what we think is right. We have done it in the past, we are doing it now and we shall continue to do so. So far as other countries are concerned, what I said to them when I was there is not that we are asking you to do this because it is good for India, but we are asking you to face the realities of the situation because we think that that is in your interest. Since the situation is going to be there every country should have seen what was in its long-term interest. This is all that I tried to do when I went abroad.

Earlier, I think you said something just now about my going to U.S.A. I think I might as well clarify that I have no territorial ambition whatsoever.

QUESTION : What is your assessment of the American Seventh Fleet being in the Bay of Bengal during the crucial days of the conflict?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The question is why was the Seventh Fleet sent to the Bay of Bengal at a very crucial time. I can only say that I do not think it had any good intentions.

QUESTION : What do you think of BBC's coverage of the war?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have not listened in and I don't know.

QUESTION : It is reported that an extensive tour programme is prepared by the Congress President for your tour all over the country to campaign for the Assembly elections. Have you accepted it?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am touring all the time, whether the programme is arranged by the Congress President or somebody else. Part of my job is to tour the whole time so that I can keep in touch with what is happening.

QUESTION : Earlier, you said that there has been no change in your attitude towards China. Does it mean that you are hoping to normalise the relations with that country and sending an Ambassador soon ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Now don't jump various steps. I do not know when an Ambassador will go but so far as normalisation of relations is there, that was my hope earlier and it remains my hope.

QUESTION : When do you propose to appoint our Ambassador in Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The matter is under consideration.

QUESTION : If the press reports are correct, a large quantity of arms and ammunition have been smuggled into West Bengal from Bangladesh, because most of our border posts are unmanned at the present moment. It is also being said that these might fall into the hands of parties wedded to violence and it may lead to intensification of inter-party clashes.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think some arms were smuggled in. But the border posts are manned, and I do not think there is great danger of that. Now we have seen in Bengal that the public is also very much aware of this. I think they are going to stand up to any kind of violence of this type.

QUESTION : In view of the atrocities committed by the West Pakistan army, would you consider the admissibility of setting up a War Crimes Tribunal, since certain things have happened which have nothing to do with fighting a clean war.

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is up to the Government of Bangladesh.

QUESTION : Now that there is no East Bengal, do you think we should continue with the name of West Bengal ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As a matter of fact there was no reason even before. It could have been East Bengal and Bengal.

QUESTION : East Pakistan also ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We don't say West Pakistan any more. We just say Pakistan and Bangladesh.

QUESTION : Is there a proposal to make Gen. Manekshaw Field Marshal because of the excellent services rendered by him during the war.

THE PRIME MINISTER : He did render excellent services; there is no doubt. I think we can end now. Nobody has any more questions and

we have gone the full hour. I would just like to say this, because a question was asked earlier and I did not give a complete reply about reprisals. I want to go back to that because the hint was that perhaps it was Mukti Bahini which was indulging in this. So I wanted to say that the people who have fought so heroically for their freedom and sacrificed so much for the liberation, for the creation of Bangladesh, I am quite sure, I have full confidence, they will now work equally hard for the unity and reconstruction of their country and also to give their country the right sort of image in the world. I am giving just an added argument why I don't think that sort of thing can continue.

Now, 1971 has been a year of grim challenges if I can put it that way. It has been a year of tremendous hard work and of tremendous effort for us in India. But it has also been a year of achievement. And I think the two always go together. You can never have achievement unless you have challenge and hard work. In India we do not want a soft life. We don't want an easy path. We want to have challenges so that we can prove that we can meet them and we can overcome them. I think somebody asked me yesterday or the day before, what my goal was. Now goals, of course, are many and I don't think that one ever reaches one's goal because that would not be a goal then. I think what I would like for my country is that we live in dignity, and as our army has shown, we die with dignity too when we have to die. So far as my view on life is concerned, just this morning I was looking at some book and my eyes fell on Browning. I don't know whether I have got the words right because I have not got it with me, but he said something that life should be a stuff on which to try the strength of one's soul. I think all these challenges that we are getting in India are strengthening us, are uniting our people; and so long as we continue to go in the right direction, I have no doubt that we shall overcome our difficulties.

May I say "Thank you very much" to the press of India and to that of the other countries, because they have also had to face many challenges, and they have faced them with courage and good reporting. May I wish you all a very happy 1972. By 'happiness' I do not wish you an easy time, but I wish that whatever difficulties you may have, you will overcome in joy.

Towards Self-reliance

MR. CHAIRMAN, MAY I begin by apologising because during the first days of Parliament I had been exceedingly busy and it had not been

From reply to debate in Rajya Sabha on Motion of Thanks on President's Address, March 20, 1972

possible for me to attend this debate as much as I should have liked to do and to hear all the Hon. Members ? But as the Hon. Members know, I can listen to their speeches even in my office and a detailed note of every speech is given to me at the end of the day.

May I say how sad I was to see a group of our countrymen not only showing disrespect to our President, but not even pausing in their demonstration to join in the tribute which was paid to our gallant jawans and officers ?

I am not an expert on Marxism. But I have read a little bit of it and I wonder whether these people have not strayed from the scientific humanism which Marx propagated.

Let me deal with some of the points made here. There were charges of rigged elections in West Bengal. Of course, some Hon. Members have already replied very forcefully and effectively to these charges. But I should like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that these charges underwent a curious enlargement as time went by. In the first allegation of intimidation, only 35 polling stations were mentioned; then, it became 35 constituencies and, later still, the charge had been extended to the entire State. I am sorry to say that the Jan Sangh also seems suddenly to have decided to follow the same line, namely, that the elections had not been fair. We all know that due processes of law are available to test the legality of such allegations. The question is whether the Hon. Members are interested in fair elections or whether they want to look like martyrs when the people have turned against them.

One Hon. Member—this, of course, is not a part of this debate—wrote to me about a particular incident which took place in West Bengal, accusing that the police and the CRP were in league with my party against the CPM and that is why when in an incident bombs etc. were hurled at CPM workers the police took no action. However, when the incident was inquired into, a member of the same party made this statement that a police van fortunately reached the spot at the time of occurrence and that saved the situation from further deterioration. I think I should leave this matter there.

Now, our friends opposite, of the Jan Sangh, have a kind of obsessive desire to appear as super-patriots, as if the rest of us are not at all concerned with the advance of the country or the sovereignty of the country or the well-being of the people. But, fortunately, our people have seen through their propaganda and they have not been taken in by them. During the election campaign and, I believe, in this House also, mention has been made about their attitude towards our unilateral offer of cease-fire. It was shocking that someone even made the accusation that the cease-fire offer was made at the behest of the Soviet Union. Now, anybody is free to say whatever he wants. But, I think, there cannot be any clearer demonstration of the strength,

unity and nobility of the Indian nation than this offer. During my very extensive travels in India, I saw for myself, the thrill which the people had felt and that we were not only for our achievements during the last year, but also in the fact that at the very moment of victory, we were able to rise above all petty considerations and were able to see the long-term interests of our country as well as of peace on the sub-continent. So, to state that the offer was made at the behest of foreign pressure, whether by the Soviet Union or the United States of America, is a calumny against the people of India.

During the last session of Parliament, I had spoken regarding our discussions with the leaders of the Opposition on this question. So had various Members of the Opposition who were present at the meeting. Therefore it is not necessary to pursue this.

Shri Bhandari made the most fantastic charge that by not acting earlier in Bangladesh, it is we who are responsible for the death of three million Bangladesh people. I think his argument was that we should have marched into Bangladesh in March or April last. The main people who are concerned are the people of Bangladesh and I think this House has seen in the newspapers what their views are regarding this matter. Normally I would not have mentioned this at all. However some things said by Opposition parties are repeated in other countries and create a wrong impression about India or about our intentions and our policies. Neither the Jan Sangh nor any group or any individual should make the mistake of contending that the freedom of Bangladesh is a gift from India. It is not. It is the achievement of the people of Bangladesh themselves. It is an achievement of the indomitable women and men, young and old; it is the fruit of the sacrifices which they have made.

We have read many stories of atrocities in our newspapers and in the foreign press. But they are nothing as to what one hears there. It is so horrible. Even though people have described what they have seen, it is difficult to believe that any human being could act in such a way to another man or woman. The liberation was the achievement of the people of Bangladesh. And it was only when Pakistan made the supreme folly of attacking us across our own frontiers that we had to defend our territorial integrity. From that point, the war of the people of Bangladesh for attaining their freedom and the war of the people of India to defend their freedom became one. Any hasty action at an earlier stage would have brought incalculable harm to India and possibly not led to the results of which we are now so proud.

I come now to the main Address. The President has given a realistic picture of our efforts as they have progressed year after year, for the transformation of our socio-economic structure in accordance with our declared objectives. At no time have we claimed that all these objectives could be achieved immediately. We do realise the

difficulties we are going to face and the hard work that has to be put in. I myself have been hammering this point all these years at every single meeting where I have spoken. In the President's Address, Parliament and the country have been kept informed of the slow progress, for instance, in the industrial field. But the theme of the Address is that in spite of the gigantic problems we have had to face all along, and more especially the law and order problem, we have not made any excuses to slow down the pace of our socio-economic programmes. The dominant theme of the Address is *Arthik Swaraj* (a self-reliant economy).

Some people have accused us of wishful thinking. I remember earlier how many times in India and abroad my father was accused of having his head in the clouds. But I should like to assure Hon. Members that the call for self-reliance is not a mere slogan. It is not wishful thinking. On the contrary, it seeks to give sharp focus to a time-bound programme of scientific measures which the Government have already formulated in some detail and will implement with the same determination which we showed during the critical months of November and December.

In the contemporary world, "self-reliance" does not mean total self-sufficiency in all lines of production. It does mean that where we have the capacity, where we have the know-how, we should not take anything from outside, but should try to earn increasingly from our exports to pay for essential imports which may be needed to sustain the economy at a reasonably high level of productivity. It means the total emotional involvement of all those engaged in the process of production, labour, management and governmental agencies at different levels, which are concerned with the regulation of the economy.

During the recent conflict, our people have demonstrated their ability to rise above their sectional differences and interests and unitedly face the national problems and work for national goals and objectives. I see no reason why the same spirit should not be generated to achieve this national objective. This is not only urgent for the well-being of the poor but also from the point of view of our defence and security. We have all along been stressing the point that it is we ourselves who shall have to bear the main brunt of the efforts needed to restructure and modernise our economy and that foreign aid can at best play only a supplementary and supporting role. We ourselves have wanted to make a sincere effort to cut down on foreign aid and fortunately some of the countries themselves are helping us in this effort.

The President's Address has identified some sectors in which increased production should contribute significantly to a reduction in our dependence on external aid. There was special mention of steel, fertilisers, cotton and oilseeds. These are the areas in which we have considerable domestic capability and yet we have been depending on

imports. There is no reason why we should not be able to increase their production. In fact, some states have assured that they have already taken up this programme and they think that within a short time we will be fully self-sufficient in these spheres also.

In his Address the President has called for a moratorium on strikes and lock-outs. The President himself is personally taking a great interest in this matter and has been speaking and meeting people. At any time for any country a hold-up in production would be unfortunate but especially for our country at this particular cross-road of our development it would be most unfortunate. Unfortunate is a very mild word to use. I think history will not forgive us if we permit any interruption of production on account of strikes or lock-outs in the present circumstances when our national self-respect demands that we should free ourselves from any dependence on others. I have full faith in our people and have no doubt that their sense of patriotism will assert itself in fields and factories. A major factor which aggravates our economic inequality is unemployment and underemployment and Hon. Members have rightly stressed these points in their speeches. The Plan is an instrument to increase employment opportunities and in the long term accelerated economic growth is the only effective answer. At the same time it is true that a proper strategy for development which is built around the problem of unemployment is necessary. We have taken certain supplementary measures to stimulate employment through specially designed programmes such as small farmers' development programme, schemes for marginal farmers, landless labourers, rural works programme in drought-prone areas, schemes for dry farming areas, etc. and these programmes are expected to generate in the aggregate employment to the extent of two million man-hours per year. Our endeavour now is to ensure that these programmes are implemented more energetically. The 60-crore crash programme for rural employment will, I am told, make a greater impact on employment in the rural areas in the remaining two years of the Plan. As Hon. Members are aware it always takes a little time for any scheme or programme to get going, that is for the work to start. Before it can make an impact or show results some time is needed.

Under the programme for alleviating unemployment among the educated, schemes have been sanctioned for the expansion and improvement of the quality of primary education through the appointment of additional teachers, rural engineering surveys, agro-service centres, development of consumer co-operatives, preparation of road projects and rural water supply schemes and schemes for special support to small entrepreneurs. We have now decided that these programmes should be continued in the remaining two years of the Fourth Plan. Government have also proposed to initiate other programmes for the training and absorption of personnel such as engineers, technicians and

post-graduates. Further allocation is proposed to be made to State Governments on a matching basis for the formulation of special employment programmes. These new programmes will be taken up in 1972-73 and will be financed out of the lump sum provision of Rs. 125 crores which was indicated by the Finance Minister in his Budget speech. It is estimated that these special programmes will benefit about 3.5 lakhs of educated unemployed.

Notice has been given of a number of amendments about monopoly houses, the functioning of the M.R.T.P. Act and the need to nationalise various industries, specially those belonging to the monopoly houses. I have indicated my views on a number of occasions in this House and elsewhere on the question of nationalisation. The Government is neither averse to nor afraid of nationalisation. But nationalisation has to fit into our overall scheme of priorities with reference to the changing conditions of our economy. We shall nationalise an industry or a unit if it is essential to strengthen the control of the public sector over the economy. That is why 14 major banks were nationalised, and later the General Insurance companies. We shall also not hesitate to nationalise any unit or industry when there is evidence that it is being managed to the detriment of national interest. That is why we took over the management of certain coking coal mines and of copper. Nationalisation is one amongst many instruments at the disposal of Government to curb concentration of economic power in private hands, and we resort to it after a careful assessment of the efficacy of the other instruments available, in a given situation. We always consider that the extension of the public sector could be an effective counter-veiling force in checking concentration of economic power. The more active role which public financial institutions are now seeking in the management of enterprises in which they have substantial financial interests is also directed towards the same end. So far as the industrial houses are concerned, our policy has been spelt out in the M.R.T.P. Act as well as in the industrial licensing policy. We have delineated the fields in which these houses will be allowed to expand further, and wherever there is a possibility of choice between a larger house on the one hand, and a medium house or a new entrepreneur on the other, Government have favoured the latter. But, sometimes no such medium house or a new entrepreneur is available, and there is also no immediate possibility of any public sector unit, and in these cases we have sometimes allowed the large industrial houses to come in because specially where the State is a backward one we find that there is a great deal of frustration, and the feeling that they have been discriminated against because other States earlier had opportunities which are now being denied them. The denial of licences for expansion in such cases would mean loss of production and perhaps involve larger imports to meet the domestic need. We must simultaneously pursue a number of economic objectives, a fast rate

of industrial expansion, economic self-reliance, industrial development of backward areas, creation of opportunities for employment of different types of people. But while doing so, we have also to keep in view the strain on resources, financial as well as managerial, specially the latter. Hon. Members will appreciate that economic policy-making has to strike a very delicate balance between the several and sometimes conflicting objectives keeping in view both the short-term and the long-term needs of the economy.

Having said all this I must confess that as a lay person—economists in this House may quarrel with me as those outside sometimes do—I do have a strong feeling that the present economic thinking is not solving the problem of contemporary society anywhere, not only in India but in the world. What other countries do is their concern, but we in India must devise an economic system which makes sense in our social setting. Our progress must be judged not by the GNP or the various other criteria which are put forward such as the number of cars on the road. I mention cars not because I think them important but recently I have read about three or four articles on China and other countries and a criterion for assessing standards is the number of cars, where there are too few in some places or too many in other places and so on. Our progress must be measured by the extent to which our programmes and goods are able to reach the poorest and the most needy. Therefore, an entirely fresh outlook on economic theory and its implementation is needed.

I am not dwelling on the question of prices and so on because this has been talked about at great length elsewhere. Hon. Members know that we are trying to hold foodgrain prices. They also know of the large sums which are spent on procurement and on ensuring a fair distribution. I was amazed to hear that some Members have spoken about starvation. We have been through periods of famine. We have tried to prevent starvation and I think the whole world has realised what a tremendous job was done in preventing starvation and in raising our food output. There is great poverty in India. Nobody denies it, but it is also true that there is no longer that degree of poverty which existed here before Independence. We have moved forward and it is no use counting the paise that people earn. It can be seen on the faces of the people when you visit villages and even remote areas, how they are dressed, how bright the children's faces are, what their reactions are when spoken to and so many other things. I would plead with the Hon. Opposition Members that while they criticise the Government, its programmes and policies, which, of course, is their main job, they should not in any way minimise the achievements of the nation, as this can only weaken national confidence and national determination.

Our foreign policy has been one of friendship. It remains so. There is no weakness or drift in it. The President has clearly stated that,

while we ourselves do not seek leadership or domination, we cannot tolerate any outside interference in our own affairs. Some nations have not always been friendly and have even sought to provoke us, but we have excluded none from the circle of our friendship. We do not dwell on the past. We think that every day can bring new opportunities and we have taken initiatives. We sincerely hope for a genuine response.

The Congress party has secured major victories in the elections and it is naturally bound to give rise to feelings of sadness or disappointment in other parties, but I am sorry that this should lead to any talk of the boycott of Legislatures. Although there is much that divides us, I personally believe that there is much that unites us. There are our main objectives. I think nobody will quarrel with the objective of our national policy which is to eradicate poverty, to remove economic backwardness, to bring about social equality. In the external sphere, our objective is to have an India which stands strongly for its independence and sovereignty, an India which will not bow its head to any power, however big, an India which will keep intact its integrity and keep aloft its national pride. I think I have covered most of the points although I have not gone into details. This is the time when our major objectives have to be looked at with a new outlook by the Opposition parties as well. I think they will notice that there is a mood of optimism, a mood of self-confidence, all over the country. We can use this feeling and this atmosphere to build. We are at the stage when we have the capacity to build. We have talked about self-reliance, we have talked about so many things. We have sincerely believed in them. But at no time have we had the capacity to go towards those goals as we have today. Before, these were the goals, but distant goals. Today they are not distant goals; they are within our reach. And if we unite instead of quarrelling over various small points or just trying to belittle one another, I think this country has a great future and we can all share in building it and in taking it forward.

A Pledge Renewed

WE HAVE GATHERED from all parts of the country to live again a moment of history when out of the long gloom of feudalism and foreign rule, India awoke to freedom and democracy. We have come to remember with gratitude the long succession of those who have gone before us. The Father of the Nation reinterpreted our ancient values

From speech at midnight session of Parliament, August 14-15, 1972

and traditions and transformed ideals that seemed unattainable into powerful instruments of political action. His message reached out to village and town, inspired the educated, brought understanding to the simplest and awakened long suppressed aspirations.

Our movement was a non-violent one. It released unthought of qualities in our people and revealed the many faces of courage. By participating in a cause larger than himself, every Indian grew in stature. Some groups followed the more familiar path of armed confrontation. Many were the instances of individual daring and self-sacrifice. I recall also the work of the Indian National Army away from our shores.

My mind goes still further back, beyond personal memory, to the great rising of 1857. The immediate cause does not matter. Perhaps deep in the subconscious, underlying sentiments of caste and religion was another stirring, the search for identity.

It was a remarkable century. The darkness of oppression was illumined by great intellects. Men of religion were also revolutionaries. Poets, scientists, indeed people of all professions, were one in a great objective—the resurgence of the nation.

Ultimately, success was achieved by the countless men and women, unknown and unsung, who served our cause by their numbers no less than their dedication.

What was our strength ? Oppressed and humiliated as we were, our leaders raised us above fear and hate. Transcending all hardship, we focussed our gaze on a vision of the future. We had faith that a people who moved with dignity and courage could not be cowed; that India awakened could never again be subdued.

We have always believed that freedom is indivisible. We have been in touch with movements for liberation everywhere and have contributed to them. Today we reaffirm our solidarity with the many Asian and African countries which became free with us or soon after, the latest of whom is Bangladesh, and with all those who are still struggling for freedom or development.

At the moment of Independence, our energies turned from the tension of struggle to the immediate problems of partition and the vast new responsibilities which we had assumed. That night, Jawaharlal Nehru said in a mood of prophecy : "The future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges that we have so often taken." A quarter of a century has since elapsed, during which we have had our share of failure and success, of tragedy and triumph. And yet we can take pride in the undeniable fact that despite the long sequences of challenges, we are today stronger—politically, economically, and socially. Our national unity, democracy, secularism and socialism remain strong and firm.

Our quest has been friendship with all, submission to none. Our fight was not for ourselves alone but for all mankind. Nor was it merely

for political independence in its narrow sense. We were determined to change the old order, to eradicate poverty, to emancipate society from rigid stratification, evil customs and superstition.

The struggle for freedom began when the first man was enslaved and it will continue until the last man is freed not merely of visible bondage but of the concepts of inferiority due to race, colour, caste or sex. Only those who are free in spirit can be the torch-bearers of freedom and pioneers of the future.

The greatness for which we strive is not the arrogance of military power or the avarice of economic exploitation. It is the true greatness of the spirit which India has cherished through the millennia. Man in the nuclear age stands at a crucial crossroad in his destiny. Let us rededicate ourselves not only to the service of India and her great people, but beyond to the broader goals of world peace and human welfare so that generations yet unborn can live with dignity and fulfilment, as part of the great world family.

Fight against Poverty

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO our National Flag was unfurled for the first time here at this spot. The entire nation awoke into a new life that day. Last night we paid our homage to those thousands of people whose services and sacrifices led us to freedom. Different types of people took part in our freedom struggle. Many among them were great revolutionaries but most of them joined the non-violent non-co-operation movement. It was the sacrifices of all of them which roused freedom consciousness in the country and forced the British to quit India. There were several others like men of the Garhwal Regiment, the Naval Ratings of Bombay and the I.N.A. who made many sacrifices for the cause of our freedom. There were so many of them that it is rather difficult to name them all. Most of them are no more with us now and we pay our homage to them. We also express our gratitude to others whom we are fortunate to have in our midst today. It is their selfless service and great sacrifices that brought us freedom.

Twenty-five years ago when we unfurled our flag here it was not the end of our fight but a beginning of a new fight—a fight against poverty and a fight to make freedom a reality for our teeming millions. All of us are partners in this great struggle and have to go a long way to achieve our objectives. We have to ensure a better life for our

Free translation of speech in Hindi from the ramparts of Red Fort, Delhi, August 15, 1972

children and find more jobs for our young men. During the last 25 years we have covered a long journey, a journey not of comforts alone but of many hardships, difficulties and dangers. But, as you know, we are today stronger than ever before; we are more resolute and united and our democratic institutions have taken deeper roots.

However, we have to see that the pace of our progress is accelerated and we fulfil our pledges. As you know we have made some progress and have a number of achievements to our credit. But I regret to say that there are some people in our country who even question these achievements. They even questioned the desirability of our celebrating the Silver Jubilee of our Independence. This is a strange attitude and very difficult to understand. Can't they see the progress we have made so far? Perhaps they can't or perhaps they don't like it

There is a mighty upsurge in India today and we all should try to gear ourselves to meet the challenges before us. We should strive for unity and strength to achieve our objectives. Any temporary difficulty or our failure to do things should not lead us to believe that there has been no progress. We do make mistakes sometimes but these cannot nullify our achievements. While we criticise ourselves for our shortcomings, we should not overlook our many achievements. We have to do some heart-searching and decide what the shape of things should be.

Almost every year, as you know, we face droughts in some parts of the country and floods in others. These bring misery and sufferings in their trail. But the impact of such tragedies today is not the same as it used to be years before. Previously, whenever there was drought in rural areas there was hardly any assistance from outside. But things are quite different now. We take immediate steps to rush aid to the affected areas and face the calamity unitedly. We cannot stop these calamities. We cannot prevent the vagaries of nature but we can always face them unitedly. A significant development we see is the increasing self-reliance among our people and a belief that they alone are the masters of their destiny. This is our greatest asset and a source of our real strength.

As you know we have made considerable progress in the fields of agriculture and industry. Twenty-five years ago when we became free our condition was really bad and we were full of anxiety. We were faced with so many problems and it looked as if we would not be able to solve them. Many people thought that India would not be able to preserve her independence. But these people were proved wrong. We were successful in solving our problems one by one. During these years we have made significant progress. Food production in the country has increased, a large number of new factories have come up. All the critical and complex problems were solved one by one. Production of steel and electricity has increased. Many heavy machines,

which we were formerly importing, are now being manufactured in the country. The development of heavy industry has enabled us to manufacture other machines indigenously. It is true that our production has not kept pace with the increasing demand. The more we produce the more we need to meet our demand which is largely due to rapid increase in our population. So we are always faced with the problem of how to meet the demand which is increasing day by day. Some people do not see things in proper perspective and try to belittle the achievements. Such persons who close their eyes to the realities are no friends of the people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Armed Forces for their heroic and courageous deeds. These brave soldiers and officers of our Army, Navy and Air Force have made great sacrifices to safeguard freedom of the country which has been attacked five times. I firmly believe that the freedom of India will always be safe in their hands. We express our gratitude and sympathies to the families of our brave soldiers and officers who lost their lives in the fighting. All of us including our army and police have to make a united effort to uplift the country. We fully realise that the real strength of a nation depends on its progress, on its ideology, on the unity of its people, on the readiness of its people to make sacrifices. We see lot of tension in the world today. The real question before us is whether we want to fritter away our energies in useless agitations and quarrels or whether we want to look into our future and act to make it really prosperous.

Today we find restlessness among our youth and others. This restlessness is not peculiar to us alone. This is a universal phenomenon today. Maybe, in India it is because of unemployment, maybe, it is because of poverty, but why we see this restlessness among youth in other countries where there is no unemployment or poverty. To my mind this restlessness is because we are emerging from one age and entering into another. And when such great transformation takes place it is bound to result in some restlessness, sorrow and suffering. We cannot remain stuck to the old order nor can we wish that there should be no change. We want to play our part in this change. These changes are of various kinds. In India we have poverty and it is necessary that we implement our development programmes speedily to eradicate poverty and create conditions conducive to these changes. We have done a lot of things in this direction but we have still to do much more. To meet the unemployment problem we have to enforce programmes to remove it as soon as possible. It is not possible for me to go into details at the moment but these programmes have been explained in the Parliament and placed before the people at other forums. Some of these have already been undertaken and others are still to be taken up. These programmes have been designed to meet both the immediate and future conditions. There are many problems which we must solve. We cannot

wait passively for their solutions. We ourselves have to shape our future. We want that every Indian should have a hand in shaping our destiny. It is true that we are now free but, as I said earlier, we have yet to make this freedom real for our teeming millions. We have to build a society in which each individual can enjoy full freedom—economic, social and political. In fact, we have to build this kind of world society. We cannot isolate ourselves from the world today. We do not covet anyone's territory. We do not want to interfere in others' affairs. We want others also to follow the correct way like us. I think we have in the last few months shown the world something. You all know how we last year met the aggression against us. Our forces fought heroically and achieved a real victory. In fact it was a victory of an ideology, a way of thinking and the world could see it. This victory has given strength to India and has created unity and enthusiasm among our people.

We have never made an attack on anybody, nor have we tried to pressurise anyone. In fact, there are some who have tried to pressurise us. But, as you know, we have resisted all such pressures. We carefully choose our own way and do not get swayed by the currents. As you know there is not any readymade way. We ourselves have to make it, step by step, and it is possible we may sometimes make mistakes or grow complacent but it has to be of our own making. A nation's character like an individual's is built the hard way. The real strength of a man is his character and only a man who works hard is a man of character and not the one who leads a life of ease and extravagance. We do not want a nation which only loves ease and comforts. We want a people who love working hard for their livelihood, a people who struggle to create better opportunities of life not only for themselves but for others also. I think our freedom will be complete only when we are able to create such conditions for our people.

I strongly feel that our independence would not be complete so long as we do not completely eliminate casteism from our society. We all must think as equals, citizens of India, an ancient country, which gave to the world a unique culture and high ideals. We have to show the world that we still value those high ideals whatever be our religion. There are many religions in India. If we follow our religion sincerely there can be no quarrels among us. No true religion teaches us to suppress those belonging to other religions. Toleration of others' views has been our tradition. We must maintain and strengthen this glorious tradition so that the entire mankind benefits from it.

I mentioned about our old revolutionaries and freedom fighters who are still in our midst today. We want inspiration from them. We want their blessings in shaping the future of this great country. To the young generation of India, I give my good wishes. It is they who are to build the India of our dreams. They are the custodians of the honour and

security of India. Let us pledge ourselves to build a clean, progressive and a great Bharat.

The way this country will move forward is not yet known and I cannot tell it. But I know that an inner force, a new life is struggling to be born. With its birth, humanity will find a new way, a way to peace and co-operation among mankind which will make the world one family.

We have to remove not only economic poverty but the penury of our thinking. We have to bring about a new way of thinking. Our young men sometimes go astray and make mistakes but they have the strength to deliver the goods. It is time we make the best use of all the strength and knowledge that we possess to take the country forward so that it is able to help the rest of the world in moving along the correct path.

Recently, as you know, we have tried to come to an agreement with our neighbouring country. People ask me if I trust that country or not. My answer to them is that I trust only one country and that is India. We have to trust our people, our unity and our strength. We want that there should always be friendship and peace in this sub-continent so that we can march forward speedily.

Strengthening National Purpose

Appeal to Pheruman

I HAVE ONLY just seen your letter of October 9. I must confess some astonishment. I do not know in what words my informal talk to the Members of the Punjab Legislature was quoted. I can only say that all these days, I have been full of anguish and that there is no trace of hatred or pride. It is this continuing feeling of anguish which led me to appeal to you more than once to give up your fast. Is such an appeal consistent with any hatred and pride in heart? I expressed to the Punjab legislators my deep concern for you personally and for the people of Punjab. There was no question of my saying anything about stopping Chandigarh going to Punjab or elsewhere.

The more I think about the destiny of our country as a whole, the more I am forced to the conclusion that we must solve our problems by argument and reason and not by means of coercion or compulsion. It was in this context that I firmly stated to the Punjab legislators who came to see me that decision-taking is not possible while you in Punjab and Shri Mann in Haryana, insist on continuing your fasts and on attempting to settle the issue by such means. This way lies bitterness and conflict.

It is obvious from your letter that it has been written in anger. How else can one interpret the violence of your language?

What kind of image do we create of our country when we swear by democratic processes, but seek to solve problems by pressures, by fasting, or by agitational methods. No democratic Government can allow itself to be swayed by pressures.

Once an atmosphere of tolerance and goodwill is created, there is no problem which cannot be solved. I want a peaceful solution for Chandigarh, a solution which would bring satisfaction to our brethren in Punjab as well as in Haryana. Any solution which leaves bitterness will defeat the very purpose for which a solution is sought. I can only reason with you in the hope that you will think of these matters in the larger context of the national interest.

Letter to Shri Darshan Singh Pheruman, a Punjab leader, who was on fast on the Chandigarh issue, New Delhi, October 14, 1969

Inauguration of New States

THE BIRTH OF the autonomous State of Meghalaya is indeed a matter for rejoicing and, on this memorable day, I bring to you, the Government and the people of Meghalaya, the greetings of the entire nation.

The inauguration of this autonomous State is yet another example of the functioning of the democratic process. It shows that, with goodwill, understanding and patience, even the most intractable human problem can be solved amicably. The discussions and negotiations for the establishment of this State have been long and tedious. Throughout, we tried to evolve a broad consensus which could further the larger national objectives. The Government specially kept in view the vital importance and strategic position of the North-Eastern region as a whole, the integrated and well-coordinated development of which is of national importance.

Mr. Chief Minister, you have, with the warmth and generosity characteristic of your people, spoken in praise of the efforts made by my father, Chief Minister of Assam, my colleagues in the Government and myself. These efforts could bear fruit because of the spirit in which you, your colleagues and your people responded to them. I am glad to hear you say that this goodwill and spirit of co-operation will continue on all sides, and set an example of co-operative endeavour for the rest of the country.

It is a day of rejoicing, and yet, from today begin your high responsibilities and burdens, to carry on the administration of this area, to take all your people forward towards the even development of this region. This is a new constitutional experiment and we sincerely desire its success. Whatever help we can give will be forthcoming for the defence, security and well-being of the people inhabiting this beautiful and strategic part of our country. No one of us can escape the compulsions of geography. Hence, it is essential for the Government and the people of Assam, and the Government and the people of Meghalaya to work in close co-operation and collaboration. Any barrier or feeling of distance between the hills and plains impedes the progress of both, for each is dependent on the other. Together, we can all galvanise our resources, unearth our rich minerals and give to the people of Meghalaya a better deal in life.

We are proud of our multi-racial, multi-lingual variety. Our Constitution safeguards the religious and linguistic freedom of all our people. It is our endeavour to see that opportunities for growth and development reach every part of our land and every section of our people. The people of every region should be enabled to grow in

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Speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the State of Meghalaya, Shillong, April 2, 1970

freedom and in the hope of a life that is worth living. But the quality of a nation is judged not by the number of its people, nor by the extent of its area, but by the loftiness of its ideals, the excellence of its policies and the endeavour made to achieve its objectives.

In your address, you have touched upon some of the problems which confront you and your people. These are in miniature the problems facing the entire country on a much vaster scale. We have to carry the maximum number of people with us and with least dislocation. There is no substitute for united, dedicated hard work. A great deal has been done, but it does not always attract notice when it is distributed over such a large area.

You have referred also to the development of Shillong. Town planning is an important and interesting problem of contemporary life. Great responsibility rests on the Government of Assam and the Government of the autonomous State of Meghalaya to build a modern and beautiful capital which will be the pride of India.

As soon as the Representative Advisory Body, which you mentioned and which the Act provides, is constituted, long-term planning with regard to water supply, electricity, housing etc. can begin. To build a city, one needs modern plans and technology, but even more essential are a forward-looking mind and a rational outlook. An important part of making something new, is to recognise what and how much of the old has to be kept. Even if it costs more in terms of money and effort, our town planning and architecture must be in harmony with the surroundings and in consonance with the climate using as far as possible local materials and patterns.

Industrialisation is not an unmixed blessing. Man can cut down in a moment what nature has taken millions of years to fashion. Many advanced countries are deeply repenting their shortsighted vandalism. The task they now face is to restore refreshness to the air, cleanliness to the water and greenery to the soil, and to help in the survival of many dying species of plants, of animals and birds and even insects, for they are all part of nature's delicate balance. We can learn from their experience and avoid their mistakes. Nature is not static, but ever changing; yet it does so in a manner that the balance is constantly being adjusted. It is the upsetting of the balance and the growth of disparities which cause the most harm and create the greatest tensions. Thus we must make every effort that growth and development are balanced as between man and man and also between man and nature. As our attitude towards our fellowmen should be one of co-operation rather than confrontation, so with nature, we should think not of the exploitation of resources but rather of their judicious use to create a better environment in which all can line in harmony. Two trends are visible in the world of today—the community's search for in individuality, and

simultaneously its need to form part of a bigger unit for safety as well as progress.

The path of responsibility and of development is fraught with dangers and difficulties. You will have your share of these. This has been the lot of men, in fact of all creatures, since time immemorial, although the nature of the problems, the difficulties and dangers keep changing as our own lives change with scientific discoveries and technological development. But just as the earth, the sea and perhaps the air are full of untapped and even unknown resources, so is the human being. He must learn to mobilise these inner resources to adjust to new situations.

In India, we are at a stage of development where size itself is making development more difficult, where progress itself is creating new demands and frustrations. We have just emerged from what is perhaps the darkest period since our independence. The economic situation has improved but is far from easy. The political situation is also a complex one. Rivalries and tensions arise because our meagre resources force us to cut down, or postpone even essential programmes. But as we go along, problems do get solved and, step by step, we are moving forward. There is great improvement in some areas of the economy and we are tackling the other areas where there are shortfalls. As development reaches more people, the pressures will mount, the impatience will increase. I am aware of all this. But I also know that as services and opportunities expand, we shall become stronger and able to do more. Our diversity will be a source of cultural richness, our size a source of strength. Man has overcome many of the old hardships, because of his resourcefulness. His courage and his sense of adventure have enabled him not only to survive but to rise to new heights. No matter how much we do or how far we go, there will always be new heights to scale.

Meghalaya has a musical sound, evoking visions of high hills and life-sustaining clouds. Shillong is perhaps the prettiest of our hill towns. As it grows and flourishes, may it retain its individuality, its gentleness and charm, and gain strength by being an integral part of our great country.

You are part of India and we are all part of the world. India stands for peace and justice, for the lessening of suspicion and for creating trust between all peoples. We shall always work towards this end.

I too am a child of the hills. I know that to walk in the hills is more strenuous than to run on the plains. But I also know that hill people have greater endurance and are sturdy of muscles. I am confident that the entire State of Assam will progress as a joint venture of the people of the hills and the plains. You are rich in resources and talent. The whole of India will watch your progress with deep interest and sympathy. We wish you well and give you our best wishes.

May I echo the slogan I saw along the road—Onward Meghalaya. Onward Assam. Onward India. Onward to Prosperity. Kublai. Methela. Jai Hind.

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I AM HAPPY to be with you on this auspicious occasion. I first visited Zero about twenty years ago. I am glad to see the many changes which have taken place here since then, and the efforts the people have made to move forward. The inauguration today of your new Union Territory is another big step forward. Yours is a beautiful region set amidst lofty hills.

India is a vast country where different types of people live in a variety of terarin and landscape. Their languages are different, their dress is different, and they have diverse food habits. There are many religions in our country. But all these people belong to India. They live together and have respect for each other. They are striving together to make this beautiful country strong. I have intimate knowledge of the hills and their inhabitants and I know that they face greater difficulties than others. Such areas, naturally, deserve our special attention and we are doing our utmost to help remove their difficulties.

During the last twenty years, the people of NEFA, now named Arunachal Pradesh, have made considerable progress. We have been trying to help them in all the fields. Many new schools have been opened, new roads built and a number of steps taken to provide health services and improve agricultural output. The people here have shown a great deal of enterprise to solve their problems and have made significant progress. Arunachal Pradesh is not big in area as compared to other regions. But even here there is diversity. I earnestly hope that all these people will live in peace and amity and help one another in the development of the entire region.

You had remained somewhat isolated from other parts of India, perhaps owing to the fact that this is a mountainous region, or perhaps owing to the fact that we could not come here to meet you before Independence. In many respects this region remained backward. But in other fields, such as handicrafts, you have few rivals. You have the know-how which others do not have. In today's world we have to see what best we can offer in exchange for something we need. None in this world is so backward as not able to offer something or the other. And none in this world is so self-sufficient as not in need of something

Free translation of speech in Hindi on the occasion of the inauguration of the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh, January 21, 1972

or the other. It is through such give-and-take that we can forge bonds of friendship and strengthen national unity.

I am sure that Arunachal Pradesh will forge ahead in all fields—and especially in education and in industry. Through your devotion and hard work you are sure to bring about changes. But I hope these changes will not mar the beauty and gracefulness of your present-day life and you will continue to cherish your arts and crafts. I offer my congratulations to you on the fine work you have been doing to develop this beautiful region. It is my hope that your region will make quick progress.

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I AM VERY glad to be with you on this solemn occasion. Manipur occupies an important place in our ancient history and, I think, in our present-day life as well. Manipur is a real 'gem' (Mani) of India and it is our wish that it may ever shine like a 'gem' and impart beauty to the whole country. This is an auspicious day when people everywhere in Eastern India celebrate Saraswati Puja. People in Uttar Pradesh and other regions celebrate the day as Vasant Panchami. The day marks the onset of spring which brings new life to Nature. Incidentally, it is also bringing new life to Manipur. My congratulations to you all.

You had been aspiring for long to have a State for yourselves and today your desire stands fulfilled. With this also devolves on you the entire responsibility for development and welfare of your new State. You will, I hope, now devote your entire energies to constructive activities.

Manipur is a region of the brave. Every Indian is aware of the tale of Chitrangada. It is a tale of glory. She was a brave woman who centuries back had held opinions which are being discussed today in the West. Manipur is thus old and yet modern in its ancient glory. It may be backward economically but it is very rich in its art, dance and handicrafts. We have to use modern science and technology for economic development, but we should see that it does not adversely affect the beauty and grace of our culture. Manipur should not lose its artistic achievements and distinctive character.

Manipur, like many other parts in the country, is at present facing many difficulties. We all are trying to remove such difficulties one by one. Just two years ago, several reputed scholars were expressing opinions that we would not be able to feed our increasing population. But, as you know, despite all such apprehensions, our food production went up and we were able to meet our requirements fully. We were,

Free translation of speech in Hindi on the occasion of the inauguration of Manipur State, January 21, 1972

in fact, faced with the problem of proper storage of our produce. So, whether it is agriculture or industry, we are striving hard to achieve self-sufficiency. It is true that we have not been able to banish poverty from our land. There is also unemployment in the country and people have to undergo many sufferings. We have formulated a number of schemes to fight unemployment and create more job opportunities for our young men. We cannot, of course, solve this difficult problem at once. But a beginning has been made and it is our hope that as our various developmental activities expand, more and more employment opportunities will be thrown open. During these years we have been able to lay strong foundations for economic progress and are now in a position to make rapid progress. We have to work hard to make our country strong and united.

There are many agitations in the country owing to various reasons, which I think are sometimes quite genuine. But when such agitations turn violent, they harm the country and the people. Violence is not the way to achieve our objectives. We can progress and make our country strong only through working together in peaceful and democratic conditions. It is only through mutual co-operation that we can make progress. No State, however big in size or resources, can do without assistance from other States. We cannot grow in isolation. I hope Manipur will also grow in strength in co-operation with other States and thus make the country strong and united.

As you know, some new States have been recently formed in this region of India. They are small in size but each one is important in its own right and has its own peculiar problems. To develop this entire region and make the best use of the available resources and coordinate developmental activities each of these States has to co-operate with others. It is with this view that a North-Eastern Council has been constituted. We hope that the Council, through the co-operation of all the concerned States, will succeed in its objectives. I once again congratulate you on this auspicious occasion and wish you a very bright future.

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I AM VERY happy to be here with you on this occasion when a new opportunity is opening up for the people of Mizoram. It is a big change for this district and there is now a closer link between you and the Central Government. Since we became free, we have been striving to raise the living standards of our people and during these years we have been able to lay the foundations for rapid progress in industry and

Free translation of speech in Hindi on the occasion of the inauguration of Mizoram Union Territory, January 21, 1972

agriculture. As a result of it we are now in a position to undertake many such developmental programmes as are needed to create good living conditions for our countrymen. But, we have yet to go a long way to achieve our objectives.

Before India became free, development, if any, was confined to the few big cities and the areas around them. It is only after Independence that our developmental plans began reaching many other areas—the rural areas, the hill areas, the desert areas and the forest areas. Although many of these projects have been completed we know that much more remains to be done to cover many parts of the country which have not had adequate development. We have programmes in hand for those areas and sections of the population which had not derived much benefit from our various development plans. We are anxious that such areas and the people living there get all the assistance they need to improve their conditions. The Mizo people are brave, talented and enterprising and are an asset to the whole region. While all Indian citizens and all parts of India, whether close to the capital or not, enjoy equality, the Centre has a special responsibility for the Union Territories. And it is our experience that any area which has some special problems regarding its development, it is easier for the Centre to help it when it enjoys the status of a Union Territory. So today we enter into new type of relationship which provides us an opportunity to undertake various types of development programmes in this region.

India, as you know, is a very vast country, with a large diversity of people, of religions, of languages, of customs, dress and food habits. Under our system of Government each region enjoys full freedom for developing its own personality. Our very diversity helps in keeping us united and in strengthening us. The country can help its inhabitants only when it is strong and united and enjoys the loyalty of all its citizens. Here in Mizoram, there had been a period of unhappiness because of disturbances and acts of violence. There have been such activities in other parts of our country also. But gradually our people have realised that their welfare does not lie in violence or disturbances but in working peacefully to solve their many problems. It is because of this realisation that India is strong today. We have solved many of our problems and yet many more remain to be solved. But as we solve one problem, our capacity and strength to solve others increases.

I hope that some of our young people who had, somehow, taken to the path of violence will now turn their energies to constructive purposes and help their people in meaningful and creative actions. The recent happenings in the subcontinent have changed the situation especially in this part of India. I hope that there will be peace here now, which is so essential to any programme of construction and development. As I said earlier, there are many types of people in India and there are some States which are more developed than others.

But, I believe, that no State is so developed or so advanced that it has not something to learn from others and no State is so backward that it has not something to give the others. So I hope that Mizoram and other Union Territories and States will co-operate to help one another so that together we can help our people to achieve better standards of living.

On this auspicious day I bring to you the greetings of the Government of India and of people of the rest of India. We join you in your efforts to make this beautiful part of our country prosperous and happy.

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I AM VERY happy to be here with you on the occasion of the inauguration of your State. Tripura is a small but beautiful State. It is well-known for its arts and crafts. Though small in size, Tripura has braved many difficulties. Only recently, about three lakh displaced persons from Bangladesh found shelter here. A small area thus accommodated a vast multitude. But the people gladly welcomed them, though they themselves had to undergo many difficulties. I want to congratulate you on the courage and large-heartedness with which you faced all the difficulties and rendered every help in the cause of their war of liberation.

This was a very difficult time not only for you but also for the whole country. It was, in fact, a big trial for our country. It put our armed forces to test and they came out victorious. They fought bravely and everyone is full of praise for them. The entire nation displayed splendid unity, courage and discipline which was one of the main reasons of our winning the war.

As you know, India has made considerable progress since the attainment of freedom. During these years, we have been able to lay strong foundations for rapid economic progress and have many achievements to our credit. Our success has been largely due to our firm faith in democratic way of life, secularism and planned development. It was our sound economic policy directed towards achieving self-sufficiency in agriculture, industry and defence that enabled us to meet the challenge successfully. The most important factor responsible for our success, however, has been the remarkable unity of our people to meet the crisis. It is my hope that we shall work with the same sense of unity and discipline to solve our many present-day problems.

As you know, there have been occasional cases of violence in Tripura when some misguided young men have taken to extreme ways

Free translation of speech in Hindi on the occasion of the inauguration of Tripura State, January 21, 1972

to voice their grievances. This, to my mind, is not the right way to deal with problems. Violence hardly achieves anything. We must maintain peace and solve our problems with goodwill. People of all religions live in Tripura as in other parts of India. We want all of them to live in peace and friendship and help one another. It is only through co-operation that we can achieve our objectives. No State can progress in isolation. Tripura, like any other State, can move forward only in co-operation with others. We should all work unitedly for the welfare of our people. As you know it is our policy to give more attention to the weaker sections of our society, who, we feel, have been denied their due for too long. India cannot be strong so long as such people remain neglected.

While we do want to usher in economic and social changes and weed out superstition and stagnation, we are also anxious to preserve our ancient tradition and culture. We have to build a modern society but without sacrificing our way of life. Tripura has a bright future and I am sure that the people here will work hard to realise their objectives. You will, I hope, display the same courage and discipline as you did in the recent past and make this beautiful State worthy of emulation. I am happy to inaugurate this new State today. I wish you all success.

The Communal Virus

I AM NOT speaking to score any debating point. I have never before, I think, interrupted any Hon. Member during his speech. If I did so on this occasion, it was with a very heavy heart and with a very grave sense of responsibility. 'I think that the Hon. Member has today done a great disservice to this country and to the minorities of this country. This is too serious an occasion, too serious a subject to try just to pick on the points which he has made and I have no intention of doing so. As far as figures and other matters related to the riots are concerned, Shri Shukla will reply later on.

Shri Vajpayee has used this occasion to launch an attack on the Muslims in particular and I think on all minorities in general. With his arms upheld, he has announced in the good old way of Hitler. I happened to be there at that time and I know how he spoke and the words he used.

I do not know what words Shri Vajpayee used, but he has challenged me on something or the other. Let me tell him that I have never backed

Intervening in discussion in Lok Sabha on communal situation, May 14, 1970

out of any challenge and I do not back out now. Let us face the Indian people.

I am used to see Shri Vajpayee and his party not only attacking me but abusing me in the papers with every possible falsehood—baseless allegations—that can be thought of. But, on this occasion, he has chosen to launch an attack on one of my colleagues, the Home Minister, because the Home Minister spoke frankly and with the sadness that was in his heart. Shri Vajpayee has chosen to try to make something else out of it.

What has happened in Bhiwandi or what has happened in other riots is equally sad and deplorable. And it is not something for which any of us would like to shirk responsibility. I certainly do not shirk it. But I think we must also face facts. What begins these riots ? This was the question asked by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Is it a little body who threw a stone who begins the riots ? Is it the person who might do the first killing who begins the riot ? Or is it the atmosphere that is spread by speeches of the type which we heard here today ? It is this atmosphere which starts all these disturbances.

And this is not a new thing. It is not something that has happened today for the first time. Is it a coincidence that when people who belong to the RSS or the Jan Sangh go somewhere, soon afterwards, there is a riot in or close to that place ? It may be that it is a coincidence, I do not know, but to me and to all other people who have watched this situation, it seems a very strange coincidence. I think that Hon. Members are well advised to try and examine this situation and find out why this should happen.

It is very easy to blame somebody. It may be that the situation could have been dealt in a better way. I do not say that it could not have been. I have not studied it, and that is the main reason why I am going there. It is possible that something more could have been done. There is hardly any situation in the world where you could not have taken better precautions or done more. I do not know what advance notice the Government had. But there is no doubt that ever since this particular party has gained some seats in this House and in the Assemblies, they have been talking more and more in this poisonous strain and more openly. Some Hon. Members shouted, when Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was speaking, that his remarks should be expunged. I am glad that the Deputy Speaker did not expunge them. I would like those remarks to remain on record and be read by future generations and by the people so that they can see what is really in the mind of the Jan Sangh, not the sweet-sounding beautiful Hindi that Shri Vajpayee paraded before us from time to time, but what is the reality behind those words. And today, we saw behind those words naked Fascism. This is what Fascism has been.

Much time was spent on speaking on Shivaji. There is nobody in this House, I would say, perhaps there is nobody in the country, who

does not have respect for Shivaji. But to use his name in order to incite people to communalism is not doing any justice to the memory of Shivaji.

Communalism, whether it is Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or any other community is deplorable. And it is not true to say that we have not deplored it when it has taken place or that we have not deplored it or spoken about it strongly, when any Muslim organisation or Muslim individual has said something which is capable of inciting people or leading to any kind of outbreak or outburst. But that does not mean that we can condone what a member of the majority community does. As I have said on a previous occasion, where people are in a majority, they have a special responsibility. They are not merely one set of people there; they have a special responsibility. Anywhere where some people are stronger, they do have a responsibility towards the weaker section. In our country, in most places, the Hindus are in a majority and, therefore, they do have a responsibility towards the Muslims, the Christians, and towards whoever else may be in a minority. But in those sections where the others are in a majority, it may be that the Sikhs are in a majority in a certain place—they have a responsibility to the other minorities; it may be Hindu or Muslim or something else. Similarly in Kashmir, the Muslims are in a majority; certainly, it is their responsibility to see that the small number of Hindus who live there can live in peace and security. So, these brave-sounding words, announcing that the Hindus are not going to stand for this and so on is merely a way of inciting people. This is what has poisoned the atmosphere of this country. Now, we know that some of these thoughts, some of these kinds of thoughts do lurk in people, in the minds of our people; the people are not perfect and there are such people, but all responsible and right thinking people must see how they can curb this tendency and how they can pacify such an atmosphere. If any such incident takes place, we must bend all our energies to see how we can help the people who are affected, how we can see that in future such a thing does not happen. But to use this occasion merely to launch attacks on people, to say things that will not only hurt the feelings of minority communities but will egg on the majority community in other places to try and create some similar incidents is most improper.

We all know that most of these incidents are very small to start with. Why do they assume such large proportions? I was glad to hear Shri Vajpayee remark that he himself said in Ahmedabad that people should not take the law into their hands. But to me, at least, the rest of his speech appeared as if he himself was encouraging just that. "We are not going to stand by". What does it mean? It means that we will take the law into our hands, and take action. We have to take action. What else was it? As far as I could make out—in between there was considerable noise; I might be mistaken—from the trend of his speech, he was serving a kind of notice that he and his party would do certain

things even if in the process it meant trampling on the rights and lives of the minorities.

As I said, Shri Vajpayee did no great justice to the memory of Shivaji, but he did even less justice to our own old philosophy, our traditions and the very great heritage of this country, because our heritage is certainly not one which tramples on the rights of minorities. On the contrary, from time immemorial, India has opened her doors to all those who suffered in their countries; whether they belonged to different religions, different languages, different customs, we have opened our doors and given them shelter in the remote past. And even today, we attempt to do it.

So the Hon. Member is giving an entirely erroneous view of India to all the world. This is another great disservice to this country that before the world he parades as our philosophy and our tradition ideas which in effect are contrary to that tradition. I am not criticising his party as a party, but merely two main aspects of it: one, the communal aspect and, second, which is even more dangerous the deliberate distortion of history, which is being done. Books are being written and published changing our known history. This is extremely dangerous to us.

Shri Vajpayee declared that the Muslims were starting these riots; he then asked why, and himself answered: because they feel they cannot live in India and, therefore they might as well die fighting. This is in effect what he said, as far as I could make out.

I would like the Hon. Member to read some of the speeches made by members of his party who have said exactly this that the Muslims cannot live in India unless they are Indianised. They say that they are distinct from the RSS. We do not think that they are distinct. Certainly not. I am told, I am not absolutely sure, that the Members who have joined certain Governments on behalf of the Jan Sangh have been Members of the RSS. I think there are any number of speeches which can be produced on these lines.

I am talking about a situation. What I am saying goes much deeper than what happened merely in Bhiwandi or Jalgaon or Ahmedabad. All these things form part of an atmosphere that is created. This is what I am trying to say, and I think it is extremely important that all Members of Parliament, as indeed all Indian citizens, think about these things far more deeply. You will be given all the facts about this. Chavanji has given the facts as known on the first day, and Shuklaji will give you whatever has come to our knowledge since then. But it is time for us not to regard these happenings merely as isolated incidents that take place, incidents which we debate. It is time to realise that it is this kind of communal thinking, these speeches and articles which come out in newspapers which are creating this

atmosphere, and it is no use just getting up and saying, "You prove that we did it."

People have suffered and we have to see firstly what relief has to be given immediately and what we can do on a slightly long-term basis. There is already an enquiry going on and it will come to its conclusions but I admit that I do not know how much such enquiries help. Anyway, it is necessary to have them and I am glad that there is one. Now, apart from the question of relief and so on, we must all get together and see how we can prevent this kind of atmosphere growing, how we can go down to the people, village by village and *mohalla* by *mohalla,* to create that type of neighbourly feeling which in the last analysis is the only protection. The police can help in a particular situation but ultimately it is only one's neighbours who can be of real help. It is only the atmosphere in the country that can prevent this kind of rioting and senseless attacks on people. It is not just a question of whether somebody threw a stone, why should not people get angry. That is where you judge the maturity of people. If people had done something wrong, by all means catch the guilty. In fact, the guilty are the first to get away and it is only the innocent who are looted and murdered.

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I AM HAPPY to be here today to take part in this Conference. From what I hear of its work, it seems to be going in the right direction and gathering momentum. I do not relish playing the leader. All my effort has been that people should find their own path. If I make my voice heard, it is because of the conviction that it is your voice. Once we choose a path our feet should be planted firmly on it.

I want to share a memory with you of my first meeting with Subhadra Joshi. It was soon after we achieved Independence. The country was plunged in riots. Subhadra Joshi had gone and reported to Gandhiji on the events in Delhi. At that time I was new to Delhi. I had broken journey in Dehra Dun. What I saw there and at other stations had deeply disturbed me. I had also given a report to Gandhiji but had forgotten about it. One day I received a message that Gandhiji wanted to see me. When I went there he told me : "I want a report from you on what the situation is in the Muslim areas." I asked, "Who will go with me?" He said, "If there was someone to go with you, why would have I sent for you? I would have sent for the other person." I said, "I know so little of Delhi. I do not know where the Muslims live and where the others live." He said, "It is your business to find out. It is your work.

Free translation of excerpts from speech in Hindi at the Fourth National Convention Against Communalism, New Delhi, December 12, 1970

Either you do it or you say you are unable to do it." I told him, "I have never said that I can't do a thing." So I had to find a way out. I did not know any workers in Delhi. I thought that if I went to the Town Hall, I might be able to find a map or find my way about. I went to the Town Hall and asked the first person whom I met there. He did not know me. He indicated through gestures that none of them had any time and they were busy with other work. I was in a dilemma. Then I noticed a young woman in a white khadi sari. I walked up to her. I did not tell her my name nor did I ask her hers. I just asked her : "Do you live in Delhi ?" She said, "Yes." I asked her, "Have you done any work in Delhi ?" She again said, "Yes." I asked the question, "Do you know the streets here ?" Once again she said, "Yes." Then I said, "I want your help. I want it for this work." I explained what work. We fixed up where we should meet. Then I said, "Let us at least know each other's name." It transpired that she was Subhadra Dutt and I of course was Indira Gandhi.

This is how we met. It is anti-communal work that brought us together. Is it not a matter for pain that after so many years we should still be talking about the same thing from the same platform ? The regret is not that we should still be working together but that in these twenty years, when there has been so much progress in science and technology, man has not been able to enlarge his humanity. Knowledge has grown, competence has grown, but only in one direction. In others we stay where we were. I do not say that this crisis of character exists only in our country. It exists in other countries also. There are tensions and quarrels over colour, race and religion. All these are various facets of the same evil. We have to fight it with all our might wherever it occurs.

I am not against any political party as such. What I do oppose are certain ideas. Whichever party puts them forth, we have to fight them and remove them from our midst. Communal hatred is a poisonous weed that takes no time to grow, once the seed is planted. It can sprout even amongst good people. As we found during the communal riots there were large number of innocent people who lived on the best of terms with their neighbours and worked together. But once the poison was abroad they forgot all about their having been good neighbours and having helped one another and that their children had played together. They forgot all that. It is our duty to clean the places where the poison has spread; and where the poison has not spread, to ensure that it will not spread. It is only if we do this that India can be strong and a beautiful place to live in.

When we fought for freedom we did not fight only for political liberation. Freedom is of course a good thing. But we wanted that after attaining freedom we should take up the other work that remained to be done, especially the work of eradicating poverty, because poverty

is an evil thing and unless it goes, we cannot do anything else. Today people have to strain themselves even to stay alive. But even eradication of poverty is not enough. We have to think of what kind of life we should live after overcoming poverty. There are formidable obstacles in our path. It is only if we overcome these obstacles that we can build the India of our dreams and take our country where we want to take it. Let us not quarrel with those who oppose us or spread falsehood because they are really incapable of spreading the truth. Do they have the courage to proclaim that communalism is good? None of them dare do that. All of them will make a pretence of denouncing communalism, and instead accuse us, who are fighting communalism, of encouraging communalism. This charge is levelled against me also, but no one has cared to explain how I am encouraging communalism. Just today I saw an article which said that I was wrecking democracy. I want to know what I have done and what I have said which in any way imperils democracy. I also ask what those who level this accusation have themselves done to strengthen democracy. Some people seem to believe that if they repeat a lie often enough, it will be believed. A few people of the upper strata have in fact been so misguided. Often people come to me and say that they are ready to support me but what will happen if democracy goes. I tell them that it is only if I die that democracy can go. So long as I am here nobody can murder democracy. Why did we fight? So that India becomes free and the people of India will get their due. How does one get one's due ? Only when there is equality, and that is why we want equality. We want equal rights for all people, whatever their religion. We want equal rights for them whether they are rich or whether they are poor. Money alone ought not to determine high and low.

It is sometimes forgotten that the very meaning of words like democracy and justice keeps changing. There is no idea or concept which has an unchanging connotation. As the world changes all concepts and definitions change. There was a time when it was not thought unjust if a few lived in luxury and the multitude lived in misery. Even that was considered justice and people did not fight against it. It did not even occur to them that they should do so. But that kind of justice is no longer regarded as just today. Present-day law says that a man is guilty only if he is proved to be guilty in a court of law and that he is innocent if his guilt is not established in a court, even though he may have really committed a crime. We consider that to be legal. If somebody maintains that this is not just then he will be regarded as a trouble-maker. But whether this is just or unjust remains to be deeply thought about.

Many things have changed but many more things need to be changed. Change cannot be brought about overnight. There are some people who think that a new order can be established through violence

and disruption. I do not believe that anything can be built this way. If we can get anything at all it is only through labour, sacrifice and service. There are two alternatives—the way of disruption or the way of peace. In my view violence inflicts not only immediate harm but also long-term harm. It does not mean that if there is no violence we should sit idle. Inaction only opens the door to violent upheaval. That is why we have to work and work hard but work peacefully, work democratically and take the people along with us. It is only that way that change can be brought about. Change is inevitable. We have to speed up the pace of change because we have to combat age-old inertia. Even in societies which have seen some change more changes are necessary.

Recently I went to some foreign countries. In my talks with their leaders, their intellectuals and their youth they said that if they were unable to bring about changes, they did not know what course history would take. This is the great question before us. If communalism grows there will be more violence. There is a general belief that only Naxalites and other extremists believe in the path of violence. But there are other parties which are considered rightist parties who also believe in violence and they make no secret of it. We have to fight this violence also, whether it is violence in thought or violence in action. That is the work of your committee.

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THE EMERGENCE OF sovereign secular Bangladesh has conclusively proved the falseness of the theory that religion can be a ground for separate nationhood. This theory has done great harm to our sub-continent and prevented the rational solution of the social and economic problems of the people of other regions.

The two-nation theory is discredited, but it has not been wiped out. There are still parties and individuals who mix religion with politics and exploit Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other narrow loyalties for partisan and personal ends. The safety of our nation demands that we fight these forces with all our strength.

My good wishes to the Fifth National Convention Against Communalism which is being organised by the All-India Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee.

Message to Fifth National Convention Against Communalism, New Delhi, January 28, 1972

Appeal to West Bengal

I HAVE VISITED Calcutta many times, but this time I have come on something of a business visit. My main purpose is to follow up the discussions I have been having in Delhi on the many problems, especially of development, with which Bengal is beset. These are also the problems of the country as a whole. We are earnest in tackling them.

Foremost among them are the problems of Calcutta city. This great metropolis, which has cradled our cultural, political and spiritual rebirth, is in the throes of a difficult transitory period. Its expanding population, both natural and because of the influx of refugees, has aggravated the already complex conditions of the slum areas, the shortcomings of the water supply and sanitation, the inadequacy of public transport and the bad condition of roads. Hence we are giving the highest priority to the needs of Calcutta.

Only yesterday we had passed an Act to constitute a Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority. This Authority will be responsible for various developmental activities, including the improvement of water supply, sewerage and drainage, of traffic and transportation, and also the problem of *bustees* in an area which includes Calcutta Corporation and a large number of municipalities. For the current year, we propose to spend Rs. 22 crores for development activities in and around Calcutta. In addition, we wish to make a major effort to improve the *bustees* and any funds which might be needed for this will be found over and above this sum. At least half of the revenue from octroi will be available to the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority for its developmental activities.

The problems of the rural area are no less compelling. Recourse to force and violence by some sections of the people has created new tensions in the countryside. Only recently a law was passed fixing a fairer share for and conferring hereditary rights on *baragadars,* and ending indiscriminate eviction of *baragadars.* We further propose to undertake legislation to impose ceilings on family holdings. This will not only reduce inequalities but will also make available more land for distribution to the landless and the under-privileged. We shall also take steps to end time-consuming litigation, which the poor cannot afford. We shall do all we can to establish a socially equitable and just land tenure system in West Bengal in order to enable peasants to produce more for themselves and for the State's industrial recovery.

I should like specially to say a word about the hardships and suffering of the refugees from East Pakistan. I do deeply share their

Broadcast over All India Radio, Calcutta, July 19, 1970

anxiety and sympathise in their misfortune which has driven them to seek shelter in our country. Their coming is not the concern merely of West Bengal; their rehabilitation is the duty of the whole country. I have been in touch with all those concerned and have urged State Chief Ministers to help in making arrangements to offer a new life to the thousands who have had to forsake their old homes. The issue has also been taken up with the Government of Pakistan.

President's rule imposes a special responsibility upon us to ensure good government. I have outlined some of the programmes which we have undertaken to meet the challenge of development.

But there is a much larger question which gives cause for anxiety. I do not need to remind you of Bengal's great contribution to the shaping of modern Indian thought. Our recent history glitters with the names of many eminent Bengalis.

What is happening today? Bengal is going through a crisis of the spirit. This is part of the crisis which confronts the rest of the country. Indeed, the crisis of the human spirit is a world-wide phenomenon.

Generally speaking, we all desire the same material goods, the same mental solace. But to attain these, we pursue different paths. Whatever the path, the type of society we want to build should be a society in which there is equality, justice and full opportunity for the blossoming of the human personality.

The question is: Can this be done through violence? Can such a society be built, if a few impatient people here in Bengal or elsewhere blow up houses and offices, convert centres of learning into centres of violence, and disfigure memorials to some of the greatest men of our time? To some young people, hate seems to come easier than love. As the Buddha has said, if iron is allowed to rust, rust itself will destroy iron. Evil cannot beget good.

Progress or prosperity for Bengal is indivisible from that of the rest of India. If Bengal suffers, so will India. Therefore, the whole country ardently desires the well-being of the State. The society which we want, and which we must build, has to be built in Bengal and in all our other States.

Better life for the millions can come only through sustained hard work. Bengal's large and small industries must run without interruption and produce work and wealth for more and more people. Every year, lakhs of young men and women come of age and enter the labour market. Unemployment can be solved only if our economy expands. Anything that hinders our recovery and growth is a disservice to youth and to the future of Bengal. We are at present formulating several programmes to increase employment opportunities and to train workers for special skills. Leaders of labour should also take the initiative and act as custodians of our future.

We want a democratic socialist India where every citizen has an equal place, where full opportunity of work and growth will prevail, and where our vital impulses are directed to creative and co-operative endeavour. These great tasks cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of insecurity or violence. The revolution of which Bengal and rest of India had dreamed, is a revolution of ideas, of attributes, of skills and techniques. It will not help to use methods which other countries have used in other times and other circumstances. History cannot be made through imitation. Our transformation must flow from our own genius. It can come about not by violence or lawlessness but only through order, goodwill and peace.

There are many political parties in the State, but those who belong to these parties form only a small part of the teeming population of Bengal. At all times we must remember that the people are above all parties. Those who labour in the field, the factory and the office, the charming women, the bright-eyed children, the dynamic youth, the alert intelligentsia and the middle classes who have formed the backbone of all movements—these are the people of Bengal. We must not jeopardise their interests in fighting for our own.

I have affection and admiration for the people of Bengal; I have confidence in their ability and in their strength and creative genius. These are the qualities on which they must draw to face the present difficulties. Let them not be diverted by empty slogans, let them not be misled by a few to destroy the very values which have made Bengal great and the fountain-head of our nationalism. Let them not submit to threats or force but resist them courageously. The path is perilous. But, if we are of one heart, and if we are guided by the glorious heritage of Bengal, we are bound to succeed.

Putting the Facts Straight

IT IS VERY difficult to know how to reply to this motion of no-confidence because, whereas certain items have been mentioned in the actual motion, many of the speeches have touched upon very much wider fields, bringing in, as usual, the public sector, socialism and all kinds of other matters which were not in the motion. Some of the speeches were in a very light-hearted vein and I should have liked to reply in like manner except that it is necessary to put straight certain facts so as to remove misunderstandings from the public mind.

From reply to debate in Lok Sabha on no-confidence motion, July 29, 1970

As far as Cong (O) is concerned, I have only one thing to say. I have been indeed amused as some Hon. Members remarked from the other side, because once I did listen to Shri Asoka Mehta. The result was not one of my most conspicuously successful actions.

Since yesterday there has been a pitiful effort to put Humpty-Dumpty together again. Some people had seen visions of a grand alliance but evidently they could not win a vote of confidence even from their own people. So, Humpty-Dumpty had a fall and except for Shri Piloo Mody, who always sounds well even when he talks utter nonsense, the others could not even work up any fervour or eloquence in their speeches in order to put together the pieces. Even though Shri Dange came to their rescue and gave them suggestions as to who should hold what portfolio in their shadow Cabinet, their hopes for their shadow Cabinet have been completely shattered and, I am afraid, there is not even a shadow of a shadow Cabinet.

The motion broadly lists four grounds. The first is the charge that the elections in Kerala are being rigged. As we have been told by my colleague, the Law Minister, and others the electoral rolls were revised in January of this year. By-elections were held after that and no complaints were made that these elections were not fair. As far as I know, they (the printed electoral rolls) are exactly where they were, where the rolls are normally kept. I am told they are exactly where they are supposed to be. I am talking of the Election Commission.

This (verifying what the Election Commissioner says) is not a governmental function. All that we can do is to draw the Commission's attention to complaints. The Government is not here to interfere with the Election Commission or the Election Commissioner. And I should like to say that one of the things about which we can legitimately be proud in India since our Independence is the fact that, except for occasional isolated cases, our elections have been free and fair and have given the people unfettered opportunity to express their wish. The very fact that almost every party has had the opportunity of being elected to form a government, elected to power and also removed from power, is a proof, if proof is needed, of the strength and justice of our electoral system. I do not know whether printed lists are given to people or not but the printed lists are available at the places where they are kept.

We have not only an independent Election Commission but the law courts also exercise full vigilance to ensure the fairness of our elections. It is rather unfortunate that any kind of doubt is cast on the election system which has worked effectively all these years.

It is also difficult to believe that all of a sudden a State Government in a part of India, which is known for its high political consciousness and literacy, should meddle with the electoral system. However, as I said to Shri Gopalan when he came to see me about this, I have referred this matter to the Election Commissioner that such a complaint

had been made and I was told that he had looked into the matter. There is, as you all know, still time for any objections to be raised in this matter. But I can assure the Hon. House that we stand fully for free and fair elections. We are not concerned with what party comes into power. Naturally everybody would like their party to win but not at the cost of fairplay or damage to the electoral system. We will never stand for it. As you all know, as the Central Government we have given support and co-operation to all Governments of whatever hue they were, which came into power anywhere in the country.

For the first time, there was something new in this no-confidence motion and that was the strange alliance which we witnessed. As was effectively pointed out by Shri Chandrajit Yadav, the cat was let out of the bag by the Hon. Member, the Swatantra spokesman, when he delivered a broadside against socialism and nationalisation, which of course they always call State capitalism.

As usual, all kinds of other baseless charges and insinuations have been made. Reckless personal charges were made against some of my colleagues and against my Secretariat. I do not need to defend them because they are capable of taking care of themselves, but I can only feel sorry that some Hon. Members simply cannot get away from this kind of vituperation and also from giving a casteist or a regional bias to anything that happens in the country. Although the question of the Kerala elections has been brought in as a bait to the Members of the CPI(M), it is obvious that the entire motion is designed as a personal attack on me on the supposed concentration of power in my hands. In fact, reference has been made to the recent reshuffle of the Cabinet and the transfer of some departments to the Cabinet Secretariat. I did not create the Cabinet Secretariat. It has long been in existence. I did not invent the Prime Minister's Secretariat either. Contrary to what some Member has said, the Prime Minister's Secretariat in its present form was not designed by me but by my distinguished predecessor, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. Since then we have answered questions in this House on the Secretariat, giving the numbers of officials. There has been no addition to the Secretariat nor is any addition contemplated because of any of the changes which have taken place; because no extra work has come to that Secretariat.

The function of the Cabinet Secretariat is to provide effective co-ordination between the Ministries of the Government. It also takes up certain items of study, analysis and research. When the Planning Commission shed its executive function in response to the desire of this Hon. House, the Cabinet Secretariat took on some of this work. It has to take initiative in several matters of economic co-ordination which were previously being attended to by the Planning Commission. The three Departments which have been transferred to the Cabinet Secretariat are the Personnel Department, the Electronics Department and the

Scientific and Industrial Research Department. The Department of Personnel has been newly constituted and placed under the Cabinet Secretariat, as the House knows on the recommendation of the Administrative Reforms Commission.

Regarding the Intelligence agencies, I had thought that there were several experts in this House on public administration and at least they should have set the records straight. As is well known, in England as well as in many other countries, Intelligence is directly with the Prime Minister and I am sure that these countries did not take inspiration from the Cabinet reshuffle in this country.

The CBI and the Special Police Establishment have been mainly concerned with the eradication of corruption from public services. It has necessarily to be a part of the Personnel Department. Even in the Home Ministry, the work was being looked after on the Services side under a separate Secretary (Services).

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence was transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the Cabinet Secretariat in order to ensure better co-ordination with the Central Bureau of Investigation. The CBI has already a wing dealing with economic offences and the work of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence is very largely related to such offences.

Some Member made a remark about the Committee of Appointments saying that previously there was the Home Minister, the Prime Minister and the Minister concerned but now, since the Home and the Prime Minister was the same person, there would only be two persons. So, I should like to inform the House that the Committees of the Cabinet were formed soon after the reshuffle—but unfortunately, they were not declared immediately—and I had decided that Shri Chavan should remain on that Committee, since he was dealing with this question and with the people who would be concerned will be in these Committees. Apart from that, I would like to point out that none of these Committees works on the basis of voting. The persons sit together and it is always a question of having discussion and coming to a decision.

So far as the transfer of the CSIR to the Cabinet Secretariat is concerned, the Hon. Members will remember that the Prime Minister, from the very beginning of its existence, has been the *ex-officio* President. Therefore, this does not really change the situation.

As for the future development of electronics in India, this also has been a subject of long and anxious debate in both Houses ever since the publication of the Bhabha Report on Electronics. The future development of electronics has such wide-ranging application, not only in defence but also with regard to communications, radio, television, etc., that the fast development of the industry has become a matter of crucial importance to the country. Several Ministries and Departments of the Government as well as the private sector are consumers of the products

of the electronics industry. It was in order to give a special impetus to the development of electronics that the Government have been considering the setting up of a special organisational structure. The allocation of the Electronics Department to the Cabinet Secretariat was made to enable this structure to be built, which, we hope, will be very soon.

For most such organisations that have to be set up, with which many Ministries are concerned, it is more convenient for co-ordinated working if at this stage the Prime Minister is there. Similarly a great deal was said about ministerial responsibility being diluted and collective responsibility being discounted. Nothing could be farther from the fact. Many Hon. Members do not seem to have a correct appreciation of what is meant by collective responsibility. All Cabinet decisions are collectively taken. Some decisions are taken by individual Ministers but we are all collectively responsible and these decisions are collectively supported and defended by the entire Government. In modern Government, several spot decisions must also be taken and Ministers who take them do so in the full knowledge that they will have to defend them on the floor of the House and in full trust that they will have the full support of their colleagues. All controversial matters are brought to the Cabinet itself or to one of its Committees. I do not have to point out that throughout last year my colleagues have come to this House and given the reasons for their decisions. They have won an open vote of the House. They have withstood many determined efforts to shake them and challenge them. Hon. Members from the Opposition had wrongly imagined that we on this side would not stand together. They have spent days and nights planning strategies and offering prayers to divide us.

They have set afloat all kinds of rumours of dissension but we have stood together with loyalty to one another and faith in our party and full conviction in our policies. I may tell the Hon. Members opposite that what they could not achieve during this difficult year, they will certainly not be able to achieve in the coming months.

Sir, I have respect for my colleagues, respect for their ability and respect for their dedication to the welfare of the people and to the progress of this great nation. That is why we have been able to work together and to introduce certain far-reaching changes in our national life. I do agree with the Hon. Member, Shri Dwivedy, that much that we wanted to do we have not been able to do. We have not said that we have done everything. But when you go ahead in a democratic way, it is a slower path than the other. I am not saying this to excuse ourselves because I fully realise that we must work more speedily and reach our goals more effectively.

Cabinet Government and Parliamentary democracy are built on the principle that the overriding power and responsibility rests in the

legislature. Parliament is the master of Ministers and, if you could put in that way, Ministers in turn are—I do not like the word—master, in a way, over civil servants. Those who are propagating the myth of a powerful bureaucracy are in fact running down this Parliament and the work which it has been doing to guard the people's interests. Now you can give the civil service any name you like, but the fact remains that whether you have a capitalist government or a socialist government or any other form of government, it has to have some kind of a civil service.

If it is a large country, obviously that civil service will be large. And a country in which society takes upon itself the power and the duty to regulate economic and social life has to have the appropriate machinery to do it. The Hon. Member is right when he said that in a socialist State there will be more servants of the State, but they are servants of the people, not masters of the people.

There may be, and there is, some inefficiency and there may also be some deadwood in the administrative organisation. But we cannot deny that there are also fine people who are as good as any in the world. They are doing their work with ability and dedication. It would be a pity if the House were to do anything which would blunt these tools. This is not peculiar to our country, because, almost everywhere there is sometimes criticism against bureaucrats, and even in countries and governments which have far more advanced methods than we can afford today.

A statement of mine, or rather a speech, was quoted and in the attempt to show that there was some contradiction between that and a letter which I had written about our administrative service to a newly selected IAS officer. I do not think that there is any contradiction between the two. Because I do believe that we must give better status to specialists. All over the world it has been realised that technical jobs must go to technicians. But everywhere administrators and business managers also are being given more intensive training in new and modern methods. We have been choosing specialists for our technical posts as far as possible, but at no time has this meant that we should dispense with the administrative service. On the contrary, the administrative service must be given greater social orientation so as to be able to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

Something has been said about the communal problem. But this problem has been thoroughly debated on earlier occasions and I leave it to the country to judge whose speeches have been provocative or have added to the tension in any particular area.

The problem of the refugees is naturally one which is uppermost in the minds of most of us. They are facing very genuine hardships and this is a matter of grave concern and deep distress. The Government have indeed a heavy responsibility to settle and rehabilitate them with great speed. We are doing everything possible towards this end. Shri

Samar Guha's excitement was understandable. I entirely agree with what he said this morning about the political side of the problem. He mentioned also my visit to Calcutta. But, as I told him when I met him there, that particular visit was for a limited purpose, that is, to look into the implementation of the various decisions which had been taken earlier in Delhi. And, the steps being taken for the refugees and their rehabilitation formed a considerable part of this discussion, whether it was with political parties, whether it was with administrators or some of the other public men and women whom I met. I have promised our friends from Bengal to visit the transit camps soon. I am sorry I could not go there on that occasion.

This is hardly the occasion on which to speak about Manipur. But, since the matter was brought up, I would just like to say that this House is fully aware of the law and order situation there. It is obvious, whether it is Manipur or elsewhere, that the restoration of normal conditions is an essential precondition for any fair election. Yet we all know that this part of the country faces many difficult problems. We are looking into them.

Government have no double standards, but I am afraid many of those who have spoken have shown their own double standards.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy also spoke heatedly about land reforms. I do not think that it is correct to say that our programmes are not making any headway even in the States where we are in control. I think there has never been greater consciousness at the Centre and in the States of the great importance of creating an equitable agrarian structure within the shortest possible time.

In Bengal, we announced some months ago that the occupiers of land belonging to eligible categories would not be evicted and that their position would be regularised very soon. Earlier this month, the West Bengal Land Reforms Amendment Act was enacted. Its result will be to increase the *burgadars'* share of the produce from 60 to 75 per cent, in cases where they themselves provide all the inputs. The conditions under which land-owners are permitted to resume lands have been made more favourable to *burgadars,* and the right of cultivation by them has been made hereditary. It has also been decided to enact fresh legislation on ceiling, fixing the ceiling in terms of family rather than individual units. The details are now being finalised. The Government of West Bengal have been told to give this work the highest priority, that is, the redistribution of waste and surplus land to eligible cultivators. In this matter, the State Government are reviewing the ceiling with much greater vigour. Detailed instructions have already gone out to district collectors, and notices have been served on several thousands of the largest owners of surplus land. The amendments to the Bihar Tenancy Act, carried out during President's Rule, are being implemented, so that even *bataidars* on oral lease are not liable to eviction.

In U.P., the ceiling laws are being reviewed. In Maharashtra, the rent payable by tenants to land-owners has been reduced to one-sixth of the produce, which is perhaps the lowest in the country. After many years, there is now real hope that land reforms, which have so long been talked about, are at last under way.

The examples of Bihar and West Bengal during President's Rule conclusively show that the Central Government is earnestly engaged in carrying through the measures which it has been urging on other State Governments.

The other problem which is very much on everybody's mind is naturally that of unemployment. I fully share the concern expressed in this House and outside about this growing problem. But the only lasting remedy for unemployment and under-employment, particularly of skilled personnel such as engineers and technicians, lies in vigorous implementation of the Plan and inclusion of specially labour-intensive programmes.

The Plan outlay for the current year has been stepped up by about Rs. 400 crores especially with a view to bring some improvement in the employment situation. We are examining how to speedily organise a land army, that is, enrolling cadres of skilled and unskilled workers to be put to work on specific projects of public utility.

There was reference to the performance of nationalised banks. It may be that we did proceed a bit slowly for many reasons. But there is no basis for the criticism that benefits have not accrued to the small persons or the small farmers, although I concede that much remains to be done and must be done speedily.

The number of borrowal accounts in the case of direct loans to agriculture went up from Rs. 1,34,839 at the end of June 1969 to Rs. 2,97,670 by the end of March 1970. The number of accounts for advances to retail traders and small business increased from 28,037 at the end of June 1969 to 70,607 by the end of March 1970. Similarly, the number of loans to self-employed persons increased impressively from 422 at the end of June 1969 to 22,030 by the end of March 1970. The share of advances to neglected sectors, namely, agriculture, small scale industries, road transport operators, retail traders, small business etc. in the aggregate advances of the public sector banks increased from 14.6 per cent at the end of June 1969 to 20.3 per cent by the end of March 1970.

There were some entirely false charges made regarding issuing of licences. Perhaps the House knows that the decision in all important cases is taken not by any individual Minister or by the Prime Minister but by the Cabinet as a whole. A ridiculous statement was made alleging that I had taken over lecensing in my own hands. Nothing could be farther from the truth. All that has been decided is that the grant of licences in certain defined cases should be considered by the

Committee on Economic Co-ordination on which all Ministers dealing with economic matters are represented. This is largely because this is a controversial matter, and many cases come within the purview of different Ministries also. Therefore, the question is not of concentration of power but of sharing responsibility and decision-making power and bringing the collective judgment of a ministerial group to bear on these important problems of licensing.

It has been alleged that the decisions taken on the grant of industrial licences have been inspired by dishonest motives. I have no hesitation in saying that this is a mischievous and reckless charge, and also an entirely dishonest charge. I have no hesitation in maintaining that the interest of the national economy and not narrow or party or personal interest guides our decisions.

I have been compared, not for the first time, to Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. If they had perhaps read more books, they could have used more names. I think the people will laugh at the preposterousness of these comparisons.

It was somewhat dramatically stated that this country would not tolerate Hitler. I entirely agree with this. In fact, this is what I myself have been saying. I have said it in the House; I have said it outside also. This country will not tolerate Hitler and what Hitlerism stands for. But we should know what it stands for, namely, the preaching of hatred against sections of the people, the building up of para-military organisations, the use of the lie, the big lie and the biggest lie and their readiness to use any and every method to capture power. We do not believe in such methods; we leave such methods to others.

The biggest lie that has been told in this House on this occasion is the one that is now being constantly repeated about our subserviance, as they say, to the Soviet Union. This, as the House and those Members who have been in the House for some time will remember, is not a new charge. It was also made against my father. Some called him a Soviet stooge and others called him an American camp-follower, but he was an Indian, a proud Indian. Now, the same charge is being levelled against me. My concern is only for the people of India. These charges are not going to deflect us from seeking friendship with all nations because the country's good requires it. And, when the national interests demand it, we shall not hesitate to stand up against all nations. Somebody said : Let us have one example. There is a very recent example, which is our not signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I trust the country will treat this charge with the contempt which it deserves. India, free, sovereign, democratic India, shall never be a satellite of any country, however great or powerful.

Those who bandy about this charge show a singular lack of confidence in themselves or in the country. All the chanceries of the

world know and respect the fact that our country has steadfastly pursued its own course of action.

And I shall continue to do it so long as I have anything to do with the Government of this country. The consistent and steadfast adherence to our policy of non-alignment is absolutely non-negotiable. Many people thought that we would succumb; they have tried to browbeat us here many a time, but we have not gone back from anything for which we stand, nor shall we ever do so in foreign policy or in domestic policy.

I hope that this House will reject this Motion and will continue to show its confidence in this Government.

Eternal Values

SWAMIJI AND FRIENDS, I am glad to be associated with this function because of my admiration and respect for you, Swamiji, and for the great order of Shri Ramakrishna which you so ably represent.

Our country is rich in its thought, in its philosophy, in its culture. But somehow we have not been able to project these outside, or even to all of our own people, perhaps because many of us look at these matters rather superficially. But Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ranganathananda have been notable exceptions. The excellent work done by the various branches of the Ramakrishna Mission all over the world has helped to fill the gap to some extent. The two books being released today will give an insight to people into our ancient teachings and will deepen the understanding of those who already have some knowledge.

There has been some interest in philosophy and the basic religious teaching. But today it is not merely the grey-haired who search for reality or the meaning of being. Questions are being asked by millions of young people everywhere.

I often talk of progress and modernity. Progress to me means the blossoming and deepening of the human personality, of the individuals and also of the nation. Obviously the evils of poverty and of a stratified society are obstacles and must be removed. However, at every step we must ensure that this process of attaining a higher material standard of living does not impinge on man's personality, does not give him a feeling of alienation from his society and his environment, but, on the

From speech while releasing two books by Swami Ranganathananda, Delhi, June 4, 1971

other hand, helps him to be a participant in development and enriches his spirit.

Does modernity consist merely in using modern amenities or in following certain fashions or aping the more affluent nations, or should we look for a more profound meaning? Swamiji himself has given the answer in one of these books. He says, "That man is modern who is inquisitive, who has a passion for truth and the power of rational investigation, who never takes things for granted but always strives to get at the heart of things, and constantly asks what next, what next."

When I received Swamiji's books late last evening I picked up the one entitled *Eternal Values* and by chance it opened with a quotation from the *Upanishad*: "Men may roll up the sky like a piece of leather. Still there will be no end of sorrow for them without realising the luminous One within." On the same page follows another quotation, this time from Europe, from Schopenauer: "All men who are secure from want and care, now that at last they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves." How true this is, and should we not seek the reason why it should be so?

Human beings are quick to find somebody or something to blame. Seeing the world's present predicament people find fault with science and with technology. The problem is not in the nature of technology but in the nature of man itself and the value systems which he has made for himself. The habit of generations becomes entwined in a sort of network of integrated circuits which resist any change. Is it not time now to disentangle ourselves from all these wires?

In contemporary life, in most countries the accent is on competition, not co-operation. This naturally leads to aggressive and suspicious attitudes within the nation as well as in the international sphere. A man's love for his family does not diminish because he cares deeply for his country, nor does a man become less of a patriot because while cherishing his country and its culture he feels concerned for the welfare of humanity as a whole. Man can utilise the vast riches of the earth without despoiling or denuding it.

The question before us here in India is how we can make the best use of knowledge and of resources, how we can create an atmosphere of co-operation and harmony. Can we do this unless we consciously attempt to modify the value systems which encourage selfishness or acquisitiveness and to replace them with others which would seek to advance the interest of the individual along with those of his fellowmen rather than at their cost? We must build our social institutions along principles which will enhance the dignity, the security and the potential of human life.

Since our Minister for Planning is present, I cannot resist this opportunity of saying to him that the criterion for all planning should be not only maximum production but optimum human development.

In achieving this we have much to learn from our ancient thought which is so beautifully rendered into understandable modern idiom by Swamiji in these two books which I have great pleasure in releasing.

The Cult of Violence

THE HOME MINISTRY touches many spheres of national activity. So, this debate naturally is an important one and ranges over many areas.

Hon. Members have touched on many points. They have drawn attention to many defects and shortcomings.

Sir, no one is more conscious than I, that in our country of this size and diversity, and with our background of feudalism and colonialism, our problems are bound to be of immense magnitude. With development, some problems are solved and others are created. Even societies which are regarded as affluent and stable are not immune from trouble, from unrest and even the growth of violence.

So, none of these questions is peculiar to our country. We know that rapid urbanisation has increased crime and violence in other countries.

I hope Hon. Members will not think that I am trying to minimise our own duties or responsibilities, of which I am deeply conscious. But, I should like the Hon. House to see our problems in perspective and not to forget that these are not normal times for us.

Our programmes and the recent elections to which many Hon. Members have referred, aroused expectations of change. But, just when we were poised for rapid advance in many directions, we have been overtaken by the tragic events on our Eastern border which have imposed a very severe strain on our entire administration.

Therefore, areas of hope and despair do exist side by side; and, when despair is exploited to propagate violence, this is bound to be a matter of concern.

I know that violence has many aspects and emerges from different roots. As I have said, the problem is not peculiar to India. Also, we are a developing society and development produces its own tensions and other difficulties.

We do not believe that the police is the answer to each situation or that violence can be met only by counter-violence. On the contrary, to the extent that the socio-economic causes of violence in India can

From reply to debate in Lok Sabha on demands for grants for the Ministry of Home Affairs, June 24, 1971

be identified and removed, we are trying our utmost to do so. But, when violence is deliberately engineered, then it falls into another category, and we are determined to meet the threat with all the strength at our command, and in this, the forces of law and order have to assert themselves. If certain political groups persist in the misguided and dangerous course which they have adopted, then the augmentation of the police strength to meet their challenge becomes essential.

I have made it clear on all possible occasions that we are not against any particular party. But I do think that we should all look at the national aims. I presume that we are all committed to democracy, which implies certain methods of functioning and assumes the equality of rights of all citizens. So far as I can see, there is no middle way between bringing about social and political changes through democratic functioning on the one side and violence on the other. It is only if violence replaces the settlement of issues by discussion and persuasion that we have to draw a line and appeal to all parties, groups and individuals to seriously consider if they really think that something can be achieved in our country by resorting to violence. Every political party, therefore, needs to examine seriously whether its faith in democracy is a durable one and not a mere tactic to undermine democracy through violent means. Can all parties represented in Parliament not join together to combat this violence and those who believe in it, instead of trying to battle amongst themselves, each blaming the other?

Many Members were concerned about the increase in the police budget since 1950. This increase is not due to law and order duties alone. Since the early sixties, the police which includes forces such as the Border Security Force have been called upon to shoulder important responsibilities along with our defence forces to safeguard our borders. More than half the increase is for such forces.

There has also been an increase in the strength of the CRP. This is necessary because of the growing demand from the State Governments themselves for additional forces for internal security and law and order duties. Even at present, the bulk of the force has been placed at the disposal of the State Governments for this purpose and at their own request. The CRP is not being used for repression. It is deployed to safeguard the lives of people and their homes and to safeguard public property. I seriously protest against the malicious campaign to denigrate the CRP. I know, and I have acknowledged in the House on earlier occasions also that there have been cases where members of the CRP or of the police have misbehaved or have gone beyond what they should have done, and wherever our attention has been drawn, we have tried to deal with the situation. But generalised allegations which are sometimes made by the Hon. Members opposite do not help the situation or solve any problem.

I myself am very much concerned with the manner of functioning of the police, and we are trying to modernise their training and the equipment they use so that the force can become qualitatively and professionally better. We want our services to regard themselves as servants and friends of the people. We want to go into all aspects of the training, not only of the police, but of other public administrators so as to give them such an outlook in their dealings with the people.

Law and order is not an isolated subject; it is very much linked with economic and social problems and the conditions of the people. I believe that authority can best be wielded in a spirit of understanding and co-operation. But this also has to be two-sided; the police also need the co-operation of the people, and if they are always going to be regarded as enemies of the people, that will make it more difficult for them to behave as they should, consistently with sympathy and friendship for all people. This is part of the difficulty, as some Members have noticed, which we are facing in West Bengal.

In a debate of this kind, it is natural that much attention should be paid to the relations between the Central Government and the State Governments. I think we all agree that the States and the Centre form part of a single entity, the unity of India. I do not think anyone is really serious when he suggests any kind of crisis of confidence between the Centre and the States. Of course, problems and differences do arise from time to time, but there is no problem which cannot be solved through discussion, consultation and adjustment.

We have had Governments of various hues and political persuasion in different States. I have had the fullest co-operation—I must express my appreciation of this—from all the Chief Ministers, and I certainly hope that they feel the same about the Centre. We have always done whatever we could to help them insofar as it lay within our power.

As I mentioned on earlier occasions, much of the dispute is with regard to the allocation of finance, and as we have extremely limited resources, it is not really within our hands to increase State allocations. While on the one hand almost every State would like to have more financial powers, on the other, on many occasions they find it convenient to ask the Centre to take over something because they cannot afford to complete a particular project or they would like us to undertake another programme or they have a dispute with a neighbouring State and so on.

So all these things have to be gone into very thoroughly. I do not know if any useful purpose will be served by freezing relationship between the Centre and the States into any rigid statutory enactment or even institutional devices, since even the most careful thought now cannot possibly foresee every problem that could arise in the future. That is why a certain flexibility is always helpful in any human relation rather than very set and rigid patterns.

Many suggestions and schemes have been put forward in the name of better Centre-State relations. It is for the Hon. House, and of course for all the Chief Ministers of States, to consider whether these will help in achieving closer co-operation between the Centre and the States or whether they will create new points of conflict, whether they will help in strengthening the unity of the country or in encouraging divisive tendencies. Whatever problems there are or may arise in future can be solved not by confrontation and argument, but by a joint attempt at finding satisfactory solutions. Naturally, no solution can satisfy everybody, but our attempt should always be to see what will serve the larger good. Whenever any such question about the States arises, the emotions of the people are easily aroused, especially in the name of language or religion or of border disputes or the magic that is attached to separate Statehood. There is a political aspect of most of these questions, but this can be exploited or used only if there are genuine economic and other grievances, and in many of the questions which have been raised here, the main problem in all our backward areas is an economic one, that of development. We have been making efforts in this direction and trying to do whatever is possible to see that where there has been any negligence or delay in development this should be made up. Reference was naturally made to Telengana and here also we are making efforts and trying to involve the people in the process of socio-economic change. There is a feeling that this sense of participation should be further strengthened. We have been exchanging views with various people. I agree that all these disputes which exist in this area or in other areas should be speedily solved.

Some Members spoke with understandable passion about the communal tension which comes up from time to time and about which we all feel very strongly. The National Integration Council was meant to promote integration and cohesiveness in our social and political structure and to look into the problems of the minorities as well as of any deprived section such as the Harijans. When the Council met in Srinagar some years ago, the meeting was overshadowed by the communal riots which had taken place just before. So, although we mentioned all the different aspects of the Council's work, our efforts were confined to dealing with communalism in its narrower sense, that is communal violence. We know that tensions in society have many origins—cultural, economic and social. These have to be resolved. We should not allow them to erupt in ugliness and violence. The well-being and satisfaction of the minorities should be our very special concern. That is why we specially mentioned this in our election manifesto and on other occasions, and these commitments must be fulfilled. One way of doing this is by broadening the whole concept of national integration. For this purpose appropriate machinery at the governmental level is being considered, and one of the main functions of this machinery will be to look into the

special problems and interests of the minorities, and although I say minorities, as I mentioned earlier, when the Council was formed we had intended it to cover the whole sphere of the rights of Indian citizens, of Harijans and so on, even though there are separate bodies which look after them.

It is not true that all these years were entirely wasted because something has been done, but it is true that more could have been done, and I hope that now the effort will be speeded up. We have been looking into the whole question, for instance, of the services. Many of these matters do not come out in the open, but this does not mean that they are being ignored. They are being looked into. They were not looked into by the National Integration Council, but they are being looked into by the Home Ministry.

I agree that more can be done and more should be done. We will do more. Part of this is the question of the Urdu language. Here also I have made my views very clear. I have discussed this matter with some Chief Ministers and, so far as the Chief Minister of U.P., for instance, is concerned, he has taken various decisions; he is going to implement them; he may have even begun to do so. We are taking up this matter with all the States concerned.

We have drawn a plan of what should be done and then we discussed it with the Chief Ministers of U.P. and some other States. But the problem is not the same for all parts of the country. It concerns specially U.P., Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh has already done something. What we are doing is entirely what is guaranteed to the minorities in our Constitution.

The other problem which is of grave concern to us all is that of organisations and individuals receiving foreign money. This matter has an important bearing on the functioning of our institutions, especially our political institutions. The Government are most anxious that political organisations and academic and social bodies working in important areas of national life should function in a manner consistent with the values of the sovereign democratic republic. That is why after this matter was taken up in this House earlier, the Government agreed to have a thorough inquiry into the matter. The broad conclusions of that enquiry revealed the necessity of imposing suitable restrictions on the receipt of funds from foreign organisations, agencies and individuals other than in the course of ordinary business transaction. We promised to consult leaders of the Opposition on the principles of such legislation. This we are doing. My colleague, the Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, has sent a note giving the principles underlying the proposed legislation to the leaders of the Opposition. Various suggestions including those contained in certain Bills on this subject which are being introduced by Hon. Members, have been kept in view. However, I should like to add that while such measures are necessary and should be taken, and

will be taken, corruption cannot be cured merely by putting a sentinel on each person. Fundamentally it is the social attitude which counts. Therefore, we must not only take steps to punish corruption but also create an atmosphere which will not encourage it in any way.

The other point which is of concern to the entire country is that of unprincipled defections. We fully share the concern for this malady in our body politic and we are determined to take steps to check it. Hon. Members know that I already had discussions with party leaders on this question just before the elections but at that meeting many of them expressed misgivings and it was not at all clear what they wanted us to do. Therefore, I wrote to them almost immediately, in fact a day or so after the meeting, seeking their specific reaction. In spite of reminders, very few replies have been received. But after careful consideration, the Government have decided to go ahead and introduce a Bill based on the recommendations of the Committee on Defections. Something came in the way of the Opposition leaders agreeing to the Bill at that moment, to put it mildly. Anyhow, in this matter we have to have some kind of national consensus and this was reached in that Committee in regard to certain legislative proposals. Now, we are consulting the Chief Ministers.

In this connection, may I say that one Hon. Member—I forget his name—earlier in the afternoon made some comments about our party giving directions for the toppling of Governments. There is no truth in this at all. At our meeting there was a discussion and we were informed by Members belonging to two States about the situation developing in their States. They did not think the Governments there could survive. They certainly said that; we accepted the situation. For instance, in Punjab, the quarrel was between two parts of the same party. The Hon. Member knows, we had nothing to do with the fall of West Bengal Government either. It was a quarrel between the constituent units of their own Government. Whether you believe it or not, it is a fact.

The other important issue is the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill. This Bill, as Hon. Members know, was introduced in this House in May 1968, but then at the request of the Members and because it was such an important measure, it was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses. The Bill, as amended and reported by the Joint Committee, was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 1969. It was awaiting consideration by the Rajya Sabha when the fourth Lok Sabha was dissolved. We intend to bring this Bill before Parliament soon.

It was inevitable that reference should be made to the privy purses and privileges. The Government stand fully committed to their abolition. It is true that Members are unhappy at the delay in this, but I would like to remind them that the Supreme Court's judgment has raised a number of constitutional and legal issues. We should be able to sustain

any action taken. That is why it is taking some time, but I think we will be coming before the House soon.

It is always interesting to hear Shri Shyam Nandan Mishra's views. If he will excuse my saying so, his party has made a special virtue of distorting facts. He spoke about the guidelines for the Governors, and he himself acknowledged that the President has formed a committee (of Governors) to go into this question. I believe they have met, but they have not talked to us and I do not know if they have talked to any Member of the Opposition. When they want us to come into the picture, the President will ask us, but otherwise I do not think it is proper for us to interfere.

It (the distortion of facts) takes place by mentioning something which may contain a little bit of truth. Of course, in many matters, not now but on earlier occasions, there have been allegations with no truth at all. But sometimes, there is a little bit of truth and a little bit of imagination combined.

People always view others according to their own light. I mean what they themselves would do, they tend to think that other people are doing. This is the trouble in life.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu is always thinking that we are interfering in the services and we are giving orders. Unfortunately the same is the case with Shri Mishra, who should know better.

The word 'commitment' is being constantly thrown at us and given all kinds of meanings, which were neither intended nor remotely hinted at. I should like to quote what I said some time last year at the Institute of Engineers about Government servants with commitment :

> "Recently my remarks that we needed Government servants with commitment have been perhaps deliberately misrepresented to mean that I wanted civil servants to support me or my political ideology. On the contrary I do not want politically convenient or servile civil servants. Their job is to give frank advice, but they should feel committed to the objectives of the State which have been approved by Parliament. They should have unreserved faith in the programme which they administer. An official who has no active faith in secularism cannot deal with the communal problem. We must all have commitment to the development of the country and a sense of personal involvement with the welfare of all our people."

This is what we have always meant by the word 'commitment'.

I should like to appeal once more to the House, not from the party point of view or the point of view of making it less difficult for the Government. As the House knows, I enjoy difficulties, so that is not my line. In fact, my favourite poem, which I often quote in public meetings is a poem by Gurudev to the effect : "Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them." Today the

danger is not to me or to my party; the danger is to the whole country. Therefore, I make this appeal to all of you because I presume, as I said earlier, that we in this House are committed to the democratic process. I should be grateful if all the Hon. Members of this House would help us in leading the people and making them strong. Certainly, criticism could be there on how to increase our efficiency. So far as the police and other services are concerned, their methods should be more humane, more modern and the attempt should be not so much to punish as to reform and to help people to go along the right path. With all our strength we must fight against all those tendencies and forces which are trying to weaken our country. You may say that the Government is not doing enough or the Government is bourgeois—you may use any adjective you like—but that should not be an excuse at this grave juncture in our history to divide the nation. That is what I would humbly ask the House. I hope the House will vote all the demands.

* * *

IN THE LAST two days, listening to the debate on the Demands for Grants for the Home Ministry, I was reminded of an English song which I had heard when I was in my early teens. The British posters for the recruitment to the Navy at that time used to bear the legend, "Join the Navy and See the World." And on this slogan, the sailors had written a song, saying :

"We joined the Navy to see the world
And what did we see, we saw the sea
And the Atlantic was not as gigantic
And the Pacific was not as terrific
As they were made out to be."

Sir, I came to this House expecting a strong onslaught from the Hon. Members of the Opposition, but what did I find? A very mild rehash of the points they have been making in the House and outside on many occasions.

The allegations which were made by the Hon. Members opposite have been answered by many other Hon. Members who spoke from this side and by some who spoke from their own side.

My colleague, Shri Pant, has dealt with the question of violence. I can only express my amazement at the brazenness with which the CPM are now talking about the negation of democracy, one party rule and so on. Such talk has also given the opportunity to a section of the foreign press who have always tried to find things against us to report and to magnify them and to mislead the people. They give

From reply to debate in Lok Sabha on demands for grants for the Ministry of Home Affairs, April 24, 1972

the impression that we have liquidated or banned all political parties in this country, which as you all know is very far from the truth. I also see from the newspapers that the CPM are contemplating some kind of agitation. It is not clear whether this will be violent or whether they will adopt non-violent means which they have all along condemned as reactionary and even contemptible.

We all know that at no time have they accepted democracy as we understand it and even now I doubt if they are willing to concede that the democratic system can deliver the goods. They have always and—I speak subject to correction—and I think they still believe that the ends justify the means. As the House is aware our own belief has been and continues to be that means are as important as ends for means govern and shape the ends.

The charge of rigging the elections is fantastic. It has been made before and has already been strongly refuted. Why is such a charge made? Curiously enough the extreme right and the extreme left have combined on this matter. Perhaps this reflects the fact that neither is too deeply committed to democracy.

The Congress lost quite heavily in 1967. We did not come and complain about these things. We tried to assess the situation: what were the causes of our defeat. Based on that experience we have been able to build our strength again. The Congress had never, and does not now believe in violence. We have condemned all acts of violence whether they are committed by Marxists, by communalists or by anybody else anywhere they take place, I do not condone violence or any wrong doing. If any in my party or pretending to be in my party are indulging in such acts, they must also be dealt with. But let the Opposition not delude anyone that there is no difference between the violence indulged in by the Marxists or the communalists and that of some misguided youths. One is part of a creed and the other is a temporary aberration.

Some points were made, some miscellaneous points, which were not about the Home Ministry as such, but about me and about what I have said outside the House. I hope that I shall be excused if I also wander just a little way off the main subjects to refute those allegations.

It was said that co-operation was given by all parties last year and that this was misused. I must confess that I have not been able to understand this point, because the co-operation was offered at the height of the crisis, and I have publicly, in this House and outside acknowledged this with thanks. So far as the elections are concerned, the whole point of democracy is that every party puts forward its point of view, and if they think any other party's policy is wrong, they criticise that policy. That is surely not an aspersion on the co-operation, offered earlier for a particular purpose by the Opposition parties.

The attitude of the RSS is well known. If I speak about it here, there will be an acrimonious exchange, but I can only say that their attitude and the training which they give to young people are antithetical to our way of life. Smt. Subhadra Joshi and some others have spoken about these matters during this debate and on the Private Member's Bill.

Another point which was made was that we made requests for votes on the basis of having done something for a particular community. I do not see how this can possibly be regarded communal. All parties and the Government were saying to different groups this is what we have done or what we intend to do for you. Obviously, if you speak to one group, they are not interested in what you have done for somebody else, you have to say what you are doing for them. By no stretch of imagination can this be labelled communal.

Similarly, mention was made of my appeal for strong and stable Congress Governments in the States. I very clearly did say that I thought only strong and stable Congress Governments could implement our programme. At the same time, I made it clear that at no time have we not given full co-operation to other Governments, when elected. And in fact we have given full co-operation to whoever the people have chosen or voted for.

I am sorry the Hon. Member of the Swatantra party, Shri Mody did not speak. The House always looks forward to his speaking; it gives some light relief. The Swatantra party's thinking has not yet shed its unreality, which is so reminiscent of what Alice found in her wonderland. Usually it was my friend Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray who quotes into the story of Alice but now that he is not in the House, I have to mention it.

It was significant also that the Swatantra party should show concern at what is happening in the territorial waters of Bangladesh, a free and friendly neighbour of ours, but not at the sustained anti-Indian stance and harmful propoganda of the United States and their help to our enemies. I am not saying that such matters should be mentioned, I am just pointing out that, if they have to mention an outside power it is of interest to see what they choose to mention. The Jan Sangh and the Swatantra party have consistently tried to denigrate the leadership of the country and the national policy.

One Hon. Member spoke about a hoarding. Perhaps this indicates the thought of his vision. I cannot guess what Air India meant to convey, but being familiar with their previous publicity, when I saw that particular hoarding, I thought it was referring to the leadership of their own little Maharaja and the superiority of their airlines. I am sure that was the reaction of most people. It would indeed be said if irritation with an individual makes some people lose their sense of humour.

My colleague Shri Pant has dealt with most of the points that came up in this debate, but because of lack of time, he could not mention two. Even these are not new. The Government's views have been explained on earlier occasions. One is the question of defections. It is astonishing that Hon. Members should continue to criticise us for the delay. As Shri Pant has said, the delay was due to some of the leaders of the Opposition not replying to our communications. At the meeting of the representatives of a number of parties and of some Independents, Members expressed themselves in favour of disqualifying defectors from continuing as members of the Legislature. However, the Committee on Defections had not reached any agreed conclusion. So, we thought it necessary to consult the Chief Ministers. This has been done and since there is vast support for this suggestion, Government will soon bring forward legislative proposals to give effect to this measure.

The second major point of concern to us is the role of foreign money in public life. Legislative proposals have been formulated and we shall soon bring them to the House, to curb such undesirable transactions. The proposals contemplate outright prohibition, prior permission and intimation. Outright prohibition applies to candidates for election to a Legislature, Members of Parliament and of State Legislatures, a political party or an office-bearer thereof, Government servants, employees of corporate undertakings, the editor, printer and publisher of a registered newspaper. The restriction regarding prior permission will apply to all other organisations, or groups of persons, whether incorporated or not, with a definite political, social, educational, religious, cultural or economic programme, including any trust, endowment or foundation. Intimation in the prescribed manner will be required in the case of other individuals.

We now come to the important question about Centre-State relations and the prickly question of State autonomy. I find that even those who used to plead so earnestly for a strong Centre have now somewhat moved their ground. I simply cannot understand why there should be tension between the Centre and the States. Whenever I have the opportunity of meeting the Chief Ministers or other Ministers from all the States—during my tenure they have belonged to all parties, I have never found any kind of acrimony, difficulty or even disharmony in settling various problems with them.

Development is a total effort of the Government in which every Ministry of the Centre and all State Governments have an allotted role. We have given a new focus to the plan by emphasising development at the ground level. We have given special attention to all those sections of the population and all those regions which have so far been neglected. Our endeavour now is to strengthen the weakest limbs.

The problem of autonomy has to be viewed in this perspective. Does any State feel helpless in serving its people? Or, has the Constitution or the Central Government come in its way? Some people have complained about delay. I know that sometimes there is delay in the sanctioning of projects. But we can certainly find ways to improve this situation. We all know that sometimes State Governments also try to score points over the Centre. We do not object to this. It is all in the rules of the game.

Some Members have raised the question of the distribution of funds and the financial powers of the States. The allocation of financial resources between the Centre and the States has been provided in our Constitution, keeping in view their respective responsibilities and by carefully balancing the needs of national planning with the scope necessary for regional initiative. It is perfectly understandable that each State should ask for more funds for its own development. Every State, regardless of what party is ruling there complains of complete apathy towards it, although I may mention in passing that funds made available to the States have not always been fully utilized by them. The crux of the problem before all of us is that if each State looks only to its own needs and requirements, how will regional imbalance be removed? The experience of the last 22 years has demonstrated the soundness of the approach adopted by our Constitution-makers. The imperative of national security and of more rapid social and economic development continue to be as important today as in the past. Every State has some common problems with the rest of the country and some specific problems of its own. What is to be the relationship between the parts and the whole, between diversity and unity? The freedom movement, in which my party was in the forefront, and the Constitution, both these have evolved a system in which there is general cultural and linguistic satisfaction. This strengthens unity and at the same time preserves diversity, for we believe that diversity itself can be a source of strength.

I presume that all of us here, regardless of what party we belong to, are working towards a more egalitarian society. We are deeply conscious of the hardships suffered by large sections of the population —the landless, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, linguistic minorities, religious minority groups and so on. They have genuine grievances and do not always get a fair deal from society. A continuous and unremitting effort to allay the apprehensions and to remove grievances is basic to national integration.

I feel that there should be a continuous study of their problems. This requires the collection of material which is at present scattered over a large number of agencies. To facilitate this we have set up a Directorate of National Integration in the Home Ministry. It is doing

work at different levels. It is not doing anything spectacular but it is functioning.

Smt. Lakshmikanthamma drew our attention to the discrimination against women in some service rules. She pointed out that married women were not entitled to appointment as of right, and that when a woman already in service marries, she might be asked to resign. We are removing this discrimination.

Smt. Sheila Kaul, Smt. Mukul Banerji and Shri H. K. L. Bhagat spoke about the police. I share their concern, but this is a two-way business and the question is a complex one. Policemen are a part of society. They are also fathers, sons, brothers and so on; they are also either villagers or townsmen, and they should be sympathetic to the problems of the people and the people should show greater respect to them.

In the old days their training did not fully equip them for this type of a role not only in our country but in most countries. The Home Ministry's work is concerned not merely with crime but with social and political malaise and other evidences of dissatisfaction. The traditional outlook of merely maintaining law and order has to change and be constantly renovated. We give importance to the Police Training Committee which was recently set up. We must aim at an enlightened public and an enlightened police.

We seek the citizens' participation in helping to solve crime and disorder. So, the public and the police, both must change old habits The public should trust the police more and the police in their turn should be more worthy of public trust.

I should like to touch upon one other matter, which is capital punishment. I know this is a controversial subject. The Law Commission has expressed an opinion in favour of retaining it. This was supported by several of our Chief Ministers. But in spite of a very thorough study the Law Commission's report was not able to establish any real relationship between the incidence of murder and capital punishment. They have pointed out, as indeed have several books on the subject, to a large number of cases where after a man has been put to death, it has been found that there was a miscarriage of justice and the real murderer either had himself confessed or was discovered. But in the meantime an innocent man had lost his life. This is a matter to which I should like Hon. Members and the public to give thought.

There was some mention of greatness. I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, the Hon. Members of the House, whether in the speeches of the Hon. Opposition leaders there was any glimmer of greatness? Have they all not confined themselves to narrow limits and to small matters, showing utter disregard for the larger problems and difficulties before the nation and the vast challenges

which we face today? They have completely ignored the mood of self-confidence which is so obvious in our country today.

Greatness is not given or taken away by words. Only history can be the final judge. But we are not interested in the greatness of an individual; we are interested in the greatness of the country. If India is great, all of us will be great; every Indian, whether here or abroad, can hold his head high. If India is not great, no one in India can be great, no matter what his position is. The policies and the work of this Government are directed towards the aim of making India great. We may make mistakes, our steps may sometimes be slow but no one can deny that the country is advancing step by step. And that is what matters.

It is for all of us to assess what is in the country's interest just now—a feeling of defeatism or a feeling of confidence. The House knows that the Government have never tried to draw a veil over our shortcomings. But there has to be some perspective in our outlook. I am reminded of two men who were in confinement and had only a small window on the outside world. Looking out one man saw only the mud while the other saw the stars.

With these words, I request the House to vote for the demands for grants relating to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Shaping the Future

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be here amidst you. I have been talking so much about our programmes and our plans for the future that there is nothing very new that I can tell you on this occasion.

The people of India are engaged in a task of gigantic proportions. Beacause of the size of this country, the great diversity, and the different levels of development, even a small programme becomes a very big programme. You know how much diversity there is even in your State. There are many problems which you consider special to Andhra Pradesh. But every State has special problems, and special difficulties, and no State can really be called advanced. "Advanced" and "backward" are relative terms. Our greatest enemy is poverty and economic backwardness. Until we can defeat this enemy, our country cannot be really strong. That is why it is so urgent to have programmes which will help lessen poverty and the disparities between different sections of the people.

Address to Andhra Pradesh legislators, Hyderabad, July 26, 1972

Land reforms play a very important part in any country's economic development. We think it is a revolutionary measure; but actually even countries which are capitalist in their thinking and their system have had to give the same priority to land reforms. For instance, when Japan came under American rule immediately after the Second World War, the first thing the Americans did was to have land reforms—far more drastic than we are having here. Their experience was that the productivity of the Japanese farmers grew enormously after the reforms. When the land was divided up, each person had a smaller acreage but the productivity of the land and the farmers' interest and personal involvement became that much greater. Iran is another country which cannot be called socialist by any stretch of imagination, but even there, the Shah has been compelled to have land reforms. This is true of any country which wants to advance, regardless of the system which they want to adopt.

The Congress of course was committed to land reform even before Independence. But somehow this programme did not get off the ground and I think that we have suffered greatly, as a party and as a nation, because of our slowness in implementing this programme.

We have a democratic system and, if I may say so, ours is a freer democracy than can be found anywhere else in the world. Nowhere else does the Government make so much effort to find out the opinion of the Opposition, have discussions with them and to try to take as many people and as many parties with it as is possible. With the majority that we have in Parliament and in most of the States, we are not compelled to do this. But in India in spite of our majority and the confidence of the people that we enjoy, we have made it a practice to taking the other parties with us insofar as is possible. We cannot of course give up our policies if the Opposition wants that. But within those limits, we always meet them, discuss with them and try to have as amicable an atmosphere as is possible. In spite of this I find words used in the Press against us, such as authoritarianism, dictatorship etc. These charges are so far removed from the truth that they do not bother us. But what bothers me is that when people have such complete disregard for the truth in this regard, how can we expect a correct assessment from them about anything else also? Most of the newspapers which use these words or some of the political parties or the individuals who use these words, what has been their assessment of the Indian situation all these years and of international affairs? Not once can we say that their assessment has turned out to be correct. Not because they are not capable of correct assessment but because they have become so imprisoned in certain set ideas and prejudices that they are unable to take the blinkers off and see things as they are.

The Chief Minister just now spoke about the Simla meeting and the Agreement which was arrived at there. Naturally when the

Government takes a decision, or follows a particular policy, it is because Government, after deliberation, believes it to be in the interests of the country. We would not have arrived at this Agreement if we did not think that there was something good in it or that it would lead to something good. By itself the Agreement is nothing more than a beginning. The whole problem before India is so vast that anything one does, whatever steps one takes, can only be the beginning. In assessing the Agreement we have to consider what we want in the future: whether we want a policy of confrontation or of peace. India's policy has always been one of peace. We have not committed aggression against another country, and even when Pakistan did commit aggression, I had very clearly said that we do not covet an inch of Pakistani territory. We have territory enough of our own. We have population enough of our own. We have problems enough of our own. It is not our desire to take over anybody else's land, people or problems. We did not believe in partition. Even when the Congress accepted it as a necessary evil, we said very categorically that it would not solve any problems. We said that no nation can exist or be united merely on the basis of a common religion.

That is what history has proved. Pakistan was formed on this idea that one nation must have one religion and therefore India was not one nation but two nations. But Pakistan could not maintain its unity on this basis. Had they tackled the real problems of their people, their economic and social problems, perhaps these situations would not have arisen. So what India said has proved to be correct almost at every step. It is not that we have always done as well as we would have liked to, or that we have not sometimes made mistakes in implementation, but our basic policies have turned out to be correct.

When this is so, do we continue with that policy, or do we take to the policy which has turned out to be incorrect?

All over the country today, the Jan Sangh and a few other parties are trying desperately hard to find a cause to fight for, an opportunity which they can exploit, and one of their major criticisms of the Congress is that we do not provide such opportunities. You know that at one time the Swatantra party was saying that Congress should help to form the Opposition. We go out of our way, as I pointed out, to consult the Opposition, and if we can compromise on something or find a middle way, we do so. For instance, in the programme for the 25th Anniversary of our Independence we had a different programme, but when we found that some of the Opposition parties did not agree to it, we said: Well, let us have a programme that everybody will agree to even though we feel that it is inadequate.

Some parties have found in the Simla Agreement a cause which they think they can exploit and perhaps with its help worm their way back into the people's confidence. But we have seen that they have

not succeeded in doing so and that the people have supported the Agreement. The people of India, in spite of illiteracy, have shown astonishing shrewdness of judgment. I am not for illiteracy, I do want our country to be literate and educated but I sometimes feel that the Western nations lay too much emphasis on literacy because they equate it with intelligence and ability to judge a question. Even the most intelligent person, the wisest person, makes mistakes, but by and large you will find that at every level our people understand what affects them, they understand their problems. They may not understand some of the complex problems, but they understand what concerns them. That is why on many basic issues, they have shown a far greater maturity than many of our educated people. On this issue also, they have understood the facts. India's greatest enemy is poverty and economic backwardness. We have no cause to feel threatened or be afraid of any of our neighbours. But some powerful forces have been trying to instigate our neighbours. If forces which are strong are interested in confrontation with India, then that is a source of danger for us. Therefore, it is in our interest to try and get rid of third party intervention in our affairs. This is what we tried to secure in the Simla Agreement. We want that whatever problems may arise between India and Pakistan, they should be solved bilaterally without recourse to any third party interference.

Nobody can say for sure whether this agreement will lead to peace or not. We can only hope for peace and any nation, no matter what policy it follows, must always be prepared for the worst also. Because we hope for peace, it does not mean that we are complacent, or that we lower our guard. At all times, any country must be prepared to safeguard its independence and its integrity. That goes without saying. But simultaneously we should leave no stone unturned in our efforts towards peace. Today we are in a stronger position to do so. It would not have been right for us, just because we have defeated Pakistan in war, to try to humiliate that country in any way. As one scholar said —I can't remember whether he is an Indian or a foreigner—if the Allies had treated Germany better after the First World War, there would never have been Hitler, there would never have been a Second World War. But because they followed the short-sighted policy of humiliating that country, it created reaction in Germany and the desire for vengeance and for another war.

So all these matters have to be viewed from not what happens immediately. We are a very ancient country. We have existed for thousands of years and we are going to exist for thousands of years. Therefore, we must not merely be concerned with what will happen this year or next year or in five years. We have to be concerned with the future of the country. There is no doubt that that future is dependent on peace, dependent on whether we can give a feeling of

equality of opportunity to all our people. Just as confrontation on the border or in the international sphere is something that can weaken us, similarly anything which creates a feeling within the country that some people are poor and will remain poor, until others are rich and will remain rich, would be the root of most social disturbances. If you have social unrest, then you cannot progress, you cannot have peace, and everything is threatened. It is in conditions where people feel that progress is not possible that they have taken to violent methods. I feel strongly against violent methods, because far from solving any problem, violence creates many new problems. Even the original problem which some of these people are concerned about, the problem of poverty and inequality, even that is not really solved by violence. The choice, therefore, is not between change and no change but between peaceful change and violent change. Do we want a change which we can mould and shape and direct, or a change which goes its own way and nobody knows where it lands us and even though it starts with good intentions?

We find that Hindu extremism does not combat the Muslim or Christian or Sikh communalism, but encourages it. If one grows, the other is bound to grow. And similarly, if you have an extreme left, it is bound to strengthen the extreme right. Therefore, it is important that our way of peaceful democratic change should succeed and I think the vast majority of the people of India are for such change. It is the responsibility of those who want this peaceful change, to show how sincere and serious we are about it. If the people get a feeling that we talk about these things but we are not serious in their implementation, then it is as good as not talking about it. It is not only a question of being convinced ourselves. We must be able to convince the people and especially those strata of people who have been the most underprivileged so far.

In Andhra Pradesh, there is another problem. It is not confined to Andhra Pradesh but somehow it has been getting more publicity here. It is the maltreatment against the Harijans. This forms the centre of the problem of poverty and the problem of the underprivileged. If after all these years of Independence, and in spite of the fact that equality was a very important plank of the Independence struggle and is enshrined in our Constitution, we have not been able to give a feeling to our people that all Indians are equal, I think it is a major failure. It is not just a failure of the Government or of the Congress; it is a failure of the entire Indian people that we have not been able to do something which is so necessary for the strength and unity and advance of this country. It is important to eradicate poverty. But it is equally important to make a rational, modern nation of this country. By this I do not mean that we sweep away all our traditions and values. From our heritage we should take whatever is timeless and of eternal

value, but we must fight against all that is obscurantist, all that is superstitious and all that is out-of-date in a forward-looking society. To believe that merely because of caste or birth, some people are inferior is certainly out-of-date today and it is something that can only weaken our society and our country.

These are some of the matters which I hope that all legislators, regardless of party, will feel involved in. They should try to solve them in their own areas and in their own villages. It is something that can never be solved merely through laws. It is only when in every village, there is an awareness that discrimination is a bad thing which must be changed that such a change can be effected.

There is a new problem in the world today. As yet it has not become a big problem for us but it is problem for the advanced countries. It is the question of pollution. Once you have industry—and industry is essential for employment, for economic progress—along with it come various other dangers such as the dirtying of the air that we breathe and of the waters of our rivers and lakes. As I said, for us it is not very important yet, although even now our big cities are facing this problem. So from now we must see that all the industries that are put up conform to certain rules and do not pollute air or water. Just as I said that it is for each citizen and each M.L.A. and M.L.C. to concern himself with equality of opportunity, and equality of treatment of all Indians, similarly it must be a matter of concern for every citizen how to keep our country beautiful and clean. It is extraordinary that in a country where religion has given so much importance to cleanliness, to bathing, to washing of hands and feet, we should have to exhort people to try and keep their cities and villages clean. I am sorry to say that countless foreigners who are friends of India have spoken or written about it. They say : "We praise your country. When people say things are wrong, you explain that yours is a very poor country and so on. But this does not mean that places have to be dirty". And we have no answer to this at all. So it is your responsibility whether you live in a town or a village, how to not only activate your municipalities or corporations to keep the streets clean but to see that every individual, every institution, school, college and so on learns to have a certain pride in keeping the place clean and making it as beautiful as possible. Especially in this 25th year of our Independence, it is high time we tried to inculcate some of these very basic civic responsibilities in our people and it is very much tied up with the other question, because there are many industries which will not flourish if you do not have a clean atmosphere.

There are many things on which some of us may differ. It is the right of those who differ to express their opinion. As I said, we do not believe in the majority sweeping aside the minority view. We give it full consideration and try to accommodate it, if it is possible, within

our policy and within what we consider is right for the nation and our people. But there are many things on which we can combine and work together. So let us at least find out these areas of agreement and co-operation and see how fast we can help to remove whatever evils there are and encourage whatever good there is in this country.

I should like to thank the Chief Minister and all of you for this opportunity to meet you all, and I give you my good wishes.

Our Tryst with Freedom

THIS MONTH WE celebrate the twenty-fifth year of India's tryst with Freedom. It has been a quarter-century packed with trial and challenge, by overcoming which the nation has emerged stronger, more cohesive and more determined to reach its goals.

Democracy has come to stay and has proved itself. But economic freedom in the shape of the economic self-reliance of the nation and also improvement in the daily lives of our common people has yet to be achieved.

The fight against poverty and inequality demands the united endeavour of all our people. It was the faith and deep involvement of the masses of our poeple which won us political freedom. Our objective is clear and unambiguous. But since no country has undertaken a task of such vast magnitude in such complex conditions, we have to chart our courage as we go along and have to face known and unknown obstacles.

Let self-confidence and courage be our companions on this journey towards a new creative society, which ensures justice and equality of opportunity to all, where every citizen is able to grow to his full height, where all men and women are involved in democratic functioning and are equally conscious of their responsibility to their fellow human beings.

General message for the 25th anniversary of Independence, New Delhi, August 1, 1972

The Economic Scene

Re-orientation of Credit Policies

I THINK IT was a bit of a challenge for me to come to your meeting this evening, because, this is one group of people with whom I am not too popular at the moment. However, you have shown in your speeches that you have some appreciation of the motives behind this step (bank nationalisation) and I know that you will very sincerely try to implement it in a manner which will make the greatest difference to the people of India.

I should like to compliment you on the smooth transition and the manner in which you have so far handled the situation. I think this augurs well for the future since there will be many occasions on which we shall have to work together to find the correct path along which we want to take the Indian banking and credit policies, and to find a way in which we could serve the people of India and, at the same time, keep to sound economics.

The custodian of each bank has been given full powers to deal with various situations and I hope that they will exercise this power in expeditious disposal of work. There is no need to seek guidance from other quarters in matters in which they have full competence for decision-making.

I hear that there is a feeling of insecurity amongst bankers and also amongst some sections of business and industry. Frankly, I do not see the cause of this feeling of insecurity. To some extent we are all insecure. We do not know when there will be an earthquake, or a typhoon or the end of the world. But barring such grave and sudden disasters, there is no need for a feeling of insecurity in anyone. As I have made very clear in several speeches, we have no intention to disturb the entire system but merely to give it the guidance which it has been sorely needing for some time. It is not that the banks were not functioning well. They were functioning well. But they saw things in a particular light which was a little bit removed from the needs of the country. While good economics is essential, greater production is also essential. Neither of it can be possible if social tension keeps growing and threatens everything. Social tension was growing in this country because of disparities, because of the sense of injustice felt by many of our people. Therefore, any move that can be made or any step that can be taken to help in easing this tension

Address to the Bankers' Club, New Delhi, August 28, 1969

is a move towards stability and security for all of us. So, I hope that you will not feel too insecure and that we shall have your full co-operation.

The nationalisation is not an end in itself. The objectives for which it was undertaken have already been elaborated on more than one occasion in Parliament as well as outside. We have now to see how these objectives can be best and most speedily achieved. I should like each bank to have its own plan for doing so. You all are aware that the nationalisation of 14 major banks has raised tremendous expectations amongst our people. One has, perhaps, not seen such enthusiasm since the day of Independence. I have lost no opportunity of telling the people that all their expectations cannot be fulfilled easily, but still they are overflowing with this enthusiasm and jubilation. But while, naturally, we cannot fulfil their expectations completely, we must do whatever we can to fulfil at least a part of them.

The re-orientation of our credit policies is designed to fulfil some of these aspirations. This can be done to the extent our banks are able to mobilise additional deposits. We attach the highest importance to this task. Any failure on this front will impede the banks' ability to meet the growing and competitive credit demands of a developing economy. Each bank should address itself to this task with vigour and imagination. Deposit-mobilisation will depend upon the strength of the institutional base of banking and the spread of its geographical and functional coverage. The pace of branch expansion, in particular, needs to be stepped up on the basis of a plan geared to definite time-horizons.

The nationalisation is an opportunity and a challenge to the banker to cast himself in a dynamic and innovating role. Rural banking in particular, will require new techniques and methods of work. The attitudes of conventional and conservative banking will not be enough if banks are to foster and enlarge the oncoming agricultural revolution, and to benefit from the substantial incomes which it is generating in the rural areas. To mobilise rural savings you will have to work hard to develop new services which will suit our farmers and make them save more and part with their savings. On the side of lending also, new ideas will be essential. You will have to innovate in respect of security requirements. Clearly, the traditional insistence on collateral security or documents of land ownership will be self-defeating. Such methods would rule out millions of small farmers and tenants. We should in this context examine how we can forge links between the nationalised banks and the co-operative agencies on sound economic principles.

The banker must become the friend, the philosopher and the guide of the farmer, by providing him technical assistance, inputs, supervision of credit and input use, and by simultaneously financing the development

of storage and marketing facilities. Some of our most dynamic bankers have already made it their business to conduct fertiliser trials in specific soil conditions. They have promoted new hybrid seeds, set up and financed soil testing facilities, collected and analysed economic data on farms, instituted spraying services, and encouraged actively a host of productive and revolutionary activities. In this challenging situation, no banker who takes merely a conventional view of banking business can be successful. Only that banker will succeed who can be more than a mere banker. I am confident that you will respond to this challenge.

I have spoken at some length about agriculture because of the primacy which it occupies in our economic development. Industrial lending, whether to the small entrepreneur or to the big industrialist, will require a no less alert and fresh approach. The emphasis must be on credit-worthiness of purpose. Banks must be equipped to make techno-economic and financial appraisals of new schemes. They must engage themselves in up-to-date, perspective market and planning surveys. They must adopt modern management systems and techniques. In short, they must be able to judge and identify the requirements of a dynamic economy over a broad spectrum, and provide it the necessary financial and technical support.

I know that these tasks demand an expanded and professionalised management of the highest order. For this purpose, we should create the necessary training facilities based on curricula suited to our needs.

Fears have been expressed in some quarters that courtesy and efficiency will be at a discount in the nationalised banks. I sincerely hope that these fears will be belied. The bank employees who have responded so enthusiastically to nationalisation have a special responsibility to ensure that their earlier record of good service is not only maintained but improved.

I am glad I have had this opportunity of meeting you and of putting some of my ideas before you. Your role in the years ahead will be crucial because you will powerfully influence the pattern and pace of our economic growth. I expect that you will commit yourself more consciously and whole-heartedly than ever before to the planning process and the fulfilment of our social objectives.

* * *

WE ALL KNOW the importance of banks in national life and the banks which function in the private sector will certainly continue to be important and the country does expect valuable services from them.

From address at the meeting of the Custodians of the nationalised banks, New Delhi, September 30, 1969

But those of you who are around this table happen to be vested with trust and responsibility of a very special order.

I have spoken on nationalisation on a number of occasions and I presume that you have been following what I had said; although sometimes I was also misreported. I will not really go into that aspect of nationalisation except to say that as experts you yourself must have noticed over the years the indifferent and weak points in our monetary system and the circumstances in which large parts of the country are not yet effectively served by financial agencies.

In the Press and elsewhere, a complaint has been voiced that with nationalisation, operations of banks may be swayed by political considerations. I do not know what these critics have in mind when they refer to political considerations. It has been noticed for some time that many of our old ideas had to change and such change would be brought about only with public ownership and control.

It is very difficult to separate politics from any other part of life. But that has been the accepted custom not only here but also, perhaps, in a country like England. There is a phrase from an English journal which I referred to in Parliament that somebody who wants things to remain as they are, is considered unpolitical, although it is just as much politics, whereas a person who wants a change is supposed to be political. Now both attitudes are equally political. One is not more political or less political than the other. Banks being closely linked with the development of the economy cannot remain entirely uninfluenced by the needs of the political situation. The political situation in our country today demands that banking facilities should be extended in an increasing measure to backward areas, to agriculture, to small-scale industry and so on, and perhaps banking operations should be informed by a larger social purpose. But if this is what was meant by political consideration, certainly there is a political consideration. But if by that phrase they mean that in their day-to-day working, those in charge of the banks might be influenced by extraneous considerations, unrelated to public welfare or economic development, then I have no hesitation in assuring you that as long as I am in charge, such considerations will not be allowed to interfere with your work. Within the broad framework of the policy laid down by the Government, you will have the necessary freedom and latitude to function as efficient and professional bankers, guided solely by your own conscience and the canons of the profession to which you belong. At the same time, we are aware that at least some of the bankers, perhaps among those assembled here, were subjected to extraneous influence in the past, traceable to the close links between banks and big business. Bankers were being hampered in their day-to-day work by the interference of Directors drawn from big industry and big business. Nationalisation has liberated professional bankers from

these unhealthy influences, which had sometimes tended to cloud their judgment in the past.

We had in the past got into a kind of vicious circle. That is one kind led to another and then another and you simply had to go on and on. When I say we had to change the old ideas, I mean we had to break this type of vicious circle. In the main this involves two steps. First, the mobilisation of deposits in all parts of the country and from all sections of the people, ranging from affluent business men to the harassed housewife. It follows that you will not only have to open branches as quickly as possible on a very much wider scale than before in villages and small towns, but you must also continually make imaginative efforts to collect savings from all, from the well-to-do to the small earners in agriculture, industry, trade and the professions, the self-employed and the manual worker. The aggregate of deposits, which can be collected from ordinary people in relatively small places, is very much larger than the yet untapped savings available in cities and large towns. To reach these hundreds of thousands of small potential depositors is certainly hard work, but then nationalisation does involve harder work, and not greater ease, for us all.

I understand that a few days ago you had formulated proposals for branch expansion in the coming months and that further thought is being given to this matter by you and the Reserve Bank. I hope that in framing these schemes you will follow a rational policy in co-ordination with your fellow bankers so that the opening of branches is not regarded as a scramble for increased prestige but of orderly service to the community which will be a good business proposition for your own bank. The greatest attention should be paid to small towns and villages, particularly in regions which by common standards are regarded as under-developed. We cannot afford to forget the elementary fact that a greater number of people live in villages and will continue to do so for quite some time. I have met some of you separately and am glad to know of services which your banks have been rendering to the agricultural sector as well as to the small man in the urban areas.

One of you pointed out to me this morning—and it is an excellent idea—that in dealing with villagers, one has to keep the human point of view before oneself, *i.e.*, that in order that they are not frightened, but encouraged, you have to evolve some methods. That is, of course, for you to see and decide how to do it. Sometimes, the filling up of large forms and the manner in which we talk to the people does frighten them and can frighten certain sections of the people. We have to have special methods of dealing with this class. Some have mentioned to me that this may even require additional hours of working, that is, if there are two banks, one may work on a slightly different schedule, so that people who are working in the fields and cannot come at particular hours may not be denied banking facilities. I am only having loud thinking.

But this is for you who have experience to chalk out these things. I am only mentioning them here to give an indication of the social need to get out of set ways of thinking and working. Any country which goes ahead in today's world is constantly renovating its methods, its ideas and its ways of working. And I think that has been the greatest lacuna in our life. Not only have we not done this while we have gone ahead in many areas, it has not had the effect which it could have if the other things had happened simultaneously.

Obviously, there is much new ground to be broken in the matter of maximum deposit mobilisation. There are also glaring disparities in aggregate deposits as between comparable States and comparable districts. It should not be beyond your enterprise and acumen to jointly, and individually, rectify this position.

Lending should not be taken up as a separate operation only after deposits start flowing in handsome measure. Deposit mobilisation and lending must go together. In many under-developed areas, lending will deliberately have to be made the first step, in the expectation that the collection of deposits will follow in due course. The number of borrowal accounts declined from 11.26 lakhs to 10.56 lakhs in the two years from March 1965 to March 1967. At a time when the numbers of the unemployed are fast rising, the total money supply in the country is widening, the aggregate of bank deposits is growing, though not correspondingly, and one hears of the small man borrowing from the unorganised sector at an interest of 20 per cent or above, this decline in the number of borrowal accounts of banks is a matter for serious concern. It suggests that the use of institutional money, which is basically the community's property, tends to be concentrated in fewer hands. According to all principles of social advance, the use should have been diffused more widely. I know that some of you have been preparing schemes for lending to all productive enterprises, however humble these may be and however small the financial needs may be. This aspect deserves the maximum and the most urgent attention. It is not enough for your branch managers to have these schemes and be ready to lend in accordance with them. It is necessary to give the widest publicity to these schemes in the manner appropriate to the community where they work. Here again, publicity itself will have to be different according to the section of the people or the area of the country. It is also most important that the State and Union Territory governments should have a good idea of the ways in which you are trying to serve the people under their administrative care. Some of the governments are under the impression that the banks collect a great deal more money in their areas than is lent there. To the extent that this impression is factually correct, action has to be taken without delay to rectify the position. And to the extent the impression is erroneous, it is desirable to explain the true facts. We should not raise false hopes of the people

or give them false promises which cannot be fulfilled but we should see that help is given in the right direction. I know the Indian people well enough to be confident that as long as they feel that we are going in the right direction, even if we are slow, they are with us. It is only when they feel that we are definitely going in a direction which is not to their advantage or which is favouring some men or others that they look to other methods. Therefore, our effort must all the time be to see what the needs are and if the situation is a changing one, how far we can change our methods and even our aims to some extent. It is a mental attitude to which I am referring.

I hope that in one year you will be able to tell the country, through the different media available, how much you have widened the spread of your lending to how many more people, particularly in the lower income brackets, who are engaged in the production of goods and services of diverse useful kinds, how you have been able to assist and how much extra gainful employment you have generated. As your managers have more experience of handling small accounts your schemes should be suitably revised. Government officers are working out plans to organise a simple but wide-ranging system of guarantees of comparable facilities for small lending by banks in fields which have remained relatively neglected so far, such as retail trade, small business, minor repair industries, small farming and the self-employed sector. The broad objective is to see that your managers shed unreasonable fears of penalisation and feel encouraged to expand lending to the small man. We shall welcome concrete suggestions from you.

I am glad to know that you are thinking of forming a council for the co-ordination of work, the pooling of ideas and checking the nature and quality of activity. You will have the advice and assistance of the Reserve Bank and the Government in all constructive ways. If administered well, the council will provide a forum for devising methods of joint or at least concerted action on many fronts, for example, formulating a broad-based drive to accentuate saving-consciousness in all classes of people, checking with one another in what respect in what parts of the country the needs of productive enterprises—ranging from the very small to the large ones—are not being met satisfactorily and what should be done to rectify the situation, how you can pool information about prudent lending, improvement of recruitment and training programmes and, where possible, share the burden of expenditure, reduce administrative costs without impairment of efficiency. You must consider to what extent your forms and requirements can conform to a common pattern and the productivity and profitability of your own banks increased, how the quality of your service can be improved, and so on. Competition can be encouraged if it is not socially unproductive. You should avoid measures which might cause undeserved injury to smaller banks and those co-operative banks which are doing good work in their

own fields. In our vast country there is room enough for all to function.

The top managements of nationalised banks must attempt to maintain good relations with their workers and staff and to induce their co-operation. Unfortunately, the management-labour relations in banking have often been unsatisfactory.

The scheme contemplated in Section 13 of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act is under preparation. Government officials are consulting the Reserve Bank and the Chief Executives of nationalised banks. Whatever constructive suggestions you may make will be taken into consideration. Government is also examining how to give a fair share of the work relating to Government treasuries and allied matters and of the accounts of public sector enterprises to the 14 nationalised banks.

In the weeks immediately following July 19, it was rumoured in some circles that the nationalisation of the 14 banks would lead to the choking off of loans to large productive enterprises. Nothing could be farther from the truth and I am sure that you know this. The production of goods and services useful to the community must expand fast. Otherwise, grave distortions arise in the economy, leading to rampant unemployment. You should have no hesitation in assisting all genuine productive enterprise of medium and large size. However, please do remember that in India bank finance has not always been measured by lenders against actual production needs and there has not been any effective check on the end-use of bank money. Naturally, you should be more alert in this sphere so that very big enterprises or houses do not have to be given larger assistance than is actually warranted in terms of the needs of production and distribution. The Reserve Bank should be able to advise you in detail in this matter.

Similarly, in lending against shares and commodities, you would be well-advised to be vigilant so that allegations of cornering of shares or of goods in short supply for unsocial purposes with bank money do not arise. The devices to ensure this are matters of detail which, for the present, you yourselves, with the advice of the Reserve Bank, should be able to work out.

There are a few other points to which I should like to draw your attention. Most of the term-financing institutions working in the fields of industry and agriculture are in the public sector. Now that 14 of you are also in it, there is greater opportunity than before to coordinate your actions and attitudes with term-financing bodies, particularly at the State level, so that the short-term and long-term needs of development are adequately taken care of. As I have mentioned earlier, it would be useful for you to be actively in touch with the State and Union Territory governments so that they do not remain in ignorance of what you can do and what you cannot, and they may so trim and adopt their

expectations as to get the best out of the monetary system for the good of the public without nationalised banks having to depart from sound canons of prudent financing. Incidentally, this might mean your subjecting governmental projects to constructive but careful scrutiny, advising the governments what particular precautions they should take in their own and the public interest and you discontinuing the hitherto frequent practice of leaning heavily on Government guarantees.

You are aware of the current tensions in the minds of the rising generation and the main causes of these. One of the malaises we must correct is the complaint of neglect and incomprehension which the student community appears to harbour against established authority. It is good to learn that some of you have schemes for financial assistance to students in need. These schemes deserve wide publicity. Those like you who have knowledge and experience of business, industry and the monetary system can also usefully establish closer touch with the student community. Perhaps you and your senior officials could occasionally arrange meetings with young people and also with other sections of the public.

I am glad to know that some of you are trying to use Hindi and regional languages in your contacts with your customers and the public. I think it is necessary to evolve some positive attitude to the language problem over which there are strong feelings in the country.

I should like to assure you that the Government has no pre-conceived intention of forcible amalgamation of one nationalised bank with another, or of upsetting the management of any bank which does its best to achieve well-known objectives. If structural changes in banks are felt to be necessary in the light of working experience wherever possible, these should come about through consultation and coordination.

The fear was expressed to me by some smaller banks whether their voice would be heard equally along with bigger banks. I am sure that this will be so.

The misunderstanding which arose in some uninformed circles after nationalisation is settling down. I am sure that soon it will disappear altogether. The nationalised banks, the Reserve Bank and the Central Government will, however, be judged by the country mainly by the quality and depth of the endeavour they make towards ensuring social and economic justice. I need barely tell you that our joint objective is that bankers should become uniformly acceptable as wise counsellors and friends of the community as a whole and not merely as associates of particular sections of society.

I hope your meeting will expedite some of our decisions and schemes so that we can go ahead with this work at a pace which is expected of us.

* * *

I AM GLAD to have this opportunity of meeting you all. I had a useful meeting with the custodians of nationalised banks some days ago—and this was mentioned by your President—and they, the custodians, will translate the broad directives of policies which were laid down by the Government and the Reserve Bank into specific programmes of lending. But it is the managers of the banks who actually have to implement these programmes. It is on them that the responsibility of this implementation with regard to re-orientation of our credit policies rests. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking the officers and staff of these banks for having rendered the transition from private to nationalised banking easier.

I know there has been keen enthusiasm among the staff and even the officer class has welcomed the nationalisation. It is now for the managers to harness this enthusiasm and spontaneous co-operation, improve the efficiency of their banks, particularly at the points where banks come into contact with the public. We should demonstrate that public ownership and control does not mean inefficiency or discourtesy to the public. On the contrary the employees, who have now become public servants, should consider dedicated and courteous service to the public as their primary responsibility. I might tell you that many bank employees who have come to see me have assured me of their co-operation and of their willingness to do what they can, to make nationalisation a success. But you all know good intentions or good resolutions do not often last very long. So, it is your task to see that you do make them last long and that you give the employees a feeling that this is as much their concern as it is yours and as it is ours. We have assured workers' participation in the boards of management of the new banks and this should give them a greater sense of involvement in the fortunes of their banks and also evoke their co-operation in improving the public image of the institutions which they serve.

The mobilisation of deposits should be the highest priority by staff at all levels because this is the means through which we can serve our ultimate objective of lending more to crucial sectors of our economy, such as agriculture, small-scale industries, the retail business and so on. The need of the hour is to increase the rate of investment in industry as well as in agriculture. Bank managers have a very important part to play in contacting all potential savers in different strata of society and canalising their savings into the banking system. The message which we have to carry to every nook and corner of the country is to save more and to keep the savings in banks.

Mr. Chairman, you mentioned in the beginning of your address about having to unlearn. This applies not only to banks, it really

From speech at the Bankers' Club, Madras, October 5, 1969

applies to every person in the world today, because the world is changing very fast. Methods are changing, new scientific and technological knowledge makes us change our lives, and to the extent that we adjust ourselves and adapt ourselves to these changes we progress along with the rest of the world. If we do not, then we lag behind. This is the reason why India lagged behind at all her stages of history and we have so much leeway to make up now. So, it is not a question of only changing oneself but being alert to the changes which are taking place in the world and changing along with them. I would like to emphasise that this does not mean that we suddenly leave everything that is old and get swept off our feet by these winds from abroad or winds of change. As Gandhiji said our feet must be firmly planted on our own soil but we should welcome new ideas and methods from wherever they come.

Now, in order to lend for different purposes, bankers must be equipped with the necessary skills. Lending against security is a simple affair. Nobody can be happier than I if this were possible but how you will work it out is really your concern along with the custodians and other people who are going to be at the ground level so to speak. Because lending on the basis of the credit worthiness of projects will be far more difficult but I have no doubt that it will also be ultimately rewarding. The bankers should adapt their functioning to the needs and attitudes of the new class of people they have to serve. Therefore, we may have to use regional languages increasingly, especially in rural areas. It is also necessary to have a re-orientation of outlook if we are to make the small farmer, the self-employed mechanic, and others feel that banks are meant to serve them also and not merely the sophisticated business men in urban areas, drawn from the affluent section of our society. I made this point when I met the custodians and it is not only a question of extending the service to a new section of the people but you have to adapt yourselves to be acceptable to that section. Because, if you treat them as if you are something higher, then, you will not get that sympathy and co-operation from them. You have to contact them and talk to them not only in their language but in their idiom and come to them as friends and guides rather than somebody who is from the city, obviously more educated and more knowledgeable. It was the great lesson which Gandhiji taught us in the freedom movement, *i.e.*, to give this feeling of equality to all those who took part in the movement. To a large extent khadi, which we all wore, served this purpose but what one wears is not so important now as one's attitude to the people whom one meets. And I am sure that you will deal with different sections of the people in the idiom and language which they will understand.

I have spoken largely just now of farmers in the rural areas but we want to tap the savings of the young people. They have an entirely

different idiom and they have to be dealt with in a different language. Similarly, each section will need a different approach and, I am sure, if this whole matter is treated with imagination and in an atmosphere of friendliness, you will certainly get co-operation from the people whom you approach. Once again, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to meet you and to say a few words, and I hope the difficult tasks which await you, you will regard as a challenge and that you will meet this challenge not only with the knowledge and imagination it needs but with a sense of humour and with a feeling of involvement that it is something which is not only of interest to your bank and, therefore, good for you in your job but as something which is good for you as a person and for your family, because it does affect the whole of our country and our fortunes are dependent on the fortunes of the country as a whole.

Agitations Hamper Progress

I DO NOT need to assure the people of Assam that their problems of economic development and their welfare are of special concern to the Government of India. They should feel assured not only of my personal concern but of our desire to help to the extent practicable. Because of this we had set up a Committee of Experts to investigate and to assess the oil resources of Assam and to recommend how best these could be utilised to promote the interests of the people of Assam.

As soon as the report was published, our Planning Commission began to examine it. However, I called together the Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals and the Member of the Planning Commission so that a decision could be expedited as I was anxious to be able to say something before or during my visit to Assam, to which I was greatly looking forward.

However, before the Government of India could consider and take a decision on the report submitted by the Expert Committee, an agitation was launched by the Assam Refinery Sangram Parishad. There was no justification for such an agitation, which was entirely misconceived and ill-advised. We are all aware that Assam has special problems and is in need of help. Indeed, each of our States has some problems. But we ought to know that we cannot solve all our economic problems to our satisfaction, because our resources are not adequate. We should pause and take time to think and to consider whether agitations do not further deplete these limited resources and, therefore,

Appeal to the people of Assam, October 19, 1969

hamper and delay developmental programmes. These constant agitations or threats of agitations in the country put a great strain on the administration. I am definite that it is not in the country's interest that any decision be taken under threat of agitation. In any case, matters of economic development obviously cannot be decided upon under duress of emotions generated by those who incite agitations.

The report submitted by the Expert Committee cannot, therefore, be considered so long as the threat of agitation in Assam looms over us. I appeal to the people of Assam, and specially to the younger generation, to appreciate this, to give up their agitational approach and to create an atmosphere conducive to peaceful development of Assam.

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THERE HAS BEEN a general demand from Assam for the establishment of additional refining capacity in the public sector. The Government of India have always been anxious to promote the accelerated economic development of Assam and have, therefore, treated Assam on a special basis in allocating Central assistance for its Plans. The Government appointed an Expert Committee in April 1969 in order to examine the techno-economic feasibility of locating additional refining capacity in Assam. On consideration of the report of this Committee, the Government have now decided that the present refining capacity in Assam should be increased by a little over one million tonnes in the Fourth Plan period, either through expansion or the establishment of an additional refinery, as may be found economically feasible.

The Government of India also recognise the need to take measures for the industrialisation of Assam based, among other factors, on its oil resources. Assam's crude oil is rich in aromatics which provide the base for the development of petro-chemicals. With the availability of adequate raw materials from the proposed increase in refining capacity, Government have also decided that an integrated DMT/ Polyester fibre petro-chemicals complex should be established. Suitable provision for this refining-cum-petro-chemical complex will be made in the Fourth Plan, now under finalisation.

Assam is rich in various resources and there is scope for the establishment of industries based on forest produce. The Government have recently decided on the establishment of a Paper Corporation. This Corporation will be entrusted with the task of putting up a paper/pulp mill in Assam.

The Government of India have also been giving their attention to another problem, namely the periodic ravages caused by floods in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, which cause considerable concern

Statement in Lok Sabha, December 5, 1969

to the Central as well as the State Government. The Government accord high priority to the evolution and implementation of a comprehensive plan of flood control through the agency of a Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission, and have now decided that such a Commission should be set up and provided with adequate resources for the discharge of its responsibility. The State Government will be enabled to make adequate provision for this purpose in the State Plan.

Role of the Private Sector

I AM ALWAYS glad to have an opportunity of meeting different sections of people. There is no doubt that the business community has played, is playing and, I hope, will continue to play an important role. I think there is absolutely no contradiction at all in the Janus-faced policy, as you, Mr. President, have mentioned just now. We do think that the private sector has an important part to play. But we think that what goes by the name of pragmatism is precisely what you have condemned in the later part of your speech, that is, expediency on the part of the very small section of the people at the cost of the larger section of the people, and unless the business community realises this, it is no use talking of obligations to the public unless you know exactly what that means. It is no use talking about pragmatism unless you know wherein the interest of the country lies. It is no use talking even about the desirability of production unless we know production for what. Do we want to produce for the sake of producing or do we want to produce so that the standard of living of the poorest of our people can be raised ?

You began and even ended on a pessimistic note. I beg to differ with you. I think there is a buoyancy in the country, in the economic field, in the political field and in the social field. I think never has India, at any time since Independence, been better poised for advance and for going ahead at a faster rate than it is today. There are many difficulties in our way. May I ask you, are these labour problems, racial problems, linguistic problems not faced by every affluent nation in the world ? Is the law and order problem confined or unique to India ? Is it not faced by the United States of America ? Or by any other country which you choose to pick out on the map of the world ? Let us be realistic when we are facing these problems. The business community

Speech at the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, October 25, 1969

has first of all to learn not to run down its own nation. You have condemned us for running down the private sector. May I ask you to look at the speeches which have been delivered through the years and the number of speeches which I have sat through, condemning the public sector? Has it not struck you then that the public sector has a role to play and that it is the public sector which has given an infrastructure to our country so that we have been able to defend ourselves, so that we have been able to help you, the private sector. Do not forget that the private sector has advanced because the Government has protected it and has helped it. It could not have built up the base that it has today had the Government adopted a different policy. So, you have to view the problems which you face and which we face in the larger perspective of the country.

As you, Mr. President, have said in your address, there can be no economic progress in conditions of instability, uncertainty and insecurity. Any attempt at bringing about a greater measure of economic equality will receive a setback in any such environment, and in all situations in which law and order breaks down, it is the poorer sections of the society who suffer more than the affluent section. But I would like to draw your attention to something. Stability cannot be and should not be equated with the perpetuation of the *status quo*. Stability cannot be brought about if the present inequalities are allowed to remain or to grow. And unless we take note of the aspirations of the people and engineer change peacefully, we shall be overtaken by events and by far greater violence than you have seen today.

Today there is an atmosphere of restlessness in our country and also in every other country in the world and even in the most affluent of societies, as you may have noticed in the newspapers. And countries that were quite until recently considered to be havens of peace and prosperity do not seem to be quite so now. A new generation is coming up into prominence in all the countries whose attitudes and beliefs differ from those of the older generation. In all spheres of life, therefore, whether it be politics or business and industry, we must take note of this new development and re-fashion our policies and programmes so as to respond more readily to the needs of the changing times.

Your speech, Mr. President, clubs together the concentration of economic power and political power and considers both to be undesirable. Now there are adequate safeguards in our political set-up against the concentration of political power. Our federal system, with its allocation of power as between the Centre and the States, is by itself a corrective against any trend towards the concentration of political power. We have now the phenomenon of different political parties holding power in different States. And, in the national sphere also, we have a powerful Opposition subjecting every move of the Government to the closest and most critical scrutiny. But businessmen should ask themselves frankly

whether there are similar correctives against abuses flowing from the concentration of economic power. What action, for instance, has been taken in our country to build up active and vibrant organisations of share-holders, consumers and small businessmen. In the absence of organisations of this nature, exercising a countervailing influence against the concentration of economic power, Government had to step in, whether it is the nationalisation of banks or the monopolies legislation, which is now on the anvil. All these should be viewed against the realities of our economy in which there is no effective force, except the State, which could mitigate the possible abuses of the concentration of economic power.

Your address has referred to the economic resolution of the AICC session and what you call the "bewildering changes" taking place in rapid succession. I think changes can seem to be bewildering only to those who wish to remain where they are. Those who wish to go ahead see the changes as part of the changes which are coming about in the entire world. And, while you may complain that changes are taking place too fast, let me tell you that there are many in the country who feel that the changes are not taking place fast enough. I do not dispute, in fact I have said so many times, that the private sector has made a substantial contribution in bringing about rapid industrialisation and in broadening and diversifying the industrial base of our economy. But business and industry should be the first to acknowledge that this process of development has itself brought in its wake certain tensions and new problems, and unless these are effectively tackled, further development will be jeopardised. Our new economic and social policy resolution only seeks to identify the basic causes of tensions and unrest and to remove them.

I welcome your statement that the business community is aware of its obligations. This will improve the image of businessmen in the society of which they are a part. It is possible to draw a minimum programme of action and to implement it vigorously. Perhaps I could indicate a few possible directions in which business and industry could act in concert and could demonstrate their awareness of their social obligations. One of the most serious problems facing us is the adulteration of food and drugs. It is a widespread evil which cannot be put down by Governmental action alone. Enlightened sections of the business community could mount a campaign against this evil which not only deprives the consumer of the value of his money but, in many cases, poses a positive health hazard. Nothing damages the public image of the business community in India so much as this unethical practice. Another social evil to which you have referred is rather a complex of social evils. It is what is termed as conspicuous consumption. This is undesirable by itself because it dissipates the savings of the community into unproductive channels. It is both the cause and the effect of other anti-social practices, such as tax-evasion and tax-avoidance. Govern-

ment can no doubt take legislative action to curb this evil through appropriate changes in tax laws or through the stiffening of controls exercised by the Company Law Board. But, here again, the business community could co-operate with the Government in curbing what is generally recognised to be a social evil which is not in the long-term interest of the business community itself. It is the ostentatious display of wealth which, more than anything else, causes social tension, which businessmen are anxious to avoid.

Here in Bombay you have, as all cities have, certain specific problems. I refer to one problem which is mentioned to me by every single foreign tourist who comes to Bombay. This is the entrance to the city. Now this is something which I have mentioned to the Chief Minister on every drive into the city and at practically every public forum where I have spoken. And I think this is a matter which the citizens of Bombay should take up on a large scale, whether it is the women's organisations, whether it is the business community or anybody else. I think that if everybody acts together it can be tackled. It is not a very large area and I do not think that finances alone stand in the way. It is not only the image of Bombay which is suffering, but, Bombay being one of the important gateways to India, it is the image of India which suffers thereby.

You have, Mr. President, mentioned in your address the present policy of the Government which is to encourage new entrepreneurship and talent. But what have businessmen done to identify and promote such talent of which there is no dearth in the country? The bigger business and industrial establishments by trying to foreclose profitable lines of business and sometimes by seeking to produce everything under the same roof or in allied establishments, succeed in keeping out new talent from entering the business field. Associations such as yours and other Chambers of Commerce should draw up concrete schemes to foster new entrepreneurship and talent. One suggestion which was made at the last meeting of the Custodians of the nationalised banks was that some of the senior and professionally qualified executives in bigger establishments, who have the necessary skill, could step out and start small-scale enterprises to provide employment to young engineers and other technical personnel. They will of course get all help from the financial institutions in the public sector. Business associations could also play an important and more active part in encouraging businessmen and industrialists in the industrially backward areas.

As regards the organisational set-up of the new nationalised banks, I think there is hardly any need for me to reiterate the assurance which I have already given, *i.e.*, that we do not propose to set up a monolithic organisation and we do envisage maximum possible freedom and flexibility of operation of individual banks, consistent only with certain broad social objectives and that the functioning will be completely insulated

from extraneous political influences. But we do envisage that the banks should function as an active instrument for the furtherance of the economic and social objectives of the Government. The recommendations of the Dutt Committee are still under consideration of the Government and all points of view will be taken into account when a decision is taken.

Your address is critical of the recommendations of this Committee, specially the one that financial institutions providing assistance to industrial concerns should have the right of converting the loans and debentures into equity capital. While this recommendation also is still under consideration of the Government, the business community should realise that there are occasions on which, in the public interest as well as from the limited point of view of safeguarding their own interest, business institutions may well seek to be associated with Boards of Directors of industrial enterprises through the conversion of loans into equity capital or otherwise. There have been instances in which the decisions of management have been in conflict with those of the share-holders and the community. The purchase of raw materials at high price from an allied undertaking, sales agreements on onerous terms and the appointment of close relations with no identifiable professional qualifications to highly paid posts in undertakings are some of the evils which we have come across in the day-to-day management of enterprises in the private sector. The presence of a representative of the financing institution could possibly have prevented some of these evils from assuming large proportions.

We know that there is a dearth of suitable skilled professional managers of whose services financial institutions in the public sector could avail themselves. But organisations such as the Indian Merchants' Chamber should also now and then ask themselves the question whether their Boards of Directors in all cases consist only of professionally qualified personnel. In fact, as I pointed out in my speech in Madras, the basic weakness of industrial undertakings in the country, whether in the private or the public sector, is that they are under amateur management. If we have general administrators managing industrial enterprises under the public sector, we have family groups dominating the private sector. The aim should be to bring both under competent professional management dedicated to the objectives of economic growth and social justice. Government have already taken some steps to bring about some managerial revolution in the public sector. We should expect the private sector to initiate similar action in their own sphere.

You have also mentioned, Mr. President, many other points. I think I do not have the time to go into all of them here. But you said something about latest techniques and so on. Now, I am one of those people who are always for latest techniques for taking the nation forward in technology and otherwise. I think that we should certainly benefit

from the research and the work done in other countries and from the techniques which they have evolved, but not at the cost of our own evolution, not at the cost of our own people doing research and trying to find new ways of doing things. No nation can advance merely by imitating other nations. And, if we have to forge new paths, we have to suffer for it, as you get nothing free in the world, not even the smallest or the largest thing. Unfortunately, the business community has thought that one pays only in terms of money but for most things in life you pay in other terms also, whether it is freedom, whether it is democracy and whether it is the unity and integrity of the country. Each one of us as a citizen has to play his role in maintaining all these.

Forging New Paths

IT GIVES ME special pleasure to be here at this meeting. I must say that I was very much attracted by the name of this organisation when I first heard of it. Because it is something which, at this moment of our development, we are very much in need of.

Enterprise is perhaps the greatest of our national needs—enterprise in agriculture, in industry, in science and even in matters of civic initiative in combating social evils such as communal friction and other types of frictions and tensions, which arise from time to time, which threaten our unity, which threaten our progress and sometimes threaten even our very survival. This is hardly the place to dwell on some of these tensions although they have a very vital bearing on the progress of our industry. In today's society, in today's changing society, the new elite are the entrepreneurs and the technologists and in the situation which exists in our country these too have a very special responsibility to society.

As you have rightly mentioned in your address, this is not only in the interest, in the patriotic interest, of the welfare of larger sections of the people, but looking at the question from a very narrow practical point of view also, it is in the interests of all that one should take a stand on the issues and work for the solution of these problems. Because, these tendencies—whether it is the communal tendency considering one citizen big merely because of his religion, to be more patriotic than all others, denying people the right to live where they want to in the country or to work where they want to—weaken the fabric of the nation. No industry can prosper and no development can take place unless there exists the proper atmosphere, the

Address to the National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs, Bombay, October 25, 1969

atmosphere of unity and of working together. As you know, we have made tremendous and spectacular progress in industry since our Independence, but we have come to a stage when industry needs a special push; not that we want to lessen the importance of agriculture, because our very lives are dependent on it and industry itself in India is dependent on agricultural progress. But all these things do not exist in separate compartments. They are all interdependent and each has to flourish in order to help the other.

Within the industrial field there is no doubt that we can live and prosper only through innovators and people who are capable of and willing to branch out into new directions. Mahatma Gandhi said once, I believe, that we cannot make history by repeating the experiences of others. We have to be willing to forge out our own path, make our own mistakes and learn from our own mistakes, and from the mistakes go on to achievement.

In India we have taken the socialist path. Our socialism does not envisage choking of private initiative. In fact we have stood and we do stand now for a mixed economy in which both the public and the private sectors are active. We do not want the State to do everything, because, apart from this not being possible, the State is not able to undertake everything. It is also not desirable for the State to do everything. What then is our socialism? It means that the State takes upon itself the responsibility for wiping out poverty, for initiating steps which will increase production, for modernising our economy by establishing key modern industries, for enforcing social purpose in all economic activities, for reducing disparities and setting right the historic inequalities between different classes and different regions, and, in particular, for checking and preventing the growth of monopoly. Now all these are the responsibility of the State but they are also the responsibility of industry and of all those who are interested in the growth of the nation. As I said just a short while ago at another meeting in this city, that whatever steps we are taking now or whatever steps we may take are all not with a view to trying to fit into a particular policy or a particular ideology. The policy and the ideology itself are made for very practical reasons and to meet the needs of the people. It is when social disparities increase that we have social tensions, It is when there is social tension that problems of law and order and instability and insecurity arise. So, these problems of inequalities, of disparities, of meeting the rising expectations of the people, are all too very much a part of the industrial scene and unless we can deal with them we cannot even advance industrially. This task which is so enormous cannot be accomplished unless everyone, every section, does play its part.

We have the problem of educated unemployment. It has arisen partly because our industrial development and other development projects have not been able to keep pace with the rising number of educated young people. Another reason, though small, is that many of our educated young people wish to have only a particular type of job. They would like to have a white collar job. They would like to work in particular places and cities rather than villages, on the mainland rather than on remote islands or in the hills. So, we have a situation where we have areas in India which are in need of engineers, of doctors, of mechanics, and many other such specialised people and yet we have groups here who are unemployed. This is partly a question of education and also of creating a social consciousness amongst our people. We would like our young men to try more for self-employment. More and more of them should try to set up their own trades and industries and not try only for what they consider to be a secure job. The Government is certainly prepared to give all possible help in this, financial and technical, and I am sure that the nationalised banks will also view with special sympathy any proposal or scheme from young people to take up new lines of production. The industrial estate movement has helped to promote small industries. Their scale of work, however, has not been adequate. Also they have spent, in some cases, far too much on buildings, roads, parks and so on, which are essential, which are good to have, but not absolutely essential. In some of our public sector undertakings also, the use of land and township buildings have been lavish and not as economical as they could have been. These projects themselves have to bear all the initial burdens. With less ostentation, I am sure, they could have shown profits earlier.

Now if you look around in our society, you will find a hundred and one small things which are needed in homes, in factories and in the field, which could be produced here; a thing which perhaps other countries do not need—they are special needs to our country. And so through the efforts of young entrepreneurs and young industrialists we could try to manufacture these things. You could also make efforts to improve efficiency and bring more beauty into our community life. Our ancillaries and spare parts are not always of reliable quality. There is a widespread outcry about this matter and, I think, rightly so. It is our young entrepreneurs who should approach production not only from the profit viewpoint but from the viewpoint of having a pride in the product they produce.

I am glad, Mr. Chairman, that you mentioned in your speech the question of social obligations. Our self-reliant economic base can be built only by self-reliant individuals. So, it is important that young entrepreneurs should rely on themselves and not wish to run to Government to solve grievances, some of which may be real and some of

which may be exaggerated. You have also talked of industrial relations. Obviously, there is the need to create the right sort of atmosphere, feeling of involvement and, perhaps, even a share in management. It is only if we give the workers a feeling that the industry is theirs, that we can get the best from them. This is not the occasion for a detailed discussion on the capital market. We shall certainly be glad to give consideration to any constructive ideas which are offered by you or by any other group. But if your reference was to forward trading, I might say that different opinions are possible on this and there also does exist very strong opinion against it.

I welcome the formation of this organisation. I think you have tremendous possibilities before you to branch out into new fields, new untouched areas, and thereby change the industrial face of the nation. India is at the turning point in her history. And this is the time when we want young people to take the lead not merely in imitating but as I said in the beginning, in forging new paths. So the nation expects a great deal from you and I know that you will meet the challenge with courage, with perseverence and with determination. May I give my good wishes for the success of your organisation and may you always work with the interest of the country at heart because that ultimately is the interest of every group as well? I thank you for giving me this opportunity of meeting you all and giving you some of my ideas.

Preserving Wild Life

I AM DELIGHTED that the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources is holding its General Assembly in our country. May I extent a warm welcome to all the delegates on behalf of the Government and the people of India?

I have special pleasure in coming to your Conference for, if I may strike a personal note, as an only child whose childhood was invaded by the turbulence of a vast national upheaval, I found companionship and an inner peace in communion with Nature. I grew up with love for stones, no less than trees, and for animals of all kinds. I have always felt that closeness to Nature helps to make one a more integrated personality. I say this especially because of the general lack of concern or feeling for these things now-a-days, at least in my country.

Inaugural speech at the tenth General Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, New Delhi, November 24, 1969

India is a country in the throes of change. And to be a conservative is not popular. Nor am I one, for, our conditions demand that we speed the process of social and economic transformation. Yet, there are some things which I would not like to change—which I would like to conserve—our beautiful craft, the rural folk's instinctive feel for line and design and, of course, the natural beauty of our wild life, our forests and our mountains. This is not merely for one's aesthetic sense, though that is important enough, but also for our future well-being.

As one looks around at the Universe, one marvels at the order and the balance. How beautifully everything fits in. How remarkably well everything is organised.

All creatures must struggle against Nature to survive, and each species has equipped itself in some special way for self-preservation. Man developed his brain and today has transcended the limits of sound and space. He is the professor of undreamt of knowledge and power. In the struggle for survival, he has gained the upper hand. One should have thought that, with this knowledge at his command, man would have learnt to live at peace with himself and with Nature. Yet, no matter where one goes, one sees the needless and wasteful destruction of plant and animal life for the sake of a moment's pleasure or a temporary gain, with no heed to the balance of Nature or the disturbance of its serenity. It is a sad commentary on our attitude towards Nature that we still talk of "exploiting" its resources. This is an unpleasant word, for it implies taking an unjust advantage. Instead, we should think of the "development" of resources, of using resources with care. We all work for progress, but progress has its ugly side also. The steady growth of population and the economic needs which it imposes, have gradually encroached upon forest resources. Mankind looks at animals, at flora and fauna for what it can get out of them.

In the last century, and especially during the last three or four decades, India has been denuded of her forest wealth. The wanton felling of trees has changed the landscape, affecting climate. Deforestation is creating a major problem of soil erosion. A massive campaign is necessary now to educate our people in the first principles of natural conservation. We must teach them, from their early school days, to become planters and protectors of trees and to care for animals.

When forests are cut down, wild life is naturally threatened. Some beautiful and interesting species have become extinct. At the rate at which secret poaching and shooting are taking place, the rhinoceros, the famous Bengal tiger, and even the elephant might disappear unless we take vigilant and drastic steps to preserve them. Fortunately, we have an enlightened forest service but its strength is not adequate to the size of our country. Thanks to pioneers, who were impelled by a missionary zeal, we have set up several national parks and wild life sanctuaries. We have a Wild Life Board, which has placed a ban on

the export of the skins of tigers and leopards. We do need foreign exchange, but not at the cost of the life and liberty of some of the most beautiful inhabitants of this continent.

As a country advances and becomes industrialised, we find water and air are polluted and mineral resources ravaged. Rachael Carson has drawn our attention to the long-term ill-effects which thoughtless and indiscriminate use, even of such useful articles as fertilisers and pesticides, can cause. Through her study and her writings, she has done much to create an awareness of these dangers. We in the developing countries can and should avoid such excesses by taking advantage of new concepts of the economic use of resources and of methods of recovery of minerals. Unfortunately we also get caught up in the race against time. It seems so much easier to emulate others, especially when they are more advanced, than to pause and think of one's own long-range interest.

Science is enabling us to find new sources for the fulfilment of our needs. But the world's population and its wants are growing so fast that we must evolve a more rational system of use and conservation of natural resources everywhere. In a scramble for exports, we in India cannot expose our iron ore and coal reserves to ruin. Nor should countries who import these minerals from us want us to exhaust our reserves. There should be far greater international research and co-operative action on the conservation of the world's mineral resources. We should learn to base our policies now on a long-term vision rather than on considerations of immediate economic gain. The natural resources of the world are truly international in character. They are the common trust of mankind.

Your Union is endeavouring to arouse the conscience of governments in regard to their responsibility to conserve the world's resources. International scientific and technological co-operation has already done much to develop human resources. It has an equally important part to play in the conservation of natural resources. All countries should encourage the interflow of scientific information and the exchange of experts, instructors and scholars in order to promote knowledge and techniques of conservation. Some day we might work towards the adoption of a universal declaration on the principles underlying the rational use and protection of natural resources. In the meantime, we must endeavour to educate governments and peoples.

There must be specialised study in depth of each aspect, which, at the same time, must be fitted in relation to other factors. For all these problems are inter-related and must be seen in perspective. These matters are of concern to the lives of all citizens. Hence, it is not enough for governments to legislate for them and other agencies to look after this work. In order that the knowledge of scientists could become functional and purposeful in the life of the country, it should seep down

to the people. From the earliest years, a child should be taught to observe and know his surroundings and to have concern for Nature. All great religious leaders have preached respect for life.

In India, the Buddha did say, and later Emperor Ashoka whose rock edicts and pillars are strewn all over the country, urging us to have love and friendship for all creatures. I have spoken of the balance which Nature maintains. I should like to share a story with you. Before our Independence the British author Edward Thompson, who saw Mahatma Gandhi said that it was a great pity your wild life was diminishing in your forests. Mahatma Gandhi replied, "That is true, but it is increasing in our cities". This seems to be the situation in most countries.

I hope that your presence here will encourage our conservationists who are fighting an uphill battle.

Importance of Land Reforms

WE HAVE GATHERED here to discuss a question which is of crucial importance to our future. No single programme more intimately affects so many millions of our people than land reform. No other measure is remotely comparable in its power to transform their lives, to release their latent energies and to give them not only economic betterment but hope in their future and their children's future, confidence in themselves as human beings and, equally important, faith in our democratic processes.

The sincerity and speed with which we implement land reforms will, of course, materially influence the overall rate of our economic growth. However, I feel that much more than this is at stake. What is on test is nothing less than the justice of our political system and its ability to bring about far-reaching social transformation in a humane and peaceful manner.

Recent technological developments and the spread of the high-yielding varieties programme have accentuated inequalities of income in the countryside and has produced even greater disparity between landowners and tenants. It would be a complete misreading of the situation to think that the productive gains of the new technology have rendered land reforms less urgent.

In my letter to the Chief Ministers to which Shri Jagjivan Ram referred I mentioned how small cultivators and dry farmers, tenants and

Inaugural address at the Chief Ministers' Conference on Land Reforms, New Delhi, November 28, 1969

landless labourers have been left behind. Most of these problems have already been mentioned but, I think, I will repeat some of them.

The position of the unproductive tenants and share-croppers has been aggravated by the rise in rents and the large-scale resumption of land by owners, lured by the high profits of the new agriculture. In the long run, the very foundations of agricultural development will be undermined if millions of tenants and share-croppers are denied security of tenure in the land they cultivate. In spite of legal protection, it is well known that cultivators belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been dispossessed of their land by money-lenders and others. Tenants have been downgraded to the status of share-croppers and share-croppers reduced to the position of landless labourers. All this has produced a growing current of discontent in the countryside which has occasionally erupted into violence. These are dangerous portents.

I know that all of you are as deeply concerned about these developments as we are at the Centre. But the conclusion which we must draw from them is that land reforms have become more urgent than ever before and that an active progressive land policy must be a vital part of our socio-economic development policy. I do not wish to belittle the importance of what has been achieved so far such as the abolition of the intermediaries. However, we must honestly face the fact that the pace of agrarian reforms has been disappointingly slow and has not fulfilled the expectations of our people. Many of our laws are themselves defective. For example, the ceilings on land in States are hedged in with so many relaxations and qualifications that they have invited evasions. Others have so many lacunae that they have resulted in prolonged litigations. The machinery for their enforcement has been far from adequate. The illiteracy and ignorance of most tenants and the dual role of many owners of being both landlords and money-lenders has made it difficult for tenants to insist on their rights. In the assessment of impartial observers, the enforcement machinery itself has tended to be biased in favour of the landlords. No programme of land reforms can be successful if it does not take these facts into account and devise measures by which they can be overcome. What needs to be done is fairly well-known. The crucial question is how to do it. All of you have given and are giving thought to this matter. Shri Jagjivan Ram has enumerated the points briefly. They are that land records in each State should be complete and up-to-date in every respect, with the proper records of the rights of the tenants. This I feel should be given the first priority because in its absence no further reform is possible and even the credit needs of cultivating tenants cannot be met.

Then there is the question of security of tenure which is linked with the regulation of rents. Land ceilings which have been already enacted should be enforced more honestly. Restrictions should be placed on the

alienation of land belonging to the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Holdings should be consolidated within a specified period of time.

But the real problem, as I mentioned earlier, is not the definition of objectives but their achievement. All the evidence at our disposal suggests that tenants and small cultivators are subjected to almost unbearable pressures during the implementation of land reforms. It has been the invariable experience that preparation of the records of rights leads to a wave of resumption.

A study on the Hyderabad Act, 1951, revealed that up to 1958, no less than two-thirds of the protected tenants had been evicted legally or illegally and that only 12 per cent had managed to fulfil the intent of the law by becoming owner-cultivators. I am told that in Maharashtra, during the five years from 1948 to 1953, the ratio of protected tenants to the total number of tenants declined from about 60 per cent to 40 per cent. It was found that 85 per cent of the area resumed by the owners had been voluntarity surrendered by tenants, which, I presume, is only a euphemism for eviction under pressure.

Litigation is another great obstacle in which land reforms have tended to get bogged down. Certain constitutional amendments which Shri Jagjivan Ram has mentioned were carried through to reduce litigation. But the problem is still very much with us. I wonder whether we could avoid burdening our overworked civil courts by setting up a separate judicial machinery with exclusive jurisdiction to hear and decide cases arising out of the land reform laws. We should try and aim at quick disposal of cases without violating the principles of equity and natural justice. Even with the simplification of the existing laws and the estblishment of a separate judicial machinery, there will still be a great deal of litigation. Tenants and share-croppers are ill-equipped, both financially and otherwise to cope with it. We must, therefore, find some way of helping them. The provision of free legal aid to tenants and share-croppers would be one method of doing so, which I should like to recommend to you. I should also like you to consider whether the normal revenue agency by itself is adequate for land reforms implementation. Can we think of some methods which could prevent landlords from exploiting the illiteracy, ignorance and heterogeneous character of tenants and share-croppers ? How can we associate the prospective beneficiaries in the actual implementation of reforms ? Dr. Gadgil has said something about it. But I am told in Ceylon all tenancy legislation was placed in the hands of local committees elected by the peasants for this specific purpose in which peasant representation was given weightage. The new technology, when supported by necessary inputs, has made even small holdings economic. Indeed, it has been found that optimum production is more frequently achieved in small and medium holdings rather than in very large ones. It should, therefore,

be our endeavour to guarantee a fair share of fertilisers, seeds, irrigation facilities, etc., to small farmers and tenants.

I hope it will be possible for the nationalised banks to fill to the fullest possible extent the gaps left by the co-operative banks. Any programme of land reforms requires a vast amount of detailed and complex administrative work. By its very nature, it can only proceed step by step, beginning with the preparation of up-to-date and complete land records and cadastral surveys.

I earnestly hope that our well-to-do farmers and landlords will be co-operative in this task and agree to implement the existing laws in the spirit in which they have been framed. It is not our intention to force a very radical re-distribution of land. Our aim is more modest. We wish to ensure that tenants, share-croppers and landless labourers are not driven to the wall and are allowed their fair share of rising agricultural incomes on a secure and permanent basis rather than at the whims of individual landlords. I feel that it is in the enlightened self-interest of the landlords themselves to support rather than to frustrate this policy. The prosperity of a small minority cannot survive when the majority are deprived and frustrated. Envy and hunger breed their own compulsions. That way lies agrarian strife and suicide for the beneficiaries of today.

Although the subject of land reforms is constitutionally a State subject, it is of national importance, because it is central to the problem of social and economic development. I have no doubt that the States and the Centre will act jointly in a spirit of imaginative understanding and common dedication.

I am very glad that Shri Jagjivan Ram has called you here for this meeting and I hope that as a result of your deliberations it will be possible for each State to work out within the next few weeks an integrated plan of land reform programmes to be undertaken by it during the Fourth Plan period which would also embrace legislative, administrative, financial and man-power requirements. Let us have a commitment not only to broad objectives but to meeting them by a certain definite date. The cracks which have appeared in the agrarian structure cannot be papered over. We must act now when there is still time and hope. We dare not fail because the consequence of failure will be beyond our control.

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TEN MONTHS HAVE passed since we last met to discuss the crucial question of land reforms. During this period, we have had unmistakable evidence, and clear warning, of the awakening and impatience in the

Inaugural address at the Chief Ministers' Conference on Land Reforms and Food Policy, New Delhi, September 26, 1970

countryside. The movement for the forcible occupation of land is a portent. The future is already casting its shadow on the present. I have no hesitation in repeating what I have said before that force and violence are totally incompatible with the democratic spirit and the concept of orderly social transformation which we have adopted. However, mere condemnation does not take us far. Much as we may deplore this phenomenon, we cannot ignore it. Political parties may organise, even exploit, rural discontent but they do not create it. The time has now come to face the facts, harsh though they may be, in a spirit of introspection and realism.

The people of this country have entrusted their destiny in our hands. We owe it to them to think deeply and honestly over recent developments. Why is social discontent in the countryside on the increase? Why is it erupting into violence with great frequency? The answer to these questions is obvious but it bears repetition. The land reform measures implemented have failed to match the legitimate expectations which were first fostered amongst millions of cultivators during the national movement. We have yet to create an equitable tenurial system for the village poor. We have yet to devise a system for the distribution of credit and inputs which is not biased in favour of the affluent. In short, we have yet to create institutional conditions which would enable small farmers, tenants, and landless labourers to share in the agricultural New Deal.

These are not matters of any textbook socialism or theoretical egalitarianism. They are inescapable compulsions of the nation's political and economic life which no Government, whatever its complexion, can ignore, much less thwart. Land reform is the most crucial test which our political system must pass in order to survive. It is also an essential pre-requisite for self-sufficiency in foodgrains. In 1967, we resolved to stop all concessional food imports by the end of 1971. I am sure that you would all like this commitment to be honoured. We can do so only with your co-operation and sustained effort to increase agricultural production. The pace of land reform must, therefore, be quickened, and favourable tenurial conditions created to enable more and more farmers to invest in the inputs of the new technology. If this is not done, there is real danger that agricultural production, after its recent spurt, will level off at a plateau, undoubtedly higher than before, but inadequate for our growing needs.

I have highlighted the reasons why land reform has become a problem of national importance and national urgency. It is hardly necessary for me to enumerate the specific steps which need to be taken I have mentioned them in my letters to the Chief Ministers and have repeated them during our Conference last year. The Food Minister has also been writing to you from time to time. These proposals were considered during last year's Conference, and certain decisions were

taken. However, on going through the agenda papers, it seems that these decisions have not been implemented with the earnestness and speed which the situation demands. Most of the States have not even set up high-level committees to review the progress and problems of land reforms. Strict enforcement of the existing ceiling laws, and the distribution of surplus land to eligible categories, have shown only a slight improvement in spite of their obvious urgency. Legislation to bar the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts has still to be enacted by most States. Landlords continue to enjoy unfettered rights of resumption in many parts of the country. Most States have not yet come to a conclusion about the all-important question of revising the existing ceilings, which is a major item on the agenda. I do not know what progress has been made in preparing up-to-date records of rights and cadastral surveys without which there can be no meaningful land reforms.

I mention these matters, not at all in a spirit of fault-finding, but because they raise questions of great consequence for the country as a whole. Can we afford this leisurely pace? Does it match the people's demands? Will it contain social discontent? I wish I could have answered these questions in the affirmative. Statesmanship lies not only in heeding danger signals, but heeding them in time; not only in agreeing to act, but acting in time. Our commitment to certain well-defined objectives of reform must be accompanied by an equally clear commitment to fulfilling them by a certain date. The necessary resources in money and manpower must be deployed for this purpose. Investment in land reform is investment in economic growth and social stability.

The question of ceilings has now come to the fore. In a country of our size, it is astonishing that the ceiling legislation in all States has cumulatively yielded a surplus of only 2.36 million acres so far. Apart from the wide-spread evasion which this figure reveals, the ceilings themselves are now open to question. They were fixed at a time when productivity and prices were low. The advent of the new technology and high support prices, together with the continuing immunity of agricultural income from taxation, have materially altered the situation. Earlier fears that lower ceilings would adversely affect productivity have been proved unfounded. Past experience of partitions within the family to circumvent the ceiling laws suggests that the revised ceilings should be fixed in terms of family rather than individual units.

I am convinced that land reform legislation cannot be implemented without the active participation of potential beneficiaries at the village level. Had this been done, many malpractices could have been avoided. The lucrative rewards of the new agriculture, accompanied by the subtle and growing shift to share-cropping as a method of dodging land reform, now makes it all the more necessary to devise special measures and institutions to protect the rural poor. The evil of oral leases and informal tenancies cannot be curbed and accuracy in records of rights

ensured unless we set up village committees containing representatives of landlords, tenants and labourers to work in close collaboration with official land reform agencies.

There is nothing radical or revolutionary in land reform. I am sure those present know about what has happened in Mexico. Modern Japan's industrial progress and stability is based on land reforms. The land reforms in Iran were initiated by the Shahanshah himself and created the conditions for Iran's further progress. Land reforms were essential ingredients of growth in modern industrial Europe. Only the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Czarist Empire thwarted land reforms And they both collapsed.

At this Conference you will also consider some important issues relating to food policy. We should not and cannot afford to slacken our efforts at procurement of foodgrains. We must build up an adequate buffer-stock quickly if we are to adhere to our objective of doing without concessional food imports. The increase in rice production has not been as significant as in the case of wheat. We should, therefore, be vigilant particularly in regard to rice. I should like to appeal to the rice producing States, and especially the surplus States, to redouble their efforts for the procurement of rice during the coming season.

The Conference will probably take up the question of zonal restrictions and of giving full support to the Food Corporation in its efforts at effective procurement. I would like to urge upon all the Chief Ministers and other peoples—responsible people present here—that they must view the problems of India as a whole. And I am sure that in so doing, their States will not suffer, but will share in the prosperity and the forward movement of the country as a whole.

The Challenge of the Seventies

IT IS IMAGINATIVE of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry to celebrate its golden jubilee by casting a forward look at the coming decade.

Like good government, good business management has to think at two levels : the present and the foreseeable future. Such thinking enables them to understand the future and to mould it.

Message to the golden jubilee conference of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, December 8, 1969

Development is a process by which more and more of a nation's material and human resources become active and creative. Development stimulates expectations, spurs demand, and transforms the climate in which the economy functions. As we approach a stage of self-sufficiency in agriculture, we have to think of a new pattern of trade and distribution which does not rest upon scarcities. In industry too, the managers must attune themselves to the mechanics of a mass market and to concepts of large turnovers and small margins rather than limited turnovers and large margins.

The seventies will pose a great challenge. To the Government the challenge is one of fulfilling the hopes generated by Independence, the hope of a dynamic and enduring political system in which the people find their wants, in which disparities are lessened, and in which change takes place in a peaceful manner and with the widest possible consent. To leaders of industry and business, the challenge is one of regaining the people's trust and respect. A voluntary movement by industry and trade to improve quality, particularly in goods of everyday use, will help to change the people's general distrust of the business community.

People's Impatience

I DO NOT know what I expected when I accepted this invitation, but it was certainly not the kind of uneducated broadside which I have received. You have talked about democracy and freedom but you have shown that you have been victims of certain propaganda put out recently. You have made no effort to find out the broad streams flowing in the country; the opinion in the country. You talked of exhaustion of patience. I ask you : Whose patience and of how many people in the country ? What about the patience of the millions of people who have not got a fair deal? You have talked about Gujarat being impatient. You have talked about fairness to all sections of the people. I would like you to go out with me here in the city of Ahmedabad and ask the people : Do they agree with this conclusion of yours? Do they think that they have had the justice that you have had ? You have talked about pragmatism. What does the word mean, may I ask you ? It means being practical. What does being practical mean ? It means facing the realities of any existing situation. What is the situation in India today ? Is it a situation where a few millowners can get away with what they have been doing ?

Address to the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, Ahmedabad, January 24, 1970

You have talked of the efficiency of the Central Government and have asked for help in modernising your mills. Who is responsible for the mills becoming run down, with all the profits made? Why have these mills not been modernised until now? I would like to know. Is the sugar industry, which is in the private sector, an efficiently managed industry? What is happening to it all over the country?

I may not be a financial wizard. In fact I know very little about finance. But I do have enough intelligence to know, I do have the eyes to see what is happening in my country. I do have the ears to hear the voices of my people. And this is what I ask of you today if you want to live in peace and order.

Why do we have disturbances? It is not because of too few policemen. You have disturbances when there is obvious inequality in society; you have disturbances when people feel that they are not getting a fair deal. It is not only in India that there is the law and order problem. I ask you to look at the United States of America. I ask you to look at many of the advanced countries where there is no shortage of money, no shortage of employment, no shortage of worldly goods. I can assure you that a woman can walk in far greater safety in the streets of Calcutta or Delhi than they can in many of the cities of those countries.

What is the help given to Gujarat? Have you taken the trouble to look at the figures? I have not brought all the documents here, but I could tell you that Gujarat has received more help than many a State in India. You have mentioned one or two specific projects. Well, each project will be considered on its merit and the merit is not whether a particular firm or a particular house gets it; the merit is whether it helps the country to stand on its feet.

We do need fertilisers. We are doing everything possible to get fertilisers but we cannot afford to get fertilisers at the cost of selling out to foreign concerns. And while I am here, I am not going to allow it, no matter what the pressure is. If you want to shout, believe me, you cannot out-shout me. I have far more experience in this than you have. Each matter will be decided when it comes up. As far as the Tata project is concerned, the scheme has not come before the Government. If and when it comes it will be given due consideration as all such schemes are. We have rushed through many things in the past and we are suffering for them today.

Take the whole question of oil. If you like I can refer you gentlemen to many books written on this subject, not by Indians, not by high idealistic people, but people who have been dealing with oil. What has happened in Biafra? What has happened in other places? It is no joke to hand over your country to a foreign oil concern. Every step has to be watched and, may be, if we lose a few years, it is certainly better than losing our independence. Independence is not merely

having our own Government. Independence means that we make our own decisions. They may be wrong decisions, but they must be our decisions, Indian decisions.

We are also aware of the problems of the textile industry. We have recognised the need for financial support for purposes of modernisation. A working group on the textile industry was appointed by the Planning Commission and it went into its problems. In principle, it was decided that funds should be made available from financing agencies. We are now entering into a round of discussions with the financial institutions in order to see how their lending terms can be liberalised for these purposes.

You have also spoken about what happened in Bangalore and some of the decisions which we have taken in Bombay. You have forgotten that those decisions were in fact taken by the Congress very soon after the General Election of 1967. They were discussed and unanimously agreed upon by the Working Committee and subsequently by the A.I.C.C. All we did in Bangalore was to give a new broad direction. I have no doubt that this country cannot go ahead unless it goes along that broad direction. I do not think that pragmatism can be divorced from idealism. All countries must base their progress on some kind of principle. It is not a question of merely what is happening in India but of winds of change which have been blowing all over the world.

Much has been said here about 'discipline' and 'lack of patience'. You should, I think, have proper understanding of these words before you use them. Perhaps you would call it discipline when there was forced labour in England which was so ill-treated, or little children went down the mines and lost their eyesight. When they revolted, perhaps you would call it indiscipline. I would not say so. I would say it was a fight for their rights and that was why it succeeded all over the world. In no country in the world, however capitalistic or conservative it is, can this meaning hold good today, and it is not holding good. You cannot keep down the Negroes in America, no matter how indisciplined you call them. You cannot keep down the students in America, no matter how indisciplined you call them. This is how the world is changing. Either you change with it or the world passes you by. You cannot prevent a change. Perhaps you all have heard the story of King Canute. King Canute was once told that he could stop the waves of the sea and so he tried to do it. But he could not.

The world is on the move. So is India today. In India it is not a new movement. This movement started with Mahatma Gandhi. I hope you know what Mahatma Gandhi has said about business. His thinking on the subject, I can tell you, was far more extreme than anything I have in view. What he said was that when you take over

a thing, you should not pay any compensation whatsoever. He said that these assets were the people's property and the business people, the industrialists, were only the trustees of the people's property. If the people any time should feel the need for taking them over, no compensation need be paid. Any such compensation, Gandhiji said, would be a sin. These are his words and not my words.

Obviously, we are not following that path. We are, in fact, trying to give, what I personally consider, even unreasonable compensation, not unreasonable because it is too little, but because it is too much sometimes. We have many times taken over industries, put them on their feet and handed them back to industrialists. In no country of the world has this ever happened.

How has Indian business prospered after Independence? It is, I think, very largely with the help we have given to Indian business. Today, you are against controls. But you have derived the maximum benefit from these controls because you have been able to have a monopoly. It is for that reason that we are suffering. Why else do you think the people have turned against you? It is because they think that we have helped you in a manner which has been prejudicial to the interest of the vast majority.

You have talked about economic growth. Now in a country with poverty on the scale that we have in India, can you have economic growth without social justice? Can economic growth at all survive in such conditions? These are the questions which you have to ask yourself.

I am not going into the details of the help given to Gujarat. Within two or three days, I am willing to send all the details to both these associations and they can let you have them. But if you want to make this kind of charge about the Centre being unfair to Gujarat, I am afraid it is not going to help you at all, because one cannot take you seriously if you are going to make remarks which have no basis whatsoever. To some extent, the Centre has been unfair to every State. If you sit down with the U.P. Government, they will show one hundred, if not one thousand, cases where we have been less fair to U.P. than to Gujarat.

We do not want to have controls for the sake of controls. Controls will come only where we feel that something is being misused and that it is harming the people. I do not believe, like the Communists or like the Jan Sangh or like the Swatantra party, that some people are people and other people are not. The Swatantra party thinks that only business people and other such people are the people and the poor are not. The Communist party thinks the opposite, that only some poor people are the people and the other sections are not. I think all these are the people of India and if we want to have peaceful advance and progress we must watch the interests of all these people.

But those who have had it much better than others have to sacrifice now. We are not asking them to sacrifice everything as has been done in many countries. We are just asking you to sacrifice some of your profit. We are not taking away what you own. If you thing that even this is too much, then only the people can judge. It would be for them to decide whether this sort of thing should be tolerated with patience. We have seen in many parts of India that they are not doing so.

You have mentioned Dhuvaran. Now, merely to do a favour to Gujarat I went against the established policy and agreed to import of boilers, because your State Government said that if they were to get the boilers, their work would go faster. It was against the wishes of the Cabinet, and against my own better judgment. But because Gujarat said, "You are stopping our things," I said, "All right, let us import them, even though it may harm us in some ways." What has happened? They did not use the imported boilers. Had we decided to have our own, they would have been ready in good time.

I am sorry to say that neither of these documents which you have given me is well-informed and true to the state of affairs, either in our country or in our industry. I agree that there is a real need for efficiency in the public sector. There is also a real need to expedite decisions at the Centre. But I must tell you that the way you have tried to distort facts and the way you choose to have constant confrontation with the Central Government is neither going to create better relations nor expedite decisions.

You have said slogans do not work. May I ask who uses the most slogans ? It is business which does so. It is advertising which does so. Advertising is trying to create an acquisitive society in the country which does not need such a society, to create needs and demands for goods which we can well do without, just because this is happening in other countries outside and because it brings greater profits here.

So it is not practical to say that if business makes greater profits today that is the practical way of looking at things. There is only one practical way of looking at things and that is how to get more and more of the Indian people to co-operate in the task of building India. And they can do that only if they have a feeling that they are being shown fairplay and justice.

Mr. Chairman, if I have said any harsh words, I am sorry, because I did not mean to, although I must say, both of your addresses were extremely provocative. But I would only say that I am not interested in blaming others. I have had in these four years to manage and to work with people of very different ideologies and opinions. At every stage, people have thought that the unity of India would not keep, democracy in India would not keep, yet we have survived all these crises. We have survived a drought which nobody in the world thought we could survive. All these things we have done and just

because of that we have some turbulence. It is not surprising. It is more surprising that, in spite of these inequalities, in spite of the grave injustice to the poor people, they are still patient, that they still have hopes and that they have still trust in us. This is what is surprising today. And if we want to maintain this faith and this hope, it is necessary that we go ahead with the programmes which convince them and will bring a change. They know that change does not come about by magic and unless we can show some of the change, they will not be with us.

Importance of the Public Sector

QUESTION : Recent developments in the Congress party and the country have created an impression that you are likely to give a new direction to economic policies. It is against this background that I would like to raise a few questions with regard to the role and effectiveness of the public sector in our economic development. Since the new direction of economic policies is expected to be socialist in character, could I begin with the run-of-the-mill question and ask whether socialism to you is compatible with sizable private ownership of industrial capital?

THE PRIME MINISTER : In a way this is an easy question to answer and in a way very difficult one because we get into the whole question of what socialism is. In the circumstances here in India it would be difficult to change entirely and suddenly what we have been committed to. We have been committed to the concept of a mixed economy. Within that there is considerable room for movement.

As far as I am concerned, and I think my party is concerned, we believe we should remain centrists but left of centre, if I may put it that way. (Personally I do not feel that the words left or right have much meaning. But they seem to make things clearer to people sometimes. That is why I am using them).

The trouble is not that the policy has failed but it has simply not been implemented in the manner it should have been. I am not blaming anybody at all because sometimes you are a victim of circumstances; the whole system we have here and the circumstances of the country, and events which took place have pushed us along one way or the other. But there is no doubt about the direction. And I know in which direction my father wanted to go; I know he felt that we were not

Interview with *The Citizen*, New Delhi, January 24, 1970

entirely going there. But, as I said, the force of circumstances cannot be ignored.

For the realisation of our objectives, a sizable public sector is a necessity. The mixed economy which we have envisaged gives a prominent position to the public sector. And I think mixed economy is a viable concept and it can be the main means of attaining a socialistic society.

QUESTION : Do you envisage a more prominent place for the public sector in the total economy than it has had so far ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, today it has a prominent position in name but not in fact. Therefore, the first requirement is that it should have it in fact also, in the manner in which it functions.

QUESTION : Could you outline what, at our present stage of development, are the most suitable areas for public sector investment and what the proper inter-relationship between the private and the public sector should be ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously, since our resources are limited, the most suitable areas for public sector investment are those where the social returns are the highest.

QUESTION : There are some people who say that the public sector should spill over into the consumer goods industry. This is not envisaged, so far as I remember, in the Industrial Policy Resolution.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I should not like to say anything very categorical on that because decisions depend on particular situations. Today there is a tremendous pressure upon us to take over the sugar industry in U.P. The pressure is not from people who believe in nationalisation of industry as such but because a specific situation has arisen with regard to sugar and they think that they cannot be saved unless the Government takes it over. So that is a different type of thing. If the private sector functions as it should function, realising its own limitations, realising the public compulsions, then I personally do not wish to diminish it. But there are areas in which the private sector does not want to move in, or if it wants to, it does not have the resources or the capacity.

Then there is a divergence between private and social returns. This is where the conflict comes in sometimes. The public sector has also to look after those goods and services which, if left to the free market, would not be supplied for lack of current demand or for other such reasons.

QUESTION : There were some suggestions in the past, for example, immediately after the 1965 Bangalore session of the A.I.C.C., that the

public sector should move into some important consumer goods industries. Will that intention now go into action?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no such proposal at the moment.

QUESTION : There are certain consumer goods which have a mass demand as, for example, certain kinds of textiles. The British Government made our cotton textile industry manufacture what was called "standard" cloth in order to economize on machines and materials.

THE PRIME MINISTER : That comes into what I call social returns in a way. If something is greatly needed by people at a given moment and for some reason the industry does not want to give it or cannot give it, then the question has to be examined.

QUESTION : Let us move over to the question of the effectiveness of the public sector because the public sector has been under a great deal of criticism in this country and I want to take up one or two points here.

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is one other point about this question of the public sector moving into consumer goods field. There are things which, if they were standardised, might help the overall economy, apart from offering other social returns. Even cloth in a way : instead of having a number of varieties of cloth, we might say that considering the country's economy we should save some resources or utilize the resources better by producing fewer varieties.

QUESTION : This would be a question for the policy-making authority deciding to put hedges on some private production and saying that they should only go in for these lines of production, rather than the public sector going into that production itself.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I should not like to say anything very specific on that. It would take much more study to see what one should take up and for what reasons. But the broad policy would be that unless there were compelling reasons such as the ones I have mentioned, one need not take up such things merely for the sake of taking them up. The reason why most people talk of the public sector taking up consumer goods is on account of this outcry about the public sector not making profits. Therefore, they say "let us go into items which would yield profits."

QUESTION : May I say that if there is a great deal of profit, as in the automobile industry which is run badly, then this might be something where the State could go in. One of the points which has been made about the public sector in assessing the reasons for its not putting up

a very good performance is that sometimes under political pressures they are located at wrong places, for example the first Assam Oil Refinery.

THE PRIME MINISTER : But are private industries not subject to the same pressures in a democracy ? Some inducements are offered, and then for some not very good reasons they say that no other site is better. To some extent, in a democratic set-up you cannot avoid pressures of one kind or another. The Government may be pressurised more by public opinion while the private sector may be persuaded by the Government or some other group. But it is pressure, whether it is of one kind or the other. This can be avoided if the decision-making is left, as we tried to do, to groups of experts.

QUESTION : One of the difficulties has been that even the expert groups have been vulnerable to the pressures which are generated against them.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that expert groups have been very much pressurised in this way. What happens is that if they say that two or three places are equally suitable then tremendous pressures are exerted in choosing between them and questions are asked why we chose this rather than that. The other point, of course, is that we are at a stage of development—I do not think we are going to stay there permanently—where the gap between the expectations and the resources for meeting them is at the widest. Political awareness is also coming up very sharply. So it is a question of educating the public. If they can be made to understand what the whole process of development is and that it is not a question of prestige—sometimes it does become a question of mere prestige; it is not a question of whether an oil refinery in Assam, for example, gives more employment there—if this kind of educational work could be undertaken simultaneously, I think it would help in softening the pressure to some extent.

QUESTION : If some institutional arrangements could be made so that these pressures are taken off ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Such as ?

QUESTION : For instance, a suggestion has been made that an autonomous development banking institution which will be given the funds for public sector investment could be set up and entrusted with the task of such decision-making. Such a bank could scrutinize the profitability and efficiency of candidate projects for the public sector before agreeing to finance them.

THE PRIME MINISTER : That is really the point. Sometimes expert groups take a very expert and narrow view whereas you have to take steps to develop States like Assam and Rajasthan which are very backward. And even though they may not be the best places for locating a particular industry, you have to make that much allowance—not from the prestige point of view but from the point of view of employment and development of the area. Otherwise development goes on in the more developed areas because they offer more facilities and it is a little cheaper and so on.

QUESTION : Public sector ownership of industrial capital does not by itself reveal the nature of the intended social control over industrial behaviour. For instance, public sector enterprises can have a mandate to maximise profits with autonomy in their pricing and investment policies, as is the case with Italian public sector enterprises.

If public enterprises are profit maximisers with both pricing and investment autonomy, they differ from the private sector enterprises only in the sense that the profits accrue to the public rather than private owners. Does this satisfy your concept of social control of industries or do you think that pricing as well as investment control of public enterprises is necessary? If so, what are the criteria for control? What is your reaction to that? This I understand is what is done by the Italian public sector enterprises. Our HMT has also.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, to some extent... Obviously we would like the public sector to make profits. It is necessary also. But it should not do so by creating a contrived scarcity, as sometimes happens in the private sector. But I certainly think that to the extent possible the public sector should have autonomy in deciding where investment should go, its pricing policy, etc.

The problem is not merely of pricing and so on but also with regard to proper managerial talent, and the whole thing is much more complicated than one sees at first glance. But there is no doubt that if there were a sort of pride of performance and of achievement it would certainly improve the situation, though there must be fully capable people who can do that.

QUESTION : One of the difficulties is that in the public debate one of the criteria employed, perhaps for political reasons, is that losses are being incurred, and it is deduced from that that the management must be inefficient. But if this were not the criterion, the estimate of the management might also be different.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, there are pros and cons of both. The people who are in charge certainly want more autonomy, and we are

also trying to give them more autonomy in various spheres. But other problems do also arise.

QUESTION : The public sector has expanded so enormously that there is a natural expectation that it should also make some profits which it could plough back into investment.

THE PRIME MINISTER : You are quite right there.

QUESTION : Public sector enterprises may, and frequently have to, compete with those of the private sector. Should government price regulation or investment licensing imposed on the private sector be used to assist a public sector enterprise in its competitive effort?

Would you give your views on the norms which should control competition between private and public enterprises? What are the grounds, other than cost efficiency or willingness to provide service where private capital is unable or unwilling to perform a needed function, for competition between public and private enterprises?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You could certainly have norms but you must take into account also the social profits and not only the other profits.

QUESTION : In the particular case we are considering, social interest only requires that there should be movement of goods and persons, whether by the railways or the roads.

THE PRIME MINISTER : But then how are we interfering with them?

QUESTION : In the name of rail-road coordination for example, the railways take a pre-emptive position that we have made investments and there must be no road competition there. Whereas the railways may have an advantage in long haulage, road transport has it in the short.

THE PRIME MINISTER : But earlier there were no roads, or at least very few roads.

QUESTION : The relevance of this question will grow as the public sector and the private sector both grow and there may be overlaps between them.

THE PRIME MINISTER : The competition between rail and road exists in many countries. For example in the U.S.A., because so many more people take to the road, they have neglected the railways. Now here in India can we afford to neglect the railways? They perform a much greater public service than in almost any other country because bigger mobility is there. A large service like this also has to look after its interests. If we decide that we do not bother about them, it is the

public that suffers. That is where the question of public service comes in, not in a limited way but when you take the overall picture. But as you started off by referring to subsidy, I would personally like this situation of giving subsidies to change as far as possible.

QUESTION : The question is really whether the public sector undertakings should be expected to live upon their own earnings or....

THE PRIME MINISTER : As far as possible they should certainly live upon their own earnings. But earnings cannot be the most important thing. Otherwise whole areas of production would be neglected. Many of the things which have been produced in the public sector are essential to the building of an infra-structure which will then provide opportunities even to the private sector.

QUESTION : Would it be correct to say that the public sector in some instances has lived more upon subsidies than the requirements of social returns may justify? The question of cutting down subsidies would arise only if they are not warranted by the particular social return.

THE PRIME MINISTER : This leads us into a much bigger question because it is not only the public sector which has been getting subsidies. We are giving incentives practically to every area of private enterprise. Equally that should stop too. So, all this is part of a much bigger question. You simply cannot separate one area from the overall situation.

QUESTION : A question of principle is involved. If concealed subsidies or open ones are involved, the question arises whether they should be withdrawn and I am very glad to hear so.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I would agree provided it does not harm the overall position of production, etc. It is often said we have spent more on projects than was necessary. There may be people who will ask "Why was a guest house built?" But in today's world visitors do come and we have to put them up properly. When people come who are going to help you, you have to give them certain minimum standard. So none of these things can be really separated. Part of the trouble is also due to accounting, because other people do not put these things into their costs.

QUESTION : But there is also the feeling that a great deal of this showy investment will make public enterprises non-competitive in national and world markets.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I dislike frills anywhere, whether in clothes or anywhere else. I am always for the simple line. But at a stage when we started all this, we had to show something also. You take

the *Moscow Metro* (underground rail network) for instance. It was an absolutely unnecessary frill, but there is no doubt that it made a difference to the people.

QUESTION : Gave them a sense of national pride....

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes..... so things have to be balanced. But I do not say that we should keep on with the frills or keep on with this expenditure.

QUESTION : I agree with you that the *Moscow Metro* was a facility of public consumption. But in our public sector this is not so. What happens is that when a private entrepreneur has to clear the jungle for instance, he will probably put up tents for his staff including the executives. But in the public sector they must first build bungalows.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, there I agree, and especially the system of ranks—you know that somebody who has a higher rank must have a bigger bungalow. This is a social attitude which has to be fought.

QUESTION : Some people believe that the frontiers between the public and the private sector are too rigidly drawn. The point is made that in certain industries the public sector has attained such a dominant position that the essential role of the public sector as an instrument of social control will not be affected even if the private sector is allowed to move in such industries. Let us say in steel, or in heavy engineering where public sector firms are dominant that private sector firms cannot only not hope to attain a monopoly position but can be made to fall 'in line'. The advantage of this is that private sector resources move in without interfering with the public sector but perform the services for which the public sector has been deemed necessary. What are your views on such functions of public sector undertakings?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is rather a complicated situation. When we started, none of the private sector units were willing to undertake these industries. And whatever industry we had was outmoded, and not in very good shape. The public sector invested heavily in steel and other heavy industries. Without the effort of the Government this industrial sector could not have been built up. Now at this stage, when the Government has put in this effort, to say that the private sector would come in because there is no danger of monopolies in such industries—well, I don't know whether this is something that can just happen.

QUESTION : In a multi-form industry some firms are in a situation of leadership; they control the market in terms of price as well as quality. The small firms which do not keep in line—well, they go out. The private sector thus has to toe the line. I am saying this only about

those industries in which the public sector is firmly established and has a role of leadership.

THE PRIME MINISTER : That leadership role will then have to be very clearly defined.

QUESTION : My submission would be that the public sector can do this only if it itself is very efficient...

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously...

QUESTION : But the role of public sector in any given situation will have to be defined anyhow, whether it is a policing or a producing role. The question really is wherever there are industries today in which the public sector is so well established that it can allow private industries to come in and yet effectively perform this policing function so that we may get the social benefits of control without direct investment of public resources...

To give an illustration. It is said that when Roosevelt went in for the TVA (Tenessee Valley Authority), there was bitter hostility from the private sector. The opposition was not because the TVA was in the public sector, but that the Government would then acquire all the knowledge about power generation, co-ordination, etc., and the private firms would have no tricks left up their sleeves. So they were more worried about the loss of these secrets than the existence of TVA *per se*. It is in that sense that I have said the basic purpose of the public sector is served and more resources are raised by the private sector. It is one of those situations which is all gains. all pluses.

THE PRIME MINISTER : How many pluses there are depends upon how it all works.

QUESTION : Are you sure that the private sector would be willing to come in in industries where it is not able to control pricing, profit and investment policies, etc. ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I doubt it very much. I doubt that they would come in.

QUESTION : Well, there are industries like steel and heavy engineering, petro-chemicals and fertilizers where the public sector has now a lot of experience and the private sector also does come in. The public sector has to be very dynamic indeed to play the sort of role I am suggesting and this raises questions about the way it is functioning. There is a widespread feeling that entrepreneurial ability and willingness to assume responsibility needs to be encouraged in the public sector. But can this be done, or be expected to develop on its own,

in a state where public enterprises have to function in the kind of political or parliamentary control that exists today?

THE PRIME MINISTER : On the other hand you must have some kind of accountability.

QUESTION : Of course, accountability has to be there, but at what level? If, for example, Parliament wishes to examine the balance-sheet it certainly has the right to do it. But should Parliament go in for little details like why a manager transferred his P.A. etc.?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Do not get me up to a Motion of Privilege in Parliament by asking me to answer this question. I think that it is accountability for overall performance to Government and Parliament that will ensure managerial efficiency and initiative in the public sector. This accountability cannot be an obstacle to managerial efficiency. Efficiency really springs from accountability. But sometimes there is criticism, which is levelled without knowledge of the full facts.

QUESTION : There is the impression that the management has been more sinned against ...

THE PRIME MINISTER : Very much, very much...

QUESTION : The morale of the management is a crucial question and in the present circumstances morale is very low. Are any steps contemplated to raise the morale of public sector managers?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are trying...

QUESTION : By way of parliamentary conventions, etc. ...

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes.

QUESTION : Well, there is also the question that we use the same old financial code which was evolved for administrative purposes and the same kind of financial arrangements in the public sector also. The rest of the world has gone in for management accountancy, which is a management tool. This involves a whole lot of remodelling of procedures, etc. Is anything of this kind under contemplation?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, we are trying to see how these things can be remodelled, made more efficient, how accountability can be fixed and training given for such purpose. Management accounting system has also been introduced, and it is replacing the older methods of triple audit. We now have audit boards. As for the other question, about the faults of a particular person, you cannot obviously allow misappropriation to go on.

QUESTION : You said on another occasion, I think in connection with bank nationalisation, that the professional expertise of the bankers will not be restricted. If we do not yet have a cadre of genuine professional managers in the public sector and we have this dominance of bureaucracy moving freely from public administration to the public sector, sometimes using the public sector only as a kind of a waiting room until the next promotion...

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is very true but we are trying to change it. We should also not overlook the fact that when there is a shortage, it is better to have a person who has a certain amount of commitment, honesty and intelligence and so on even though he may be a bureaucrat that way. I entirely agree that as a rule we should not have a bureaucrat. We should have somebody who is a specialist. But many of these posts need something more than specialisation. For instance, take a steel complex. Now you certainly want to have someone who knows about steel but you also need someone who will be able to judge a political situation if it develops in that area, how it will affect the workers in the mill and so on. So in all these things you do need some generalistic approach also...

QUESTION : I was not using the word 'bureaucrat' as a term of abuse.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, I think that is not very good and we have stopped that. Now there is a question of having an option. Officers who come in from the civil service have to exercise an option, as to whether they would like to resign from the civil service and get absorbed in the service of the public sector or revert to their parent cadre.

QUESTION : At what stage is this option offered to them?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have said by March 1970. And we are also now trying to build up a managerial tradition. We know it is slow but a genuine effort is being made.

QUESTION : So that they may cease to be bureaucrats in the sense that they do not form part of the cadres of bureaucrats. But some of the bureaucratic procedures—for example quick transfers from one factory to another factory—of key personnel.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are trying to stop that also. I cannot say that it has entirely gone but at least when things come to me we try to make a study of whether it is the right man in the right job.

QUESTION : In good private enterprises, career planning is supposed to be one of the most important management functions.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes.

QUESTION : But here the managers are transferred without regard to that.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes. We have neglected this.

QUESTION : Is it possible to say as a very broad generalisation whether people who have come into the public sector with experience in the private sector have proved better than those who come from the administration side, better as a category, or *vice versa?*

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think I can generalise... But there is also the other complaint that you work all your life in some particular place and just as you may have a chance to be promoted to the top somebody else comes along from outside and you feel frustrated. There is a complaint of that kind also. Whereas if you can go to the top in your sphere then there is more incentive.

Educating Workers

I HAVE NOTHING new to say. Everybody here knows what the objectives are. I think they are more aware of what the lacunae are than I am perhaps.

About informing the public, our problem is that most of the publicity or newspapers today have got definite views about these things. Just before I came, I met Mr. Parkinson. He said : I know from our English experience that we are the most backward of nations and it has happened because we have experimented in socialism and so on. You cannot go very far. When you are talking of educating the people, it is a very good point. We have to start with undertakings themselves. Because apart from managers, etc., there are workers. They have to know what it is all about. During one of his visits to an undertaking long ago, my father asked a particular worker what he was doing. He did not know what he was doing. He was not a very skilled person, of course. But everybody who is working in an undertaking should feel involved even though his task may not be so important. He is a clog in the wheel; he has to contribute to the smooth functioning of the whole. That is how the workers know it and then their families know it. Step by step the information can go. I do not know whether there are schools in the neighbourhood. Some of these undertakings are so far removed. But I think we should try out a certain competition among

Speech at a meeting of executives of the public sector undertakings, New Delhi, March 7, 1970

the people who visit the enterprises and among school children and college boys to write about them. It gives a little personal interest.

Research and having a correct picture ourselves, is equally important. I think we are a nation where we take a superficial view of things. For instance, we have found in the Consultative Committee, we have the same members, we go through the same questions every time and next time again we have exactly the same questions. They say there is nothing new. We say : "What can we do, you are asking the same questions". There may be marginal improvements like prices have risen or gone down. Certain things are fixed in the public mind; it just remains where it is. Perhaps we should start at the younger level before these ideas get set.

Apart from the urgent necessity of production, there are questions of research, of technology, employment, commercial management, market research. You are going into all these matters here and they are no less important.

Last but not the least is how to cut down the costs. There are many areas in which we can cut down the costs. One very small thing, for example. You will find, if you go to any undertaking, that all the lights are put on whether it is 2 o'clock in the afternoon and however bright the sun may be. Sometimes all the fans are on even if it is winter. I am very particular. I put off all the lights before I go to wash. These are the habits which have to be ingrained by workers, whether it is electricity, or the tap running or whether it is a public hydrant. These are not of major expense, but it is the habit of functioning which we must induce in our country.

I have said on a previous occasion that I was in an institution where we had to be most thrifty. We were not allowed to throw anything at all. When we received a parcel, it was delivered in a particular room. There were boxes and on the wall was written : "Used brown paper" "Used stamps". We were not allowed even to cut these things with scissors. All the stamps (sometimes weighing a kilo or so) and paper were sent to institutions. We have to be very frugal in everything. I think this is how some of the nations have become richer. There is also this habit of cutting down the cost at every possible level. We have been a bit large-handed so far as the public sector is concerned without really giving benefit to anybody. If we concentrate on what are the necessary benefits and cut down anything else, that could make the difference.

I know in Lucknow, for instance, we had free milk distribution. That was offered to some body. That gentleman said : "I do not believe in getting anything free". There was conflict. We told him that it had got to be free. He said : "It is against my principles". After much thought, he figured it out like this : He told his children : "Look, you are getting this milk free. There are such and such plants. They

all grow round about places. And this is such and such herb and this is such and such plant". The children were fascinated that really they were taking part in some research. They spent their time looking for these plants. They got very much involved in the botanical garden. Now this is not possible every time. But if a little bit of imagination is used, one can find ways to get people more involved. The whole atmosphere becomes more conducive to work, more cheerful and that sort of thing. Perhaps with the present labour situation, it is not easy. But if we can get them involved, it might help in the situation later.

I am particularly happy in meeting you. Especially I wanted you to talk because apart from usual ideas, it helps one to know people better than lecturing—of course, mainly on my side.

My good wishes are with you. You are tackling extremely difficult tasks—tasks which are essential to progress and development of our country at a very difficult phase of our development. On your success depends the success of the country as a whole. It is not only the whole public which looks to these undertakings, I think the entire world. We are trying to prove something and nobody can say—I certainly cannot make a categorical statement—that we will succeed. But I do think that it is important to succeed in this and I think that effort itself is very much worthwhile. If we make an effort with confidence and with determination, there is little doubt that we will also succeed.

Towards Peaceful Change

ALL OVER THE world today, in countries rich and poor, in the East and in the West, we see a vast upsurge of progress tempered with justice. But just when much greater all-round progress is possible, we also see far greater restlessness. This restlessness has to be met, so as to take us forward as a nation, widening the horizon of freedom and harmony. Neither justice nor economic progress are ends in themselves. They are only the means for the creation of a more civilised society.

In all modern societies, a balance has to be maintained between the interests of workers and consumers on the one hand, and the owners of capital on the other. The same is true of the interests of the urban and the rural population. We must either accept the fact that there

Speech inaugurating the 43rd annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, March 14, 1970

are conflicting interests which must be reconciled in a spirit of goodwill, or else we allow confrontation and conflict, which could generate chaos. In a democratic society, it is the function primarily of the associations of labour, business, shareholders, farmers and so on, to exercise the necessary countervailing power to safeguard their respective but mutual interests. It is only to the extent that the Government succeeds in holding the scales even between different groups and reconciling differences among them in a harmonious manner that it can serve as an instrument of orderly and peaceful progress.

In a sense, the regulations and controls which we maintain are not directed at any particular section of the community. Much less are they maintained as an end in themselves. Anti-social elements are to be found in all sections of the community. We must deal with them without fear or favour, and I do realise that it does not help to generalise or to tar entire groups with the same brush. If we want to build up managerial and entrepreneurial talent on a larger scale, unlimited freedom cannot be allowed to those who are already well established.

By the way, in your speech, Mr. President, there was a sentence saying that the 41 delicensed industries have been brought again within the ambit of the new licencing policy. So far as I know, this is true of only six, and thirty-five still do not require any licencing.

We are not opposed to largeness in itself. At the same time, efficiency does not always or necessarily increase with size. Also, we cannot overlook the fact that many large enterprises set up in the country have had to draw more heavily on public financial institutions than on resources which they have themselves raised. It is not unreasonable to expect that an enterprise which draws on the resources of the public at large should also be prepared to share management with Government or financial institutions and be ready to expose itself to the public gaze.

The question of profit is naturally one which interests one greatly. The need and the justification for every industrial enterprise to make profit is not questioned. But these profits should be based on efficiency and not merely on the ability to charge prices from the consumers without hindrance. This is all the more so in a country where because of foreign exchange difficulties, we cannot subject domestic industry to the full competition of imports. Even when imports are allowed, we levy high import duties in the interest of domestic production. The burden of protection is thus borne by the ordinary consumer. He has a right to expect that this burden is not unreasonable and in fact is eliminated over a period of time. That is why we have to resort to price controls for basic and essential items from time to time. The society which has reached a diversified structure of production, and which has no chronic foreign exchange difficulties, may not need such controls, because it can allow imports to maintain reasonable prices

for consumers. However, so long as this freedom is not available to us, it would be idle to pretend that we can altogether dispense with price controls and other regulatory mechanisms.

Profits sustained for a few people by special arrangements such as selling agencies and managing agencies have no place in modern industry which have to compete at home and abroad and must, therefore, justify its profits in terms of quality rather than manipulative talent. We cannot change our business practices and ethics overnight. But can we hope to secure a proper place for ourselves in international markets without adopting modern professional management techniques and constantly changing our production processes in the light of continuing research ? Only thus can business fulfil its obligations to its shareholders as well as to consumers and the community at large.

The most heartening development to which you have also referred, Mr. President, has been the increase in recent years in exports of engineering goods and other newer products. Despite the deceleration in the rate of growth in our exports during some months of 1969, we have succeeded in breaking out of a long period of stagnation and can look forward to a steady increase in our export earnings. We have achieved a substantial measure of success in import savings. In consequence, our balance of payments has improved appreciably. We now have the confidence and the capacity to manage our foreign trade so as to provide stimulus and support for a more rapid growth of our economy.

But life is never without anxiety. The new worry is that the welcome revival in domestic demand may tempt some who have contributed to our success in overseas markets, to confine themselves to the home market. This temptation must be resisted. No good entrepreneur should wish to sacrifice long-term interest for the sake of short-term profits.

Our experience over the last two to three years tells us that unless production keeps ahead of domestic demand, it will not be easy to maintain the momentum of our export effort. That is why in our industrial policy we propose to place increasing emphasis on production for exports. We should like our entrepreneurs to focus attention on increasing output and reducing costs.

It has been the experience of many nations that at a certain stage of their economic evolution, external demand imparts a strong impetus to domestic growth. We are in such a situation now. We can take advantage of this only by channelling our resources in directions in which it becomes easier for us to compete in international markets and win an increasing share for our products from global trade exchanges. I am not thinking only of adapting our industrial products to the tastes and needs of overseas markets. We must think also of cash crops, of fruits and flowers, of forest and marine products, and of mineral ore. The list is long and by imaginative exploration we can make it even

longer, and this can open out many new opportunities. These primary products can be increasingly exported in processed or finished form. Our expanding labour force is endowed with traditional dexterity and skills as also with the capacity to imbibe modern technology. If we succeed in our effort to augment production for exports, we can provide expanding employment oportunities and also increase our foreign exchange resources.

Mr. President, you have expressed some concern about the role of the public sector in the country's foreign trade. Many traders operate on margins very much lower than in other countries. At the same time, I know that in some sectors of imports, the profits available to importers are disproportionately large. Many of you must be conscious of the inadequacies of the commercial set-up, as it now obtains in our country, to meet the challenges of the seventies. I doubt whether our importers are always able to buy from the best source or to use our buying potential to advance our national interest. Similarly, our capability to take advantage of expanding export opportunities needs to be built up. It is our policy to use the public sector to make good these deficiencies and to induce and organise individual initiative, so that we can develop our foreign trade along efficient lines and to the best national advantage.

In your address, you have referred also to inadequacies of our shipping services as an impediment to the growth of trade. The need for improvements in this commercial infrastructure to sustain our export drive is widely recognised, and I hope that our development plans will be able to take care of this.

The problem which is causing the greatest concern to us in Government—and to you in industry—is the unemployment of educated young people, especially those who have undergone technical courses. These young men and women have talents which the country needs and which industry certainly needs. Had there been no drought and recession, the problem would perhaps not have been of quite this magnitude. As the programmes of development regain their tempo, the demand for technicians will also grow. But right now we do have a special problem and we need special expedients. The initiative taken by some industrial houses to give practical training to technical graduates which will help them to be absorbed later on in industry or to enable them to set up small industries of their own is welcome. Government have shown their appreciation of this move in a concrete form by bearing 50 per cent of the costs. I have every hope that more leaders of business and industry will take up similar schemes.

In India, there is room for initiative and enterprise from every section of the community. Even with the growing role of the public sector and the need to develop and safeguard the interests of small entrepreneurs and co-operative producers, there will be much for the larger industrial houses to achieve if they turn their attention to the positive tasks before

the country. If in some ways, the task before the Indian business community is more difficult than for their counterparts in other countries, the same is true for the country as a whole. Conditions in West Germany and Japan are entirely different. In India, we are in the midst of several revolutions simultaneously—social, political and economic—revolutions of the kind which other countries were able to achieve in a step-by-step manner and at a leisurely pace over several centuries. But there are historical reasons for this which we cannot escape or control. We are facing tremendous odds. An endeavour on a national scale is necessary. The challenge facing the whole nation at this important juncture in history can be met only if the Indian business community, our scientists and technologists, indeed the nation as a whole, work with skill, self-discipline, a high sense of patriotism and dedication. No group can be denied its right of service and self-fulfilment. In seeking to realise its full potential, every group must serve the larger interests of society. This is the ultimate meaning of Gandhiji's teachings about Sarvodaya or trusteeship, or whatever other name is given to his message.

I am glad that you have taken up programmes for family planning. Equally important is the conservation of our natural beauty and keeping our air and water pure. And this is a question which is increasingly engaging the attention of other countries. It is better for us if we look to it before it reaches the proportions, which it has reached in some countries and some large cities. All of us are firstly human beings who have to live on this earth, whether we are in business, in politics or in any other profession. We all breathe air and drink water and we know the dire consequences when either of these gets polluted.

So this is a matter on which we can co-operate—business, industry and Government—to show sensitivity towards life and industry, and to see that our country retains not only its personality and its individuality but also that the purity of air, water and our surroundings, which is just as necessary for the growth of good health of the country, is maintained. This does cost us money. At one time it was said that air and water are free. Now with the growth of industry we know that they are not, that somebody has to pay the price—either you pay the price in greater costs, or in some measure the Government or you pay the cost in the worsening of health and peaceful living.

So life is always a question of choosing between one evil and another and of balancing the costs. I hope that our business and industry will take as great an interest in this aspect as they have begun to take in family planning so that we can plan our new units in such a way that this problem does not become a large one.

On the whole our economy, as you have pointed out, Mr. President, is poised for substantial growth. We have no time to engage in arid controversy. We must all be imbued with a sense of urgency and a

sense of purpose. Let us not look at the 10 million extra people merely as job-seekers but as talented people who can enrich our society, who can help us to go forward. Unless there is a great spurt forward in per capita national product and per capita income, standards of consumption, savings, etc., will all decline. Thus there is no time to pause or to look back. Let us have confidence and faith in our future and in ourselves.

All problems need practical solutions. But to look ahead, you would, being practical men, also be dreaming a little bit, having a vision of the sort of future we want. All great human societies are the creation not of profiteers but of dreamers and, therefore, I would say that none of us should live in a compartment, whether it is a compartment of business or of administration or of a profession, but to look at India and to look at the problems which face us in the larger perspective of the country and its problems and even more so what sort of future we would like to have for our country.

If you look at growth in this perspective, I think we will find far larger areas of co-operation and of working together and we will be more successful in meeting these many challenges.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating your conference and giving my good wishes for your deliberations and for all of you to go from here with a greater commitment, a greater involvement in the future which we want not for some sections of our people but for all sections of our people.

A Significant Beginning

I RISE WITH rather mixed feelings. A Finance Minister gets mostly brickbats and I had braced myself for this. But the Budget has been acclaimed by many here in the House and outside and it has been recognised as marking a point of departure, seeking growth with social justice. Many Hon. Members have spoken of the meagreness of the amounts for social welfare schemes. I share their concern but so large is the problem and so vast the numbers involved, that even a hundred times more would hardly be adequate for what is to be done. But we have in all sincerity and earnestness made a small beginning.

The most eloquent tribute to the Budget was paid unwittingly by Prof. Madhok when he called it a political budget. I believe that the Budget should not degenerate into a mere statement of receipts and

From reply to debate in Lok Sabha on the General Budget, March 17, 1970

expenditure. It should set out the direction in which the Government wants to lead the country, and seek to mobilise the support of the people for its policies and programmes, by responding in some measure to their urges and aspirations. In this sense this Budget, like any other sound budget, is a political document. It reflects the political philosophy of the present Government. Through this Budget we seek to move forward towards greater equality of incomes and wealth and to create more opportunities for gainful employment through larger outlay in the public sector and through greater opportunity for small entrepreneurs and small savers.

It is our firm belief that social justice is not only compatible with economic growth but is an essential condition for sustained and orderly growth. Prof. Madhok, who is the philosopher of the Jan Sangh, thought there was too much politics in the Budget, but his counterpart in the Cong (O), Shri Asoka Mehta, seemed to deplore that there was too little of the new politics. I am told that one of Shri Mehta's favourite authors was Mr. Erle Stanley Gardner. Many of us here regret his death. As Gardner would have put it, Shri Mehta's is "The Case of the Rueful Radical". Shri Mehta is an adept at polemics of sorts. He talked of embroidery, window dressing and so on. Unfortunately, I am not good at these crafts. But we have all marvelled at Shri Mehta's own skill in embroidering words, not only for himself but for others.

Shri Mehta called me the author of de-stabilisation. I shall not comment on this. The Hon. Member, Dr. Maitreyee Bose has dealt with this point very effectively. She said that it was Shri Mehta who first split the Congress Party, joined the PSP and then split it and, finally, rejoined the Congress and again split it. She called him "a master splitter". It is well-known that it was not I who was the author of the letters of expulsion and ex-communication which split our party.

Then, Shri Mehta says that between 1962 and 1967 some 32 lakh jobs were created while in four years under my stewardship only four lakh jobs were created. But not a word about drought and recession of the recent years and there is no mention of increased defence and development effort which we put in between 1963 and 1965. This selective use of history is not worthy of one who prizes intellectual and cultural freedom.

Shri Mehta wanted a better Budget. Though I listened very carefully to his speech, I could not find any concrete idea of how to make the Budget better. He advocated much larger sums for rural areas, rural works, not just Rs. 25 crores but Rs. 200 crores or even Rs. 300 crores for rural works and other social welfare measures. But he did not say how these additional outlays should be financed. He seemed somewhat unhappy at not being able to make any real criticism. Perhaps what he really meant was that I should have come forward

with a Budget which would have provided a better target for attack. At the same time, he did concede that, perhaps, I had accelerated the trend by a year or so. I think, to accelerate the trend of the progress by a year or so is no mean achievement, and I take it as a compliment. If I were asked to name the single most important feature of the Budget, I would unhesitatingly say that it is an attempt to break the spell of fiscal stagnation. The new Budget restores to the public sector the original role envisaged for it as the pace-setter for the economy.

Since 1964-65, we have had to severely prune the development programmes of the public sector. We should perhaps have taken advantage of the comparatively good harvest of 1967-68 and 1968-69 to step up the rate of investment in the economy. But we had over-reacted to the phenomenon of rising prices during the closing stages of the Third Plan and had cut back sharply on investment. This significant drop in public investment was one of the reasons for accentuating unemployment. The cut in the investment in the public sector had induced a setback in the tempo of investment in the private sector also.

The Hon. Member, Shri Masani, may not agree, but some of his business colleagues will tell him that in the conditions prevailing in our country, a significant reduction in the public sector investment results also in recession in the private sector. This in turn leads to sluggishness in the growth of the revenues of the Central and State Governments, necessitating further caution in regard to investment programmes in the public sector. This is a vicious circle of slow growth in resources and decline in the rate of investment. It has to be broken at some point. The present Budget does seek to do this. It provides for an increase in the plan outlay by Rs. 400 crores in the coming year. We believe that this increase, along with other fiscal and monetary policies of the Government, will stimulate the economy and employment opportunities all round. This will in turn make a favourable impact on public revenues and thus restore a measure of dynamism to our economy.

If the stock exchanges have reacted favourably to the Budget, it is not because a particular item was taxed but because they recognize the simple fact that the Budget will boost the economy. As usual, Shri Masani has attacked our whole economic policy. It is strange that a person who is so articulate should be content to make the same speech every year. He has or his party has certain formulae. Scrap the Plan, there will be more development; reduce the tax, there will be more revenue; there will be more income if the Government did not attempt to raise more resources for development, and, after 1962, for defence. I suppose, extending this argument logically both ways, if income tax, excise and customs are all zero, perhaps income would be infinity.

Then. again, if the tax collection machinery improves, there would be no need to increase the rates. I can see the scope of tightening the tax administration. We all know that a great deal has to be done. We are making every effort to do it. Many measures have been taken. We know that in every country, not only in India but even in the more affluent countries like the U.S.A., the U.K. and France, big taxpayers do try to withhold as much as they can. Affluent countries also have diseases. There are new diseases of affluence and one such disease is the avoidance of tax.

Many Members have expressed their concern over prices. It is most important to protect the incomes of those who are already in employment from erosion because of rise in prices. But can we overlook the interests of those who are unemployed or under-employed and those who have no income at all? Their only hope lies in a balanced and judicious acceleration of the pace of investment in the economy. We want growth with stability. Growth may, in fact, be a pre-requisite for stability if it is interpreted as comprising not merely the stability of prices but also social stability.

Many Hon. Members from the Opposition have sought to denigrate the performance of the public enterprises. This is not a new experience for us. It takes place during practically every Question Hour. The Swatantra party would like to confine the State to the maintenance of law and order and certain basic services, leaving the whole field of industry and commerce to the unregulated functioning of the private sector.

The speeches of some Hon. Members of the Cong(O) echoed the speech from the Chair in Faridabad last year. We do want our public enterprises to make profit. We do want them to be efficiently managed. But, let us not forget that the public sector has another important objective, the building up of the infrastructure for the economy as a whole. The metallurgical, heavy engineering and heavy electrical units in the public sector are designed for this purpose. These industries are, by their very nature, capital-intensive and have long gestation periods. The critics of the public sector conveniently overlook the difficulties arising from drought and recession which industry in general, both in the public and private sectors, had to face. In the last few years. many engineering units in the private sector had also faced difficulties similar to those of the public enterprises, that is. lack of orders, under-utilisation of capacity and so on.

Even so, the performance of the public enterprises has been improving, and Government have taken a number of steps in the recent past to ensure greater efficiency in their management. During 1968-69, of the 73 running concerns, 42 made a net profit of Rs. 66.23 crores as against Rs. 48.95 crores made by 40 concerns in the previous year. Even after setting off the losses incurred by other units, the performance

of public enterprises in 1968-69 registered an improvement over the previous year. The overall net loss of public enterprises was reduced from Rs. 37.89 crores in 1967-68 to Rs. 27.67 crores in 1968-69.

While evaluating the performance of the public enterprises, particularly the bigger units such as the Hindustan Steel, we should, in fairness, recognise that similar units in the private sector did not fare better in their initial years. Tata Iron and Steel which was incorporated in 1907 declared its maiden dividends only in 1915-16. Thereafter, it declared dividends only in 1920-21 and in 1935-36. The regular dividend on its ordinary shares was being declared only from 1940-41 onwards.

The balance-sheets are important, but in assessing the role of the public enterprises in our strategy of development, we should look beyond their balance-sheets. We envisage an expanding role for the public sector because we want it to occupy a key position in our economy. Only such expansion will lay the foundation for a self-reliant economy and will prevent the concentration of the ownership of the means of production. These enterprises belong to the nation. The very fact that they are publicly-owned ensures that their performance will be under constant public scrutiny and that there will be constant pressure for their improvement.

Shri Masani has alleged—I believe the word he used was 'under brutal Soviet pressure'—that an Indian consultancy firm has been pushed out of the job of consultancy in Bokaro, which had been promised to them. He has further alleged that the Central Engineering and Design Branch of the Hindustan Steel is nothing but a cover and a facade for the Soviet consultancy organisation, *Gipromez*. There is no question whatsoever of our being under pressure whether brutal or gentle, from any quarter, whether Soviet or Swatantra.

During the first stage, that is up to 1.7 million tonnes, *Gipromez* was the main consultant while Dastur & Co. were assigned certain specific responsibilities. During the next stage of expansion up to 4 million tonnes, it was felt that since we wanted to develop our own consultancy organisation, there was no longer any need to employ the Soviet organisation as the main consultant. Far from giving *Gipromez* a larger role in the second stage of Bokaro, we propose to give a larger role to our own consultancy organisation. Presumably the complaint is that in choosing the principal consultants we have chosen our own organisation in the public sector, *viz.*, the Central Engineering and Design Branch of the Hindustan Steel rather than Dastur & Co. I do not think I need apologise for choosing a public sector consultancy organisation as our principal consultant. We should like Dastur & Co. also to continue as consultants during the second stage for the same kind of work as was entrusted to them during the first stage.

I would like to say a word about the Central Engineering and Design Branch of the Hindustan Steel. It is not an agent or satellite of any foreign consultancy organisation, but to build up its own potential it has entered into certain agreements with a number of foreign firms and consultancy organisations including *Gipromez* of the Soviet Union. They have made similar agreements with United Engineering of the U.S.A. and Messrs. Otto of West Germany. They are proposing to enter into an agreement with Messrs. Voest of Austria.

The detailed project report for Bokaro expansion has already been approved by the Government of India. If we decide to strengthen our own consultancy organisation, this does not in any way imply lack of confidence in private consultancy organisations such as Dastur & Co. or others. We are committed to encouraging Indian consultancy organisations in every possible way. But Hon. Member will agree that any agitational approach to secure particular contracts at the expense of competitors is not likely to promote the interest of developing indigenous consultancy capability. There is enough work in our country for all the organisations that exist in this field.

There was a further allegation that payments to the Soviet consultancy organisation for services rendered were to be made in pound sterling or the gold content of the rupee. Here again the Hon. Member has been misinformed. All such payments are to be made under the Soviet credit for Foreign Plan projects for which an agreement was signed in December 1966. All our credit agreements with the Soviet Union provide, and I quote :

> "Repayments by way of principal and payment of interest may be used by the Soviet organisation to purchase goods in India in accordance with the Indo-Soviet Trade Agreement in force and/or may be freely converted into pound sterling."

No repayment has so far been made to the U.S.S.R. in pound sterling, nor has any request been made for such payment in pound sterling. There are standard clauses in all our credit agreements regarding adjustments to be made in case of change in the exchange rate. Here again, the situation is no different from that in respect of credits from Western countries where, since repayments are determined in foreign exchange, the rupee equivalent varies automatically in response to changes in the exchange rate.

Some Hon. Members have asserted that revenues have been overestimated to the extent of Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 crores. My colleague, Shri Sethi, has already dealt with this point. Hon. Member opposite, Shri Mehta, spoke of this also, but did not adduce any argument in support of his thesis. He declared he would not go into details, but would be prepared for discussion. We always welcome such discussion and exchange of views, but I would like to assure Hon. Members that the revenue estimates for 1970-71 have been worked out most carefully,

without any under-estimation or over-estimation, and they reflect our best judgment as of today. There is every likelihood that with the increase in import licences which has already taken place and the more liberal provision for imports which is proposed, the revenue from import duties will increase as estimated by Rs. 35 crores or so. The estimated increase of 10 per cent in Union excise duties is based on the likely increase in consumption and production of excisable items. Even my colleague, Shri Salve wondered how excise revenue could increase by 10 per cent when industrial production was likely to increase by 7½ per cent or so. The weightage of commodities in industrial production is not the same as the weightage of commodities that enter into the collection of excise duties. To give only one example, commodities such as petroleum products account for a much larger share of excise revenue than their share in total industrial production. The revenue from direct taxes should exceed the estimates presented in the Budget. As Shri Salve and some other Hon. Members have pointed out, at least in one respect, that is, the collection under Wealth Tax, we have been careful to assume a slight decline in revenue at existing rates of taxation for the coming year. Since collections in the current year represent to some extent an acceleration in the pace of assessment, I do not say that there could be no variations, either up or down but I must most strongly repudiate the suggestion that we have deliberately tried to present a rosier picture of the situation than is warranted by facts as we see them now.

A number of speakers have referred to the provision of special assistance of Rs. 175 crores to the States to enable them to have worthwhile Plan programmes. It has been suggested that this provision is not constitutional and that it is intended to be used for political purposes to favour certain States and to punish others. Such an allegation only reflects the mental make-up of those who make it. It probably represents what these Members would do in like circumstances, but it is not the way in which I function.

In every session Hon. Members have spoken up for one or other State, which is suffering from chronic financial difficulties because of the burden of accumulated debts and other factors. It has been repeatedly urged that those chronic difficulties of the weaker States should be met by the Centre by debt re-scheduling or by any similar form of special assistance. On more than one occasion, we have assured the House that we would look into this question and do whatever be necessary after we received the recommendations of the Finance Commission.

The Finance Commission examines only the position of revenue account and does not examine the position of different States on capital account. That is why the recommendations of the Finance Commission cannot solve the problems of the weaker States which might arise from factors like the burden of accumulated debts.

The Planning Commission has been aware for quite some time that many States have non-Plan gaps and that unless these gaps are covered by some form of special assistance, it would not be possible for them to undertake Plan programmes which the Planning Commission considers worthwhile. What is more, as long as there are non-Plan gaps, any additional resources mobilised by these States are going to cover these gaps rather than be available for Plan purposes. The Planning Commission has been urging that in order to provide an incentive for the States to raise resources some special effort should be made to help these States in meeting their non-Plan gaps.

After receiving the recommendations of the Finance Commission, the Planning Commission has had a series of detailed discussions with each State, and as a result of these discussions, it has arrived at certain conclusions about the special assistance that should be given to eight or nine States, in addition to what they would receive as part of Plan assistance or in response to the recommendations of the Finance Commission.

It is in the light of this examination and in response to a specific recommendation of the Planning Commission that it was decided to provide special assistance. There is nothing arbitrary about the figure of Rs. 175 crores or about the manner in which this assistance will be given. There is nothing unconstitutional about the provision of such *ad hoc* assistance to the States. Even this year such *ad hoc* assistance to the tune of Rs. 275 crores is likely to be given to the States. All that we have done for the next year is to provide in advance for the need which is already felt and for which a great deal of concern has been expressed in this House.

I strongly repudiate the suggestion that there is anything sinister or irregular about the provision. The assistance will be made available on the assessment of the resources position of the States in relation to the approved Plans, and will thus conform to the well-recognised criteria. The assistance is also not unconditional. It will always be subject to sound fiscal management on the part of the States. We would certainly stipulate that the States do all that they can to mobilise and conserve their resources.

Hon. Members have asked for the names of the States. I would not like to give them just now because the assessment of the resources position of the States is not quite complete. It would not be proper to name them as the Planning Commission would like to obtain a commitment as firm as possible from the States in need of such assistance. In the course of the year, the House will certainly have the full details of the assistance provided to the States. Then they would appreciate how objective we have been.

Shri Masani chose even to question the competence of the Union Government to extend assistance to the States. The Government of India have, subject to the authority of Parliament, the right to extend

loans and grants to the States under Article 282 and 293(2) of the Constitution. Such loans and grants have been given since the commencement of the Constitution and are inescapable in any federal set-up.

Some Hon. Members have stated that the welcome increases in direct taxation might lead to greater tax evasion and black money, thus putting the honest tax-payer relatively to a greater disadvantage. We are well aware that greater equality cannot be achieved merely by increasing the rates of taxation. These have to be followed up by systematic and stringent measures to improve the machinery of tax collection to root out avoidance and evasion of taxes. As I said earlier, we propose to do all that is possible to energise our tax collection and to deal with tax evasion and avoidance with the utmost severity.

We have taken some measures to plug the loopholes in tax laws such as those in relation to trusts. It has been represented here and outside that the provision now made relating to public charitable trusts, specially in regard to the time given to them to comply with some of those conditions, may lead to difficulties in genuine cases. We shall try to remove any genuine difficulties, but no quarter can be given to the tax-evader.

I now come to the apprehension that the budget might add to inflationary pressures. A deficit of Rs. 225 crores next year is not large, if we bear in mind the anticipated increase in production. Before the presentation of the budget, nearly all economic commentators agreed that we could provide for a deficit of something like Rs. 300 crores. Our own assessment was a little more cautious and we decided in favour of a smaller figure. I have already refuted the charge that the deficit would be larger because of over-estimation of revenue.

There is also some misgiving that the deficit might be larger because of the State Governments adding to it. As I said earlier, it was to forestall this situation that next year we have provided an advance for special assistance. The proposed new Central measures of taxation will make as much as Rs. 45 crores extra available to have a very clear or comprehensive picture of the position as it emerges from the State budgets, already presented or going to be presented. The deficits, as publicised, do not take into account the special assistance provided and in some cases the market borrowings.

I am glad that some States have come out with proposals to mobilise additional resources. With all the measures which we have taken to assist the States, they can no longer have any justification to run into unauthorised overdraft from the Reserve Bank. If they fail to play their full part in resource mobilisation, their Plan programmes are bound to suffer.

Regarding the criticism that increase in indirect taxation will lead to an increase in prices, care has been taken to limit the new imposts

as far as possible to items which are consumed by the upper class. There is hardly any reason why the comparatively better-off sections should not pay for things like juices, syrups, custard, ice cream, cheese and chocolates. The only imposts which might conceivably affect the common people would be the increase in excise duties on sugar, kerosene and tea. But even here a conscious effort has been made to introduce the concept of equitable discrimination as between the different income groups.

As regards tea, there is no proposal to increase the duty on the loose varieties produced in Zone I and on packed varieties containing 25 gms. or less. Similarly, the proposed increase in the case of Zone II is only ten paise per kg. Those two zones account for more than half of the total production and nearly two-thirds of the aggregate domestic consumption of tea. The effect of adjustments of excise duty in tea would, therefore, be insignificant, particularly as the poorer sections consume loose tea. The maximum proposed increase is in Zone III which produces quality Darjeeling varieties, the bulk of which is intended for export.

As regards sugar, the central excise duty on levy sugar is to be raised by two per cent, from 23 per cent to 25 per cent *ad valorem*. Half of the proposed additional levy would accrue to the State in lieu of a sales tax. The basis of price fixation with respect to the levy on sugar has recently been altered in accordance with the recommendations of the Tariff Commission.

Over large parts of the country, even after the proposed duty, the ex-factory price of levy sugar, inclusive of duty, would be lower than the corresponding price obtaining before February 20 of this year.

As regards the effect of the excise duty on free sale sugar, we must remember that the price of free market sugar declined by nearly 50 per cent as compared to the prices obtaining in March 1969, and in view of the sharp increase in the output of sugar in the current year a further decline in the price of free market sugar can be expected in the coming months. Even with the proposed increase in excise duty, the chances are that in 1970-71 we would be paying a lower price for free sale sugar than in 1969-70.

As regards kerosene, the proposed duty is only two paise per litre. Taking into account the weightage of the index of wholesale prices of the different commodities, on which taxes are being increased, the increase should not go to more than half per cent even if the entire burden of the additional taxation is passed on to the consumer.

There is no single unchangeable definition of the words 'luxury' and 'necessity'. As incomes go up, sanitaryware or preserved foods may be regarded as necessities. But if resources are to be enlarged, it cannot be argued that commodities like preserved foods or sanitaryware should escape taxation altogether. While considering the incidence of taxation

on the lower income groups, we should not ignore the beneficial impact of the welfare schemes proposed, such as family pension, schemes for industrial workers, enhanced minimum pension for Government servants and child welfare programmes.

As I said earlier, price stability is essential to social justice and rising prices do cause social tension. In assessing the price situation it would be highly misleading if estimates are made on the basis of trends over one or two months. Let us not invoke the horrors of the inevitable failure of the monsoon or some such thing. The average level of wholesale prices between April 1969 and January 1970 was roughly three per cent higher than the average level during the corresponding period of previous year. Between the middle of January and the middle of February this year, the wholesale price index remained stable after rising for about three months. The credit measures taken by the Reserve Bank are beginning to have some effect. One Hon. Member was needlessly harsh on the Reserve Bank, particularly on its Governor, who has rendered distinguished service to the country in more than one capacity.

The events of the last few months have brought about much-needed discussion and heart-searching in the political forces of the country and there is a movement towards a certain crystallisation, which will help us to pursue more efficiently our positive social and economic objectives. It is not surprising that critics are unable to find anything new in the Budget because they have failed to appreciate one simple fact. If we are to carry forward this great nation to its rightful destiny at a crucial period of history, we have to bring about simultaneous transformations in our social, political and economic life. The Budget does indicate the directions in which we intend to move forward. Shri Chandrajit Yadav has referred to these. I was also glad that a dispassionate observer such as Shri Tenneti Viswanatham has focussed the attention of this House on these initiatives. I am glad also that Shri Dwivedy has recognised the new departures which the Budget makes, especially in the direction of social equality.

No one can be more keenly aware than me of the fact that we have tried to achieve in the Budget only a small but significant beginning. But, as I have said on previous occasions here, the greatest distances can be covered by small steps and this Budget is one such step. I have no doubt that it will lead us to other steps and the country will be able to go ahead with greater dynamism, vigour and speed.

* * *

THE FIRST SPEAKER for the Opposition said that there was nothing new in the Budget, but the young doctor, I think it was from the Jan Sangh, Dr. Bhai Mahavir, was pleased to describe it as the most significant Budget since 1947. I myself do not make any such resounding claim for the Budget and I believe that had circumstances permitted, the Budget could have been better and bolder. Sir, there is not much new. The poverty of the country is not new. Our desire to fight poverty is not new, but in every earnest Budget something dynamic must be done to fight against these old familiar problems.

In the last twenty years we have taken up several challenges. Planning itself has been the acceptance of a mighty challenge. As my father once said, the timid of heart could never build a Bhakra Dam or the steel plants. It is because we accepted the challenge of development and built the infrastructure that we are today at the stage of building the main structure and addressing ourselves to the reduction of inequalities and disparities.

The Hon. Member, Shri Chatterjee, has cast what I would call a slur on our people and has hurt the country's pride when he asserted that 70 per cent of our outlay came from aid. In fact, he urged that in the First Plan 81 per cent of all our outlays had come from aid. I am afraid his figures are totally wrong and misleading, whether they relate to the First Plan or to the later Plans. In fact, the truth is quite otherwise. In the Fourth Plan, as now envisaged, only about 8 per cent of the total outlay constitutes net foreign aid after repayment. Even in terms of gross aid, it will constitute 18 per cent. Thus a significant part of the investment in our economy is financed by the efforts and sacrifices of our own people. Even taking together the entire 18 years of planned economic development, foreign aid would constitute only 23 per cent of the total outlay. Let us, therefore, not minimise the contribution which our people have made in the building up of our economy. The country's integrity and progress are certainly two great objectives for which our people are willing to shoulder the burden. The poor are also asked to bear a part of the burden in the form of indirect taxes.

If, over the years, there has been an increase in taxation, direct or indirect, it was primarily for development which is as urgent a problem as any other. In the last few years there has been another unavoidable and urgent problem and that is to increase our defence preparedness.

The State Governments, of which Shri Chatterjee's party was a constituent until recently, have also agitated for more development projects. Though, I may say that they do not disown responsibility for resources, the bulk of which they would have to realise through indirect taxes such as the sales tax, every indirect tax is not inherently iniquitous. Nor can we view the tax structure in isolation. We have to see it in

From reply to debate in Rajya Sabha on the General Budget, March 26, 1970

relation to the pattern of public expenditure. If we raise resources to finance development and social welfare projects, the intention is that, on the whole, the net effect may be to bring about a transfer of income from the comparatively affluent to the poorer sections of the society. So, when members criticise the specific proposals of taxation, I should like them to bear in mind that the Budget provides also for certain new initiatives in social welfare services. I am aware that these provisions are inadequate but, as we have said in the Budget itself, they mark only a beginning.

In framing the tax proposals we have taken care to soften the impact on the lower income groups. The only imposts which could marginally affect the common people are the increase in the excise duties on sugar, kerosene and some varieties of tea. With regard to sugar, the bulk of the poor people have to content themselves with what is supplied in the fair price shops under the levy scheme. The increase in the excise duty on levy sugar is only two per cent. Even here, as the ex-factory price of sugar in many regions has been reduced, in the light of the recommendations of the Tariff Commission, the poor consumers may not, on the whole, be worse off. With regard to tea also, we have adopted a selective approach. There is no increase on the loose varieties produced in Zone I and on the packed varieties containing 25 gms. or less. The increase indicated in the case of Zone II is only ten paise per kilogram. These two Zones account for about two-thirds of the total consumption within the whole country. The increase in respect of kerosene is two paise per litre and has been proposed in order to prevent its misuse in replacing diesel. Incidentally, there is some misunderstanding that our excise levies will increase the cost of public transport. There is no basis for this because we have not taxed diesel. We have taxed petrol and most of the public transport vehicles operate on diesel.

The transference of income from the small group of the rich to the large majority of the poor is certainly one of the main objects of the Budget, but it cannot be the only object. Equal sharing by all of what we now have, would still not very much improve the lot of the poor. It would at the most be a psychological satisfaction. Our great task is to raise production to ensure that the size of the national product goes up. So, the Budget cannot be just a sickle. It has also to be a plough.

As the Hon. Member, Shri M. N. Kaul, has rightly remarked, the Budget in our country has to create confidence—confidence in the general public that it does more towards welfare and also among the productive elements that it does, in fact, help growth. We can legitimately claim that this Budget does both these things.

Some Hon. Members have enquired why we have spared the corporate sector in the present Budget. Now, the rates of taxation on the corporate sector are not low, but the existing rates are eroded by a number of rebates, concessions and exemptions which reduce the effec-

tive rate of taxation. In the last few years a number of concessions were given to the corporate sector. We have not offered any new concession to this sector. On the contrary, we have reduced some of the existing concessions. The development rebate has been reduced. The tax credit scheme has been withdrawn and we have now taken decisive action to curb conspicuous consumption in the form of entertainment expenditure and lavishly-furnished guest houses. We have also proposed several measures which will check the diversion of resources into unproductive and speculative channels. In fact the very vehemence with which one member of the Swatantra Party, I believe Mr. Mohta, has reacted to the proposals dealing with trusts and urban land should convince us that these changes will bite and thus have the desired effect. Shri Mohta was at least consistent with his and his party's point of view. But what can one say of Dr. Bhai Mahavir who expressed great sympathy for the poor but shed more tears for the people in the Rs. 2 lakhs to Rs. 5 lakhs income group? He and his party have perhaps not yet fully adjusted themselves to the new socialism which they are now advocating.

Another Hon. Member, Shri Gurupadaswamy, who sits opposite, raised the question of repayment of foreign loans. He dwelt on the evils of aid and maintained that we should have been better off without aid. It would be interesting to know at exactly what point of time his views on foreign aid have changed. He has also criticised the children's programmes, implying perhaps that these were not necessary since they are already covered by UNICEF. I myself said that we have not been able to allot sufficient funds for this and what we have done is to make a beginning in the right direction. Although some of these programmes have been working in the country but on a very very small scale and in only one or two parts of the country. Now we would like them to spread in a more systematic manner.

Shri Gurupadaswamy also said that we have not been able to meet our repayment obligations and have asked foreign Governments to reschedule these payments. I should like to put the question of debt relief in its proper perspective. In the early years when we started taking foreign aid, such aid was generally given on what are known as hard terms. In recent years the international concept of terms of aid has changed and aid is now being made available to developing countries including our own on softer terms. We should also remember that while in most cases foreign aid is tied to purchases within the donor countries, the repayment of loans in most of the cases has to be made in free foreign exchange. The World Bank and other members of the Consortium have recognised that some form of debt relief is necessary in these circumstances. India has had a very clean record of honouring all her obligations, and we shall continue to maintain this record.

We have looked upon debt servicing as the first charge on our export earnings. Debt relief is of the same nature as fresh aid in the form of free foreign exchange which can be used for any of the various essential needs without being tied to purchases of items available from the donor countries only.

In evaluating this Budget the emphasis should be on its main thrust. Certain criteria have been kept in view. We thought that the foremost objective of the Budget should be to guide the nation back to the course of growth from which it had slipped somewhat. We were convinced that a new dynamism had to be imparted to the economy and that this could be done only through a purposive increase in the size of the Plan and the developmental outlay in the public sector. Let us recognise frankly that in the last few years public investments have not been on the desired scale, and after the years of drought and recession the private sector also was not able to rekindle the spark of growth. Public investments were held back because of fiscal difficulties and there was a corresponding setback in private investment, thus proving beyond doubt that in the present climate the private sector cannot survive or prosper unless the public sector grows vigorously. It is the impulse generated by Government expenditure which stimulates private investment. We have taken all this into account and have made a determined bid through this Budget to break away from the stagnation in investment in recent years. In this sense at least we have deviated from what has been called the beaten track.

As Hon. Members may have noticed, the outlay on Plan is being pushed up by Rs. 400 crores, an increase of 18 per cent over the current year. I am sure that this increase will enliven general economic activity and will also stimulate investment in the private sector. There should be no controversy at all over this part of the Budget. Perhaps the only party which could possibly be unhappy is the Swatantra which considers any increase in the public sector to be almost a sin.

Thus, the budget aims at economic growth. But of what use is economic growth if it is accompanied by increased social tensions and if it does not mitigate distributive injustice? The gain from economic growth should be shared by all sections of society. The increase in the Plan outlay, by its own momentum, will bring greater opportunities for gainful employment to the weaker sections of society. But we have also incorporated several programmes which are specially oriented towards employment. Some figures of the magnitude of unemployment have been mentioned. We have touched upon this subject on a previous occasion in this House. I shall not rush in where even economic and statistical experts fear to tread. The House is aware that a Committee of Experts under Prof. Dantwala was appointed to study the existing statistics of unemployment and to make suitable

recommendations for a proper assessment of the dimensions of this problem. We have received only a provisional report. This provisional report throws doubt on the various attempts made in the past to quantify precisely the extent of unemployment. After carefully looking into the estimates which were used in the Plan documents, the Group formed the "considered view that the data available for the estimates were inadequate, and the conclusions based on them were not accurate". The Expert Group's view is : "While the lay public desires precise estimates, in our social situation such precision is not possible. There is more seasonal unemployment and under-employment than outright unemployment, and the two cannot be aggregated. Household enterprises are so widely prevalent that many people only technically enter the labour market, but will not seek or accept outside employment".

However, whether it is the unemployment problem or the other problems facing the economy, I am as conscious as Hon. Members are that the financial provisions made this year are not sufficient to tackle all these problems in the short run. At the same time, a beginning has been made in this Budget to rediscover and redefine the egalitarian purpose which is an integral part of the process of our economic growth.

In pursuing these objectives, we have not overlooked the need for price stability. Price stability is essential to social justice. I know that when prices rise, it is the poor and the fixed income groups who suffer the most. The impact of the proposed changes in indirect taxes on the price level will be minimal. The Government regret that trade tends to increase prices by more than what the actual incidence of taxation would warrant.

Similarly, with regard to deficit financing, we are confident that it can be absorbed by the system, without disturbing the price level. The measures included in the Budget should induce a rate of growth of economy of 5 to 6 per cent. In the current year our economy has, in fact, registered an increase of 5.5 per cent to 6 per cent. The production of foodgrains will be of the order of 100 million tonnes. and we have ample stocks of foodgrains in the public godowns. The deficit we have left uncovered is, therefore, unlikely to have adverse effects. However, I should like to assure the Hon. Members that we shall continue to be alert in ensuring and enforcing price stability. We shall keep a close watch over public finances and other bank credits to the private sector. It will be our continuous endeavour to apply restraint whenever it is called for. But I am sure the House will agree that we cannot sit back and allow opportunities for economic development to be frittered away for fear of adverse seasonal conditions or even for fear of rise in the price level.

While attempting to reduce social inequalities and to maintain price stability, we have also taken care that incentives for savings are not impaired. Capital formation, backed by our own internal savings, has to be the keynote of development. With this in view, we are deliberately trying to augment incentives for savings.

Several Hon. Members have referred to the increase in the non-development expenditure in recent years. I think that they are labouring under certain misconceptions. Taking capital account first, the rate of increase of developmental expenditure over the last decade has, in any case, far outstripped that for other items. But even on revenue account, the record is not unsatisfactory. The total expenditure met from revenue was Rs. 953 crores in 1960-61. It is proposed to be Rs. 3,152 crores for 1970-71. Of this increase over the decade, a sum of Rs. 543 crores represents the increase in developmental expenditure while the rest is accounted for by other items. For example, Rs. 770 crores are accounted for by Defence, Rs. 404 crores by debt services, Rs. 245 crores by grants-in-aid to States and Union Territories, and only Rs. 237 crores by other types of expenditure such as administrative services and tax-collection charges. This will show that if defence, debt services and grants-in-aid to States are excluded, the rest of the increase in non-developmental expenditure has been quite moderate. As a percentage to the revenue expenditure excluding defence, debt services and grants-in-aid to the States, the Union Government's non-developmental expenditure has steadily declined over the years. It was 45 per cent in 1960-61 but 39 per cent in the current year. It is expected to go down further to 36 per cent next year.

A number of Hon. Members have expressed misgivings regarding the provision of Rs. 175 crores made in the Budget for special accommodation. My colleague, Shri Khadilkar, touched on this point yesterday and I also touched on it during the last Question Hour here. We have already made it clear that we are not breaking any new ground in providing such loans. Such special accommodation has been given on an *ad hoc* basis to States in the past and it has often been in the nature of a hurried response to a call for financial help. After examining the impact of the Award of the Fifth Finance Commission, the Planning Commission found that some States had non-Plan deficits and that their additional resource mobilisation was being absorbed almost wholly in meeting their overall non-Plan deficits, taking both capital and revenue accounts in some cases. The Planning Commission, therefore, asked the Government to make special provision for such States. This accommodation is not unconditional. It is subject to the assurance that the States concerned will contain the gap within the limits agreed upon and mobilise additional resources to the extent expected of them.

Some Hon. Members have attempted to impute political motives. They should at least try to take the trouble to verify their facts before making such charges. May I remind those who seek every opportunity to malign us that among the States which have welcomed this provision are Orissa and Mysore? They recognise that this special accommodation will be given according to well-understood criteria. The actual funds to be advanced to the individual States will be discussed with the State Governments and the Planning Commission, and we shall abide by the technical judgment of the Planning Commission in this matter.

What we have tried to do, and that also to a very small extent, is that whereas the States which are relatively better-off should make a somewhat larger contribution of their own towards their progress, others should receive a somewhat higher assistance from the Centre. This is the general policy which we advocate internationally also; that is, the richer countries should help the developing ones. In relation to industrial development also, we expect the more established houses to make a greater contribution from their own resources for their expansion and rely to a lesser extent on public financial institutions.

A Member, from Tamil Nadu I think, called the Centre a monarch and the States mendicants. It is a very misleading description if I may say so. The Centre is neither a monarch nor a mother-in-law as some other people sometimes are likely to quote. But as I have said previously, I would like to register a protest on behalf of all mothers-in-law in attributing such motives to them.

Both under the statute and in the way in which we have worked, the Centre and the States are co-workers in development and co-sharers in responsibilities.

Now, the Hon. Member, Shri A. P. Jain, spoke with experience and authority on the problems of development in the rural areas. He listed four important factors which gave new life to land. I should like to add a fifth factor which, I think, is equally important, and that is land reform. I am sure we know that in the implementation of land reforms, the Centre can only prod, exert and persuade, and this we are trying.

Shri M. P. Bhargava and Prof. Nurul Hasan, both referred to the affairs of the C.S.I.R. I share their concern and I confess that I feel that there can be nothing more unscientific than scientists quarrelling among themselves. As I have said on previous occasions, there are many contributing factors to this and one of them is, whether scientists or administrators, we are all human beings and we all suffer from certain human failings. This is not the occasion to go into the problems of the C.S.I.R. However, I would only like to say that we are looking into them. Many scientists are helping us in this matter and we hope that we can sort out things soon.

Prof. Nurul Hasan mentioned one other matter, that is, the protection of archaeological monuments. The Government certainly has a very great responsibility in protecting these monuments and all national treasures. But some of the monuments are in such remote places that the citizens and especially those citizens who have interest in this matter should share some of the burden. I think that we should try to educate every citizen to become a protector of this architectural treasure and also of our wild life, which is a treasure of another sort and which is fast diminishing.

I am intensely aware of the complexity of the financial problems which affect our economy. A single Budget cannot by itself make any serious dent on these problems. In spite of the criticism about the various aspects of the Budget in this House and outside, the fact does remain that this Budget has evoked the kind of response which no Budget in recent years has evoked.

There is an all-round recognition, although in some quarters it is most reluctant, that in this Budget there is minimum possible contradiction between what it professes and what it has actually set out to achieve. It will be the continuous endeavour of my Government to bridge the gap between profession and practice.

May I just add one word with regard to Gujarat. This House has had a discussion, I believe yesterday and today, and Dr. Sen has said a few words on the subject. We are all deeply distressed at this natural calamity which has caused suffering to so many people. We have sent some help merely as a token until we get further news of what is required. Our heart-felt sympathy goes out to the Government and the people of Gujarat and especially to those families who have suffered from this disaster.

Exploration for Oil

IT IS WITH great pleasure that I declare the start of the drilling operations here. I do hope that it will meet the same success that earlier drillings on the land surface of Gujarat met with. On behalf of the country I felicitate our technicians who are helping us to realise our dreams.

I also wish to record our appreciation of the technical co-operation which the Soviet Union is giving us in the design of this project.

Speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the first off-shore drilling operations at Allabet, Cambay, Gujarat, March 19, 1970

I am aware of the difficult operations involved in constructing the platform and how these were completed in record time. My congratulations to all the engineers and workers, skilled and unskilled, involved in the construction and in the drilling operations that are being undertaken.

The importance of oil in the world today is well known. Many forces were at work wanting us to rely on foreign oil companies. They said that no oil was to be found in the country. We were fortunate to have a Minister who said we shall find reserves through our own scientists.

This is a day of joy to all of us. It is a step which will take the country forward.

It is a happy and proud day for us. I have always had the greatest confidence in the capacity of our young people, and this confidence is sustained by achievements such as this. I do hope with this proof, the Oil and Natural Gas Commission will go on to other and greater achievements.

The Government will do everything to foster self-reliance. The secret of self-reliance is that once you are confident that you can do something, your competence will increase further.

This event, which marks the beginning of a new phase in our economic life, owes much to the personal interest and initiative of Dr. Triguna Sen, our Minister, who in turn was helped by his Ministry, by scientists and engineers and by the Gujarat Government. It is an example of team work which holds lessons for us.

The formal start of drilling for oil in the sea is an important event in the economic progress of our country. It will add considerably to the nation's wealth and well-being.

The sea is a storehouse of immense wealth. You will recall that our Sanskrit poets used to call the sea as *Ratnakar,* the jewel-mine. Oil is one of the great jewels hidden below the surface of the sea.

In modern life oil is so important that economic and political pressures are exerted through it. Oil politics plays a big part in international politics. To ensure real freedom self-sufficiency in oil is most essential. After successful drilling on land, our country has now entered this field of off-shore drilling. We have decided to do it through our own technicians in spite of the fact that the technology is so difficult and complex.

Thus, today's event is the symbol of our faith in our technicians. This is a big challenge to them. But I have no doubt that they will work hard and that with faith they master the techniques and justify the country's faith in their ability. Those who regard the country's work as their own, can overcome any challenge.

The story of oil exploration in India is a comparatively recent one. When the old foreign company which operated in Assam was asked

to search for oil in other parts of the country, they reported that the country had no reserves of oil anywhere else in India. This gave us a true glimpse of oil politics. But thanks to the determination of the Petroleum Minister at that time and the Government's efforts, we took up exploration in other parts of the country.

We set up the Oil and Natural Gas Directorate, now the ONGC and gave our technicians a chance. The technicians of the ONGC fully measured up to the challenge. In the last 10 or 12 years several large oil finds have been made.

At the present spot, the drillings will be comparatively near the coast and in shallow waters. This has given us courage. We are poised for venturing out farther and deeper into the sea and bringing out the oil and giving it to our people. I hope we shall be starting this work soon.

The demand for oil is growing and will increase manifold as we progress. We should do everything in our power to find as much oil as we can within our own territory.

We have just come out of a period of tremendous economic crisis. This crisis tested our will, but our people have proved their capacity to bear hardships and meet challenges. Except for some professional pessimists, everyone realises that we are today in a position to move forward with planned development and make rapid advance again.

We have launched the Fourth Plan and it has already gained momentum. Every month, every week, some new project is either started or completed. And this is true of every part of the country.

In the mass of the people of our country I find tremendous enthusiasm and practically unlimited hope. I wish that those who claim to be representatives and spokesmen of the people also reflected this upsurge. Instead, many of them are engaged in raising needless doubts and pointless controversies. One of the most purposeless pursuits is the attempt to pit States against the Centre and the Centre against the States.

The oil finds in Gujarat are the result of the initiative of the Central Government and its technicians. Considerable resources and effort have been invested in these operations. The people of the State have benefited. The State Government has benefited and, no doubt, the nation as a whole has benefited. The oil finds have made it possible for several new industries to be located here. I realise that every State wants more investment and more industry. Gujarat cannot be an exception. But the country as a whole can progress only if all parts of it share in the progress.

The progress of the country demands the fullest co-operation between the States and the Centre. At the Centre it is not our habit to take unilateral decisions, expecting others merely to fall in line. This is not our method of working. All our decisions are reached

through detailed and exhaustive discussion. This is true of economic decisions as well as political decisions.

The Plan, as you know, is not drawn up as a confidential exercise of the Planning Commission. Its formulation is preceded by very thorough discussions with the State Governments and with the Central Ministries and with experts. The final decisions are taken at meetings of the National Development Council where the Chief Ministers have full say.

We should conserve our energy and spend it on progress and development if we are not to waste it on needless controversies. Let us all join hands and work for the future of the nation.

It is said that some people dream dreams while others do deeds. My experience, however, is that we cannot achieve anything worthwhile unless we have the capacity to dream and to think big. Only those who can see far can go far.

Our greatest good fortune has been that the leaders of our freedom movement were persons of vision and farsightedness. The design for economic progress took shape in their minds before it was converted into plans on the ground.

No individual and nation can prosper unless they have the courage to face dangers and difficulties. Once again I salute the engineers and workers of this project.

Plans are Indispensable

I WELCOME ALL of you here. This is a very important meeting of the National Development Council.

I should like to express my appreciation of the hard work which Dr. Gadgil and Members of the Planning Commission have put in an exceedingly difficult situation. Dr. Gadgil will give a detailed analysis of the resources of the Plan and the lines along which it has been recast.

You are all aware that many changes have taken place since our last meeting. Today the relationship between the Centre and the States and between the States themselves has assumed an even greater importance. We know that each State faces special difficulties, There are sometimes differences of opinion and there are also some disputes.

Speech at the meeting of the National Development Council, New Delhi, March 21, 1970

I hope that all of us will face the problems from the point of view of trying to resolve these difficulties and disputes as peacefully as possible and causing as little dissatisfaction as possible. I am fully aware that no solution can satisfy everybody, not even satisfy any one party fully. That is why I have said that we should try and find solutions which will leave as little bitterness as possible.

The Plan is obviously not perfect—no Plan can be; and specially with the difficulties which we face, the difficulty of resources and so on, it has been a difficult task. But I feel that within the general constraint of resources and the need to assure certain minimum tempo of development in all the States, we have tried to be as fair as possible. I do not think anybody disputes the need for planning or the need to have the sort of plan which we have. But if we needed a plan, when there was one political party in power in the Centre and in the States, I think we need it even more so now when we have different political parties. It is only a plan which is widely discussed and broadly accepted that can bind all the constituents of our federation together and impart coherence and viability to economic and social policy.

Since we last met, the Central Budget has been presented. In it we have sought to raise the level of outlays in the public sector to a reasonable extent, and if the State Governments fulfil the targets agreed to in the course of the discussions with the Planning Commission, an increase of Rs. 400 crores in the Plan outlay is realisable in the coming year. This will mean an increase of about 18 per cent over the current year's performance and will make a significant contribution towards raising the level of production, incomes and of employment.

In the fulfilment of these objectives sound fiscal management is essential. Price stability demands that budgetary deficits should be kept within the limits defined by monetary expansion, consistent with the growth in production.

You all know that we are making a major effort to reduce our dependence on foreign aid. While this will strengthen our country and our economic base, and also help our industry and our employment and other programmes, it does create difficulties in the interim period, and it certainly calls for a further enlargement of domestic savings.

You will see that the Fourth Plan now before us spells out the minimum tasks which need to be done. Given the necessary will, these tasks are not beyond our capacity. We should be failing our people if we do not set out to achieve with grim determination what has been envisaged in this Plan.

I know that all of you, with the heavy responsibilities which you face is your States, will consider these problems not merely in the

light of the difficulties and problems of your own States, but in the larger perspective of the growth of the country as a whole. I think we are all aware that while we have certain pressures, we can ultimately solve our own local difficulties only if we help in raising the level of the country as a whole and establishing a firm base for progress and forward movement.

* * *

PLANNING IS THE vital instrument we have adopted to realise the social objectives enshrined in our Constitution. Through the Five Year Plans we have already achieved a significant increase in the national income in the past eighteen years and laid the foundations of technological advance. The Plan is fast modernising our agriculture and strengthening and diversifying our industry. Above all, it has reinforced national unity and purpose.

The attack on our territory in 1962 and again in 1965 forced us to modify the pattern of national expenditure. Before we could reconcile the competing claims of development and defence, drought struck us. Foreign credits became uncertain. Recession followed. All these seriously restricted our freedom of choice. We had to divert our energies to fight drought and near famine and their aftermath. For some time, long-term planning had to be virtually suspended. But we succeeded in turning adversity to good use. We concentrated on import substitution which further enlarged our industrial base. This, along with the need for more foreign exchange, put us on the path of a more fruitful export drive. We maintained our investment in development work, especially in intensive agricultural programmes,

A new period has now opened. There is a welcome upsurge in the economy, and the increases in agricultural production have brought us nearer to self-sufficiency in foodgrains. But, inevitably, there are other problems, and a fresh challenge to face. Rural disparities have increased, partly owing to the very efforts we have made to move rapidly towards self-sufficiency in food, and partly owing to a certain tardiness in the matter of implementing the land reforms. Although the industrial recession has waned, new industries, are not coming up fast enough and unemployment, especially of technically trained persons, continues to be acute. We have a larger and, understandably enough, a more articulate population.

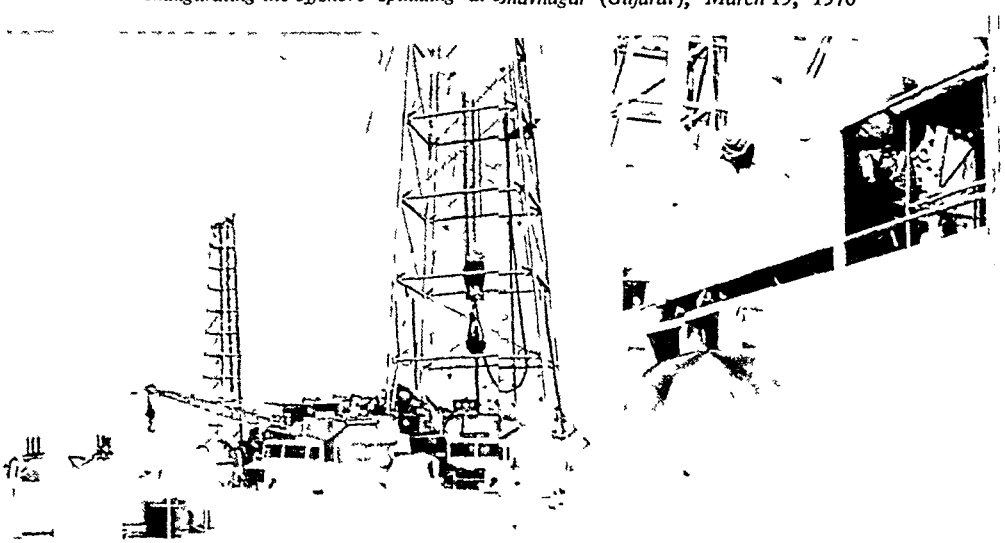
Planning is the method to which we are committed for meeting such challenges. We have carried out three Five Year Plans. Each Five Year Plan has addressed itself specially to problems which have

Preface to the Fourth Five Year Plan, July 18, 1970



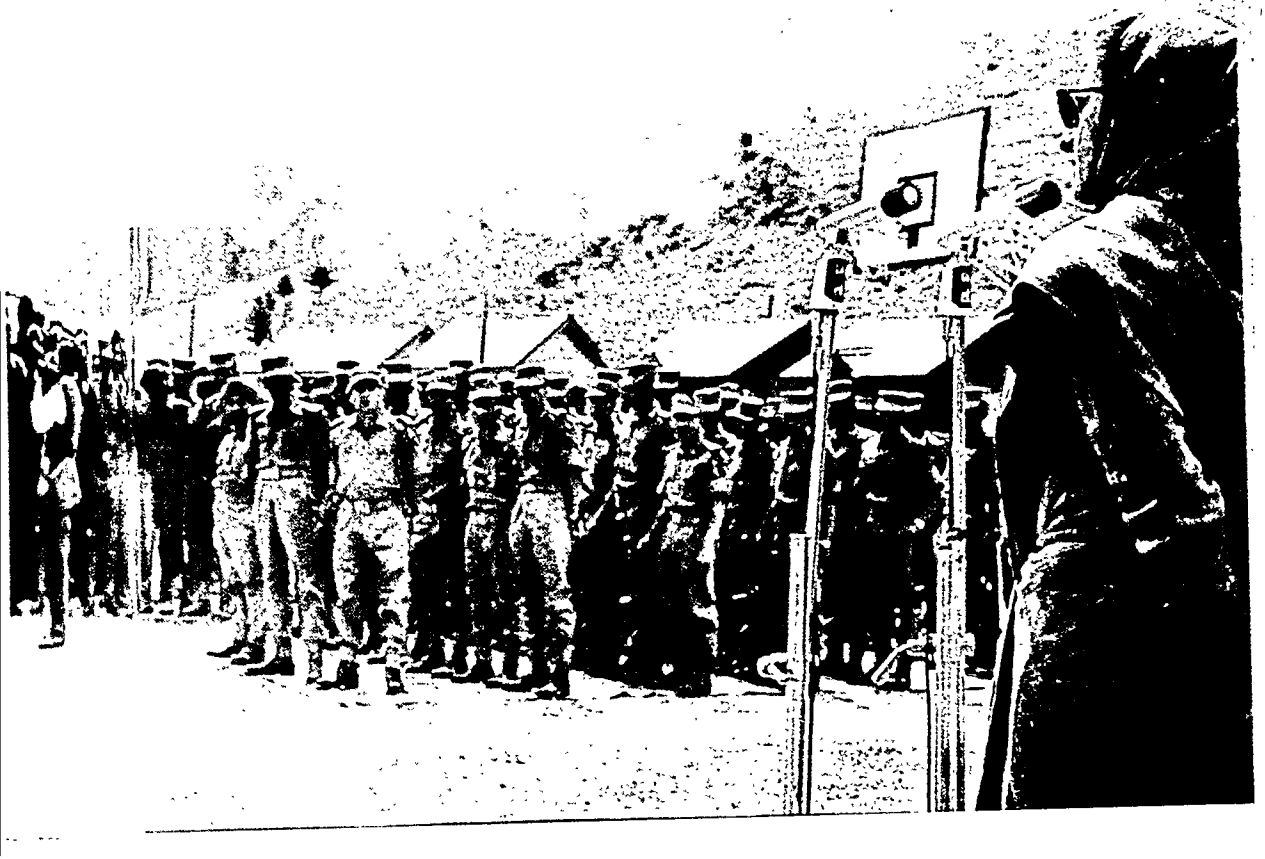
Inaugurating the tenth General Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, New Delhi, November 24, 1969

Inaugurating the offshore spudding at Bhavnagar (Gujarat), March 19, 1970







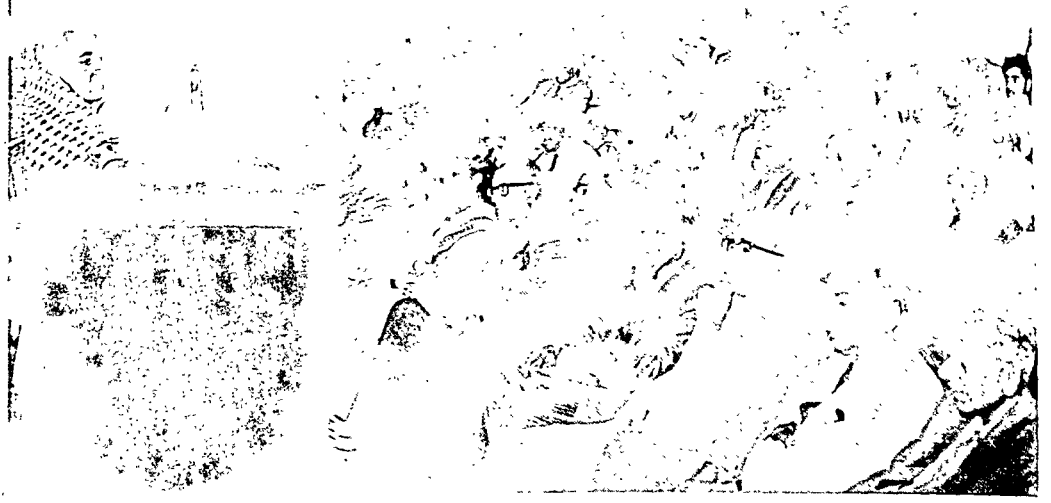




(Far left)
Visit to riot-affected areas of Ahmedabad, September 25, 1969

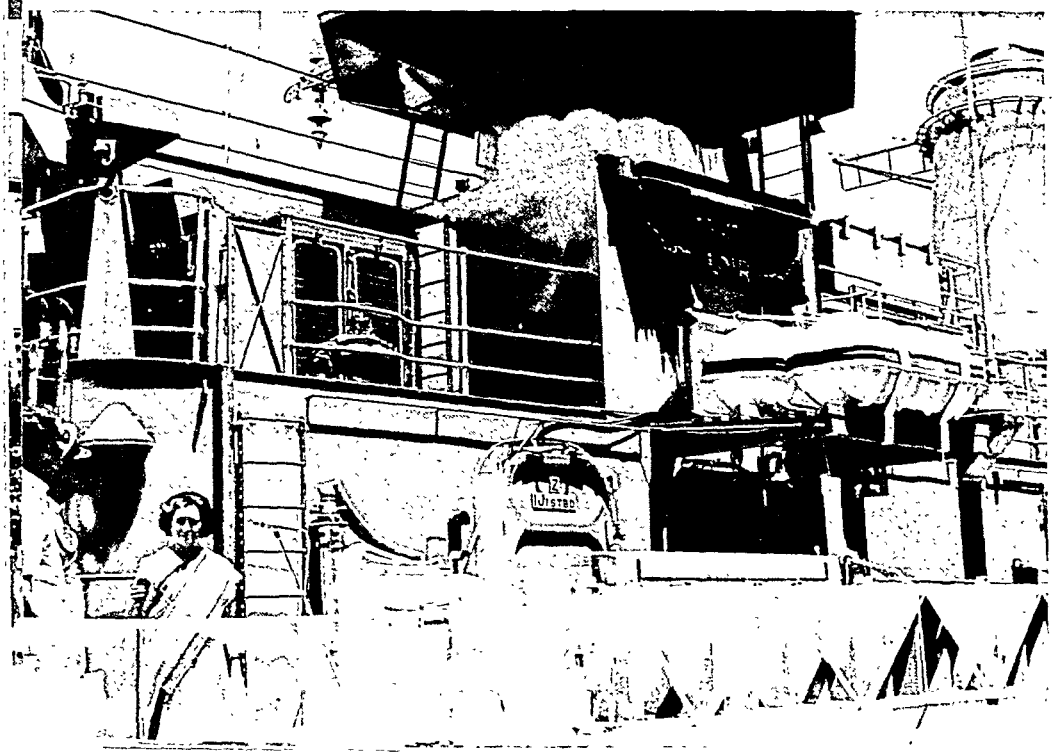
(Above)
Addressing jawans in a forward area, June 18, 1971

(Left)
Speaking at a mass rally at India Gate, New Delhi, August 9, 1971



At the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, October 22, 1971

Commissioning the first India-built frigate, "INS NILGIRI", June 3, 1972



emerged either because of new political and economic developments in the country and in the world, or as a consequence of progress already achieved. The priorities and the emphasis have necessarily changed and have had to be adjusted from Plan to Plan, but we have always kept in view our long-term objectives.

The Fourth Plan represents a conscious, internally consistent and carefully thought out programme for the most efficient exploitation of our resources possible in existing conditions. The basic aim is to raise the standard of living of the people, especially of the less privileged sections of society. Our planning should result not only in an integrated process of increased production, but rational distribution of the added wealth. The overriding inspiration must be a burning sense of social justice. While increased production is of the utmost importance, it is equally important to remove, or reduce, and prevent the concentration of wealth and economic power. The benefits of development should accrue in increasing measure to the common man and the weaker sections of society, so that the forces of production can be fully unleashed. A sense of involvement, of participation by the people as a whole, is vital for the success of any plan of rapid economic growth. This can only be evoked by securing social justice, by reducing disparities of income and wealth, and by redressing regional imbalances. A re-orientation of our socio-economic institutions in this spirit is accordingly the first necessity.

One year of this Plan has already gone by. Between the Draft Plan and the present document certain important changes have been made. The projected investment in the public sector has been stepped up so as to enable us to undertake a larger and bolder agenda of work. New schemes have been added to help the small farmer throughout the country, especially in the unirrigated areas. The emphasis is squarely on areas that have hitherto suffered from neglect. Transport and housing problems in urban regions will receive more attention. A small but significant beginning is also being made with special programmes for children.

The Fourth Plan thus provides a necessary corrective to the earlier trend which helped particularly the stronger sections in agriculture as well as in industry to enable them rapidly to enlarge and diversify the production base. In the long run, the full potential of growth cannot be realised unless the energies of all our people are put to profitable use. The emphasis on spreading the impetus and benefits of economic growth to the weaker sections is thus necessary in the interest of equality as well as growth. The Plan will now assist the less prosperous sections of our farming population to improve their position and make a yet bigger contribution to the national economy. Greater industrial activity and the modernisation of agriculture, such as is proposed through the wider use of electric power and the adoption of

intensive methods of cultivation in both irrigated and dry areas, would mean that a larger proportion of young people seeking jobs could find employment nearer home. At the same time, there are some new schemes, *e.g.*, for a network of service centres in the rural areas, which will open out opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

The nationalisation of the fourteen big banks is evidence of our determination to bring a greater volume of resources within the area of social decision. It has effected a major change in our economic structure. It enables us to pay more attention to the "small man's" needs, and it restricts the scope for the monopolistic operations of the privileged few. Among other areas where social considerations have still to make a comparable impact are the enforcement of land laws, the management of public sector enterprises, and the toning up of the administration as a whole.

There can be no doubt that the responsibilities devolving upon the public sector—without diminishing those of the private sector, in our mixed economy—will grow in range and volume. Socialism involves a reordering of society on a rational and equitable basis and this can only be achieved by assigning an expanding role to the public sector. Following the reorganisation of credit policies resulting from the nationalisation of major banks, the public sector can be expected more and more to occupy the commanding heights of the economy. It alone would be in a position to undertake investments of the requisite magnitude in such industries of vital importance to us as steel, machinery, machine tools, power generation, ship-building, petro-chemicals, fuels and drugs. Naturally, the administration of public enterprises poses some problems of its own (here as in other countries) but they are not insuperable and will be overcome as we gain experience.

In addition to the fight against poverty and economic inequalities, the Plan seeks to enlarge the area of self-reliance in terms of financial resources and technological inputs. Here too, the public sector has an important part to play. Besides striving to set an example in better management methods and ushering in a new pattern of worker-management relations, the public sector should increasingly base itself on domestic know-how. The public and private sectors have both been too ready to look to foreign collaboration not only for financial but for technological resources. Such collaboration may be unavoidable when new processes have to be introduced, but excessive reliance on it has induced a state of mind which inhibits the development of our own technological skills and managerial talents. We should rely more and more on our own machinery and technical know-how, even though it may entail some initial risks and difficulties. This does not mean that we should be indifferent to the latest development in technology, especially in the fast-growing sectors. But it would be folly to forget

that a nation's strength ultimately consists in what it can do on its own and not in what it can borrow from others.

There has been a noticeable change in recent years in the climate of international economic co-operation. It is now increasingly reaffirmed by responsible sections of public opinion in the lending as well as in the borrowing countries that development assistance should not be regarded as an instrument of foreign or commercial policy but as a means of correcting dangerous imbalance in the world economy. However, "aid" is in reality credits which have to be repaid; and even if such credits are available on terms which are concessional in some respects, they often have features which are not consistent strictly with the objective of development. For some time to come we can benefit by more external credits, especially untied credits on concessional terms. But we have to take note of international realities as they are and reduce our reliance on foreign credits.

The policy of self-reliance does not mean that we should be actually reducing imports from the rest of the world. In fact, as the pace of development quickens, imports of industrial raw materials, intermediates and special components will go up. But we propose to pay for them increasingly through our own earnings from exports. Economic independence, therefore, hinges to a considerable extent on how we fare in export markets; and our export performance in turn would depend on the state of our economy at home and our success in developing a purposive, planned approach to the problem.

The complaint that planning has led to a rise in prices and that planning is, therefore, harmful, is misconceived and unfounded. Consumers with fixed incomes, particularly in urban areas, face hardship when prices rise; but at the other extreme, when prices are reduced or depressed to uneconomic level, producers suffer and employment sags. If development means larger real incomes to ever larger numbers of people, some price increases can hardly be avoided. What we must ensure, however, is stability in respect of the core items of family consumption. And adequate supply of foodgrains and articles of everyday use must be maintained at fairly stable prices. Agricultural scientists who have brought about such notable increases in yields of wheat, and to some extent of millets and rice, have now turned to the task of bringing about similar gains in pulses and cash crops like oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane. In general, the possible impact of development plans on the price situation has been carefully studied, and every effort will be made to keep production and prices in balance.

Planning certainly has its critics, but the fact remains that in modern conditions, and in a developing country like ours, economic planning has become indispensable. Compared to the tasks to be accomplished, the resources of money, trained manpower and administrative and managerial skills are in short supply, and they have to be allocated

primarily with a view to the national interest rather than the interest of any private individual or group. This is, after all, what the Plan seeks to do. At the same time, and through such rational allocation, it can lead to an augmentation of the now scarce resources, and thus gradually extend the limits of our economic freedom.

For us in India, planning is a charter of orderly progress. It provides a framework of time and space and that binds sectors and regions together and relates each year's effort to the succeeding years, impelling us all constantly to greater co-operative endeavour. By strengthening the economic fabric of the country as a whole and of the different regions, it makes a powerful contribution to our goal of national integration. The Plan gives concrete expression to our national purpose. With its implementation, we shall have advanced yet another stage towards our goal of a prosperous, democratic, modern, socialist society. In meetings of the National Development Council I have found that all States, irrespective of the political beliefs their Governments hold, have very similar expectations of the Plan. This is so, because our people as a whole have pinned their hopes on the Plan and want it to succeed. I am confident that they will not spare themselves in a determined effort to ensure that it does succeed.

Foreign Investments

QUESTION : Much has been heard of the success of your "green revolution" which has gone far to solve India's food problem. Is it the case that India will be self-sufficient in cereals in the next couple of years and may even be able to export rice to the deficit countries of South-East Asia ? This is a great achievement. Can you tell us how you did it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This year our grain production has crossed the 100-million tonne mark. There has been a virtual doubling of output compared to 20 years ago. This has come through extension of irrigation, use of chemical fertilisers, electrification of the countryside, and more recently, the use of new varieties of seed and modern methods. The success of the intensive agricultural programme was popularly called the "green revolution". However, modern farming must cover a much larger area before we can really speak of a green revolution. So far we have had good results in wheat. We have taken up work on rice. The most urgent need now is to solve the

Replies to questions by Mr. Heinz Moeller of *German International*, April 14, 1970

problems of the farmer who is dependent on rain. High yielding varieties should be evolved in millets and in cash crops such as oil-seeds and cotton. We have asked our scientists to take up this challenge. We have also launched a big programme of soil conservation in areas with low rainfall. I think it is premature to speak of the export of rice although even now we do export some high quality rice.

QUESTION : As I understand only about one-third of the country is now irrigated and that your Fourth Plan will cost a great deal of money, how can foreign investment help in this project ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Irrigation now covers about one-fourth of the land under cultivation. But this is unevenly distributed. Some rivers are intensively harnessed, for example, Kaveri in the South—97 per cent of whose water is used for irrigation. In States such as Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, barely one-twelfth of the land is irrigated. The foreign assistance we have received has been principally for industry, power and transport. We have managed our irrigation projects on our own—the investment as well as the technical knowledge. In fact the irrigation engineers of India are rated among the most experienced in the world. We are now in our Fourth Five Year Plan. This Plan has a much lower foreign aid component than the two earlier Plans. In fact most of our foreign credits now go to repay old credits, and the net foreign assistance accounts for only 8 per cent of our Fourth Plan investment.

QUESTION : As a woman and as a mother and at the same time as the political head of a government facing perhaps the greatest population explosion in the world, do you feel that you should get special aid from Western countries, for example from the Federal Republic with its advanced pharmaceutical industry to help you curb the problem. Your birth control campaign has already achieved remarkable success but what you need for mass contraception is an unlimited supply of the pill, the loop or perhaps a long-term injection to be used among your rural population.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Family planning is an essential part of our national development. Although it has always figured in our five year plans, it has made real progress only in the last five or six years. In the first ten years of the two plans, we spent Rs. 23 million. Last year we spent Rs. 305 million. According to the latest statistics, 7.14 million sterilisation operations have been performed and some 3.26 million women use the loop. The use of the pill is much less widespread, because only the better-off classes can afford it. We have some 1,800 centres in villages concentrating exclusively on family planning services. The population today would have been

3.5 million more, had we not had the programme. It is estimated that the sterilisation, etc., will over the years prevent 18 million births. The birth rate has fallen from 41.7 in 1961 to 39 per 1,000 in 1968. Our goal is to reduce it to 32 per 1,000 by 1974, ultimately to 25. This takes time, at least one generation of determined effort. In addition, there are 25,000 other clinics where family planning services are provided. We have some 30,289 family planning staff working on the programme. These include doctors, nurses, health visitors, propagandists. So far the programme has succeeded mostly in urban industrial areas—which shows that the most important factor for success in the family planning programme is education.

In such a programme, there can be no compulsion. We work only through persuasion. But personnel and appliances are important—even more so is the awareness that in the present circumstances, a planned family means better health for the mother and the child and would enable parents to look after the children better. Fortunately there is no religious resistance. But some political pressures are building up. For example, some people of the Jan Sangh have begun saying that family planning is a conspiracy of the Western nations against India! I do not know what they mean.

QUESTION: With a population of well over 500 million and a high growth rate, your problem is surplus population while the Federal Republic faces an almost permanent labour shortage. Could not some scheme be devised to provide a flow of Indian guest workers to German factories? Many Indians have considerable advantages, particularly in language, over foreign workers such as Turks, Greeks and Yugoslavs. The main problem would seem to be the cost of transport. Would you be prepared to investigate this question if the German Government was agreeable?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I don't know what you mean by surplus population. As our economy develops, there will certainly be employment for more people. We find that intensive agriculture demands greater labour input. In the districts which lead in agricultural production, there is some labour shortage. Industrialization will also create employment. We are not in favour of sending Indian workers abroad. If skilled workers and technologists go, it would be a double loss. The country needs them, and they have been trained at the cost of the nation. Already we have a problem of brain drain. The export of unskilled workers leads to all kinds of tensions.

QUESTION: Official statistics for the past half-dozen years show that India has been running a substantial trade deficit with the Federal Republic and that German exports have been steadily declining from 1,000 million DM in 1965 to 238 million DM during the first half of last year. What do you feel can be done to reverse the trend?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The picture of trade exchanges with West Germany is not satisfactory. Our exports to that country seem to be fluctuating around 250 million DM a year. Lately, there has been some improvement in the export of cotton textiles and some promising developments have taken place in the field of engineering products. The two Governments are collaborating on a trade development scheme but much more needs to be done before we can hope to wipe out the trade deficit or acquire the means to increase our cash imports and repay our loans.

The decline in imports from Germany has been fairly sharp, although it may be noted that in 1969 our imports aggregated to 498 million DM, leaving a trade deficit of a little over 250 million DM. The decline has, nevertheless, one good aspect, namely, it has narrowed the trade deficit. The decline is mainly due to the change in the pattern of our imports and also to a diminution of net developmental assistance available from Germany. We have for long used foreign exchange earned or borrowed from other countries on financing a large trade deficit with Germany. Fortunately, we can now meet from our domestic resources much greater part of our requirements in steel-based materials, particularly machine tools, electrical equipment and other types of machinery. At the same time there has been an increase in our imports of fertilisers and raw plastic products. As the Fourth Plan gathers momentum, our need for sophisticated equipment will increase. The demand for German products can be built up again provided we have the financial resources to pay. To this end we propose to concentrate on increasing our foreign income from Germany by building our exports to that country. We hope that the development of exports will be increasingly regarded as a common objective to help reverse the unfavourable trend which you have mentioned.

QUESTION : Indian goods, like carpets, for example, are much less easily obtainable in the Federal Republic than say in the United Kingdom. Should not some special effort be made to get Indian exporters in contact with any German chain stores to sell particularly Indian goods to the German people?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I believe special steps have been taken to increase the availability of Indian carpets in the Federal Republic. The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation runs a special depot in Hamburg to which carpets are exported on consignment account and from which sales are made to individual retailers and also to chain stores. We have also developed new designs acceptable to the German consumer. In consequence, the export of carpets to the Federal Republic has gone up from Rs. 9 million in 1963-64 to Rs. 12 million in 1968-69.

To increase the availability of Indian consumer products, special export promotion schemes are now being undertaken in departmental stores in Germany.

QUESTION : Should the United Kingdom enter the European Common Market, some of the former British colonies in Africa are now indicating that they will expect the same preferential treatment in the EEC as the former French colonies have long had under the Yaounde Convention. I don't know what remains of the British Commonwealth economic links but are you likely to ask for the same favoured treatment as the former British colonies in Africa ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is for the United Kingdom to consider this question. So far as we are concerned, it is our effort to build up our exports to a higher level with the United Kingdom and with the African countries. If Britain joins the Community, we would wish the special facilities we enjoy in the British market to be preserved. At the same time, we have been keen since 1962 to develop independent economic relationship with the European Economic Community. It was in that year that we set up a Mission accredited to the EEC The effort to build up this independent relationship has succeeded only partially. We hope that this effort will not receive a setback when the Community engages itself in negotiations for British adhesion. We have no desire to become an associate of the Community as associate status is not compatible with our position in the world economy. However, in our continuing dialogue with the Community, we should like to find ways and means to strengthen and diversify our economic relationship and build up expanding trade exchanges between the present, and laterly enlarged, Community on the one hand and India on the other.

QUESTION : Western development aid to India and the problem of the servicing and repayment of loans, etc., is a long story. What form should Western, and in particular German, development aid take in the next few years ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Aid is a loosely used term. The people and even administrators in aid-giving countries tend to look upon it as charity or as an investment which should yield certain immediate foreign policy dividends.

We think that economic assistance should be regarded as a systematic and long-term attempt by all countries to eliminate inequalities among nations, and to help backward nations to strengthen and modernise their economies.

Aid is mostly credit. Many of these credits are on very tough terms. They are often worth less than their face value and are tied with compulsory purchases from aid-giving countries.

The human aspects of aid-giving and aid-receiving must be kept in view while drawing up plans for developmental assistance over the next few years. Many of the difficulties in foreign aid programmes, which have come to the surface in recent years, have been conditioned by attempts to make a distinction between close allies and not-so-close friends, between neighbours and others, between like-minded nations and the rest. This classification has also affected the assessment of needs as well as the evaluation of performance of the aid received. There has sometimes also been a failure to appreciate the scale of the problems involved in development or the context in which it is being attempted. It is disappointing that, in regard to the quantum of aid, the target of one per cent of the Gross National Product has not been accepted by most donor countries; if anything, there has been a slideback in recent years. In the name of co-ordination of aid, certain irksome procedures have also been introduced. Besides, the attitude to aid on the part of some donors has been frankly commercial, and closely linked to the goal of export promotion; various forms of tying of aid and intense competition to unload capital goods—some of which are technologically obsolete—have not helped matters. Some credits have been extended on exceedingly hard terms and effective aid amounts to much less than what it appears. In recent years, the burden of debt servicing has been heavy, and the plea to lighten this burden has been a signal on the part of several donors to start limiting their new commitments.

We welcome aid. But the terms should be reasonable as well as imaginative. The aid which we receive is the lowest in per capita terms. We also hope that some of the advanced countries, including West Germany, would initiate measures to stabilise and improve the prices of primary commodities exported from developing countries. The protective duties levied by the rich countries against the products of the poor should be reviewed sympathetically.

QUESTION : Western businessmen, who have been watching your moves in recent months to nationalise the principal Indian banks, have naturally concentrated on the future of foreign-owned banks in India. It has been suggested that you personally are opposed to any takeover of the foreign-owned banks. Is that so? Could you explain your reasons and the background?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Nationalisation is not an end in itself, but only a means for achieving certain wider social and economic objectives. The larger Indian banks were nationalised because we wanted to remove the control of large resources by a handful of persons, in order to provide adequate credit to agriculture, small industry and exports, to give a professional bent to bank management and to encourage new classes of entrepreneurs. In short, we wanted to bring the banking system in tune with the needs and aspirations of our people.

The fourteen banks which we nationalised accounted for three-fourth of all the deposits of Indian banks. We left a number of (60) small banks alone, since they did not represent economic concentration. They are also serving the objective of helping farmers and small entrepreneurs.

This explains why the foreign banks were excluded. There were other specific reasons also, which continue to be valid. Foreign banks are part of a world-wide system. They give special facilities and services to exporters and importers, which Indian banks are not in a position to provide. For instance, foreign banks have intimate knowledge of parties in other countries on whom export bills are drawn by Indian customers. They also spread information about business opportunities in India, as well as in the other countries in which they operate. They thus have a distinctive role to play.

QUESTION : The future of the foreign banks, and still more moves such as the nationalisation of the foreign-owned tea-plantations in the Communist state of Kerala, have raised the questions in minds of German bankers and businessmen about the danger of nationalisation to other foreign-owned enterprises. What is the danger ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have repeatedly stated that nationalisation is not a universal cure. On the contrary, it is a weapon which must be used with care and discrimination. In our present situation, the most compelling and urgent task is to accelerate economic development, to resolve the problems of unemployment and inequalities. Since our resources are limited, it is naturally more fruitful to invest them in creating new production facilities, in preference to merely taking over existing units or industries. However, if any privately owned industry is found to be operating against the national interest or is impeding special progress, we will not hesitate to take it over. Any proposal for nationalisation should be subjected to these two tests.

QUESTION : Quite frankly, do you favour nationalisation on ideological grounds like sections of the British Labour Party or is your approach purely pragmatic and should nationalisation become necessary for what your Government regards as national interest, would the settlement of compensation be subject to international arbitration—say the World Bank ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have adopted the system of a mixed economy, which was clearly defined in the Industrial Policy Resolution. There is an active role for the public sector and a clear area for the private sector.

So far as nationalisation is concerned, there is no question of discrimination against foreign enterprise. The compensation which is payable is subject to judicial review in our country. We have always tried to be fair and the usual complaint is that we have been too generous.

QUESTION : Under your new licensing regulation I understand that all foreign concerns are banned from investing in any but the heaviest industrial sectors—notably fertilisers, tractors, steel, heavy engineering and machinery, ship-building and newsprint. Why is that ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There has been much industrial development in the last 20 years. We now have a fairly sophisticated and diversified industrial and scientific base. Every part of it must be fully utilised. Foreign investors frequently insist on importing foreign technology also, even when comparable Indian technology is available. Employing foreign technology also means that there is an outflow of profits, mostly in foreign exchange. We have had collaboration agreements which have not been of real economic benefit to us—in the sense of introducing new industrial processes—but only for the use of certain brand names. Too easy resort to foreign collaboration has also inhibited our initiative in research and development. This naturally causes resentment and frustration among our scientists and technologists. We are now understandably more selective. Where foreign investment brings with it an advanced technology in which we ourselves are deficient, it is welcome. It is also welcome in projects which require a large foreign exchange component, or in industries which are highly export-oriented.

QUESTION : German businessmen, for example, automobile manufacturers, complain they are being excluded from the sectors of the economy which almost certainly in the next few decades will show the greatest growth—consumer goods. Do you not feel that this exclusion of foreign investment from the high profitability sectors and their channelling into capital goods sectors where growth and profits are likely to be slower tends to prejudice the whole economic atmosphere for foreign investment ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The emphasis in our development plans is to reconcile the objectives of rapid growth with that of purposive egalitarianism. In this circumstance, it is inevitable for Government to evolve an order or priorities in the sphere of industrial growth. Unbridled expansion of certain luxury consumer articles is discouraged, as the resources could be better deployed elsewhere. There is no question of discriminating against foreign businessmen in this matter, domestic as well as foreign investors are being treated alike.

QUESTION : In the context of the last question, Indian diplomats in Western countries have suggested privately that India with an automobile production of something under 50,000 units a year is contemplating the production of an Indian people's car. In such a project would German manufacturers such as the Volkswagen with their unrivalled experience in this field be considered either as a partner with an Indian group or

in a mixed enterprise with your government or in similar line to the current FIAT project in the Soviet Union ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I should not like to comment on this, since the small car question has become rather controversial in our country. Various proposals which are before the Government are being studied.

QUESTION : Following the previous question, do you feel that foreign companies could form a partnership with an Indian nationalized industry ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Fruitful industrial collaboration between the Government of India and foreign companies is not a new proposition. We have such arrangements in the refineries of Cochin and Madras and the fertilizer project at Goa. Oil India is another example. We are ready to consider proposals in the light of specific needs and if they are in keeping with our national interest.

QUESTION : Increasing indications are being received from German firms presently in partnership with Indian groups that they are being forced to decrease their financial holding in the joint company and that in fact their Indian partners are only interested in using such joint ventures to get German industrial and technological know-how on the cheap. As I understand, you recently discussed the same issue with British Cabinet Minister Mrs. Judith Hart and with Sir Norman Kipping of the Confederation of British Industries; what do you feel can be done to improve the situation ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Government have always taken a positive attitude whenever foreign companies associated with Indian partners have sought to expand their capital. Such capital expansion has generally been granted freely, with the minor proviso that Indian equity participation should be allowed to go up at the margin. A U.S. mission returned to Germany with a feeling that India provides an attractive market for investment.

QUESTION : German businessmen who are sympathetic to further investment in India are concerned by two political factors : (a) The increasing support which your Government is receiving for quite understandable tactical reasons from Marxist parties in Lok Sabha; (b) Developments in Communist-governed States such as Kerala and the current imposition of Central rule in West Bengal. Can you say anything to allay their fears and how great do you honestly feel is the likelihood of a Communist or quasi-Communist development in a country with such big problems created by population and poverty ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Indian politics today is in ferment and people in every party are doing serious rethinking about their professions and

policies. In fact many party labels have ceased to have meaning. In the same party you find groups owing different emotional allegiances. Certain Leftist or regional parties support us conditionally, that is they support us on some of our programmes. The nationalisation of banks and the measures we have initiated against economic monopolies are examples. These have been a basic part of our political objectives for years before the latest division of our party. A few other parties also happen to have the same objectives. It is natural that they should vote with us, if they sincerely believe in these objectives. We have made no alliances and no commitments.

West Bengal and Kerala pose special problems. The two Communist parties won a large proportion of votes in both these States in successive elections. This also happened in France and Italy during the War. We have to meet this challenge by demonstrating to the people that our programmes and methods are better. This is the only way in which a Communist challenge, or a Rightist challenge, can be met. This is what we are trying to do. A middle-of-the road approach, which is slightly Left of Centre, is the only stable way for India.

QUESTION : Do you feel that parliamentary democracy of the Westminster type inherited from the *Raj* is necessarily best suitable to a country in a stage of development such as yours ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Democracy is more responsive to the people's needs. Participation in the actual process of Government at all levels strengthens the people. Any authoritarian alternative might produce some immediate results but would solve no long-term problems. We have seen this in other countries. The Presidential system of the United States of America also may not help us, because that system leads to greater conflict between legislature and executive.

QUESTION : One member of your Planning Commission has been quoted as saying that India could achieve a substantially higher rate of growth by abandoning all licensing restrictions on production and investment, and maintaining only foreign exchange controls on the import of capital, raw materials, components and know-how. Is your Government likely to move in that direction ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : All our industries have to function within the framework of national objectives and be subject to the provisions of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act. Our industrial policy offers considerable scope for the expansion of the private sector in a large number of industries. Government is trying to liberalise all irksome restrictions and have just announced several measures of relaxation. Companies which have fixed assets of less than Rs. 10 million will not need licences now if they are not auxiliaries of the big industrial houses,

if they produce articles which are not listed as core sector industries or those reserved for cotton and small-scale sector. Companies which have fixed assets between Rs. 10 to Rs. 50 million and already have licences, can also expand to the extent of another 10 million. We have permitted freer imports of raw materials for firms falling under such categories. It is only in the case of the large industrial houses that the Government considers it necessary to exercise a degree of surveillance, so that social priorities are ensured and further concentration of economic power is avoided.

QUESTION : The Suez Canal has now been closed for something approaching 3 years. How serious is this for your trade? And what loss has India suffered as a result of the closure of the Suez Canal?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The closure of the Suez Canal has adversely affected the development of our trade with Western Europe. Our exports have suffered more than imports. That is because freight is an important component in the cost of some of the items we export to Western Europe, as for example, cotton seed cake, groundnut extractions, fish meal, mineral ores, hides and skins and leather, coir goods, etc. Incidentally the closure of the Suez Canal has provided an impetus for the export of some of our non-traditional items to some destinations bordering on the Indian Ocean. On the whole, however, the resumption of traffic through the Canal will be helpful for the development of our trade with Western Europe.

QUESTION : The recent Annual Report of your Ministry of External Affairs has been interpreted abroad as being increasingly in favour of the Soviet Union. The Report praised in particular the plan of Mr. Brezhnev for an Asian collective security pact. What is your Government's policy towards such a Pact and how do you view for example the increasing concentration of Soviet warships in the Indian Ocean?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Such an interpretation is incorrect and wholly unwarranted. In fact, I wonder whether those who give that interpretation have actually read the annual report, or are basing their opinion on misleading versions which have appeared in the Press and, I am told, in Britain. We have repeatedly made our views on the Brezhnev plan abundantly clear. We do not approve of military pacts or defence alliances. We favour economic co-operation. We do not want the Indian Ocean to be subjected to Big Power competition.

QUESTION : It has long been known that India has the capacity and the know-how to produce sophisticated nuclear weapons. Until now your Government has shown admirable restraint but the American Intelligence Report suggests that China will have a long-range delivery weapon by

the mid-seventies. Is that likely to change your decision on the manufacture of nuclear weapons?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do not believe that the bomb will afford any real protection. On the contrary, it will add to the tensions of an already complex situation.

QUESTION : Your father has long been regarded as the architect of the group of uncommitted nations which came to play a powerful role notably in the United Nations. Does your Government still adhere to this policy? Or is it the case that has been alleged for geo-political reasons your tending more towards the Soviet Union?

THE PRIME MINISTER : My father's policy of non-alignment has even greater validity today and we have not deviated from it. It is not at all true to say that we lean towards one country or group or another. We do believe in seeking out areas of agreement and co-operation with all countries and are trying to enlarge these areas.

My father did not envisage India pushing herself forward but more a working together especially of those countries which have common problems. Naturally we do not wish to shirk our responsibility in the international organisation.

QUESTION : Do you feel that the uncommitted nations as a group can still play as important a role as they did in your father's days?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes.

QUESTION : And now may I ask you what may be a hot question. With your personal cordial relation with Soviet leaders such as Mr. Kosygin what result do you expect from the current Bonn-Moscow attempts to achieve a European detente and particularly an improvement in inter-German relationship?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We warmly welcome any attempts to resolve tensions and antagonisms in Europe. It is not enough merely to freeze controversies, they might hot up at any moment. We have taken special note of Chancellor Brandt's declaration that he will work for better inter-German relationship. We certainly wish success to any such move.

New Steel Plants

THE FOURTH FIVE YEAR PLAN has a provision of Rs. 110 crores for the development of new steel plants during the current Plan period. The Government have decided that work should be started during this plan period on two integrated plants for the production of mild steel and the third one for special steels. Various alternative sites have been examined for this purpose both from the point of view of techno-economic suitability and from that of regional development.

Taking into account the advantages of locating a steel plant in the proximity of a port, which should facilitate the export of steel products as well as the import to the extent necessary of the required raw materials, the Government have decided that one of the new steel plants which is to be taken up during the Fourth Plan period would be located in the coastal region of Visakhapatnam.

There are vast resources of iron ore of high quality around Hospet which, in the absence of a steel plant in the area, are at present being utilised only partially for export purposes. To use this raw material resources adequately and, at the same time, to develop the industrial potential of the area, it has been decided that a steel plant should be constructed in the Hospet area in the State of Mysore.

The proposed plants at Hospet and Visakhapatnam will mainly produce mild steel. There is, however, a considerable demand in the country for special steels, and a good deal of this demand is from the States of Tamil Nadu and Mysore where there are large number of consuming units for such steel engaged in the manufacture of engineering goods including automobiles and automobile ancillaries. To meet this demand and also to encourage further industrial development of the area, the Government have decided to locate a special steels plant in the District of Salem, based on the local iron ore and Neyveli lignite.

The Government propose to initiate the necessary preliminary work on these three steel plants within the Fourth Plan period and with the utmost expedition. As the new steel plants are to be designed by Indian engineers and equipment is to be manufactured in India, the programme of construction and erection will have to be suitably drawn up to fit in with the availability of technical personnel and the manufacturing capacities of the engineering units which would be called upon to supply the bulk of the equipment for these plants.

With the growing strength of the country's industry and economy, the demand for steel will progressively increase in future. On a modest estimate, it is expected that the capacity for steel making will have to be doubled every ten years. New steel plants may, therefore, have to be

Statement in Lok Sabha, April 17, 1970

erected, apart which many three now decided. As regards the location of future steel plants, we are fortunate in having a number of other sites which are *prima facie* suitable for such development. These will be taken into consideration in the process of rapid development of the steel industry which we now envisage.

Workers and Management

OUR PRESIDENT, Shri V. V. Giri, has sent a message to this Convention saying how happy he is about it. I am reading the last paragraph of it. He says : "We are today engaged in a radical transformation of our society. The Government would have to play a crucial role in economic development. It has to reconcile competing claims to protect the relatively weak and also provide the basic guide-lines along which the nation is to proceed towards the goal of economic progress with social justice. Whatever we may do will have to be within the ambit of the Directive Principles of State Policy adumbrated in our Constitution which stipulates that the ownership and control of the material resources of a community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good and that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment."

Let me, first of all, say that this venture has my blessings. I am glad that this step has been taken; it is an important step and it is a gathering which should be repeated. It is important for different sections who are concerned with the public sector to meet, to exchange views, to clarify what we mean by our declaration that we want socialism and to make concrete suggestions as to how this can be brought about more effectively. Some suggestions have been given; the more you think of the problem and the more you progress, many others can come to mind. I think it is true that, although we set out to form the public sector with the best of intentions—and the public sector has achieved much—we made it largely on the model of the old existing private sector. This has hampered its growth, this has hampered fresh thinking, this has hampered the spirit of innovation and of constant change and progress which is necessary to keep up with the pace of this changing world of ours. It was said just now that many important decisions have to be taken. That's true enough. But every decision has to be backed with commitment, not of a few people but of a large enough section to be able to have

From speech at the All-India Convention on Role of Workers and Management in the Development of Socialistic Economy, New Delhi, May 2, 1970

effective implementation. It has to be backed by Steel the type of tools and the right type of organisation. We are lacking all of these things. We have a great deal of emotional commitment, but not perhaps the sort of commitment which can go all out to achieve a common objective. The will for it is there, the desire for it is there, but something is lacking and I think that in this we should all try and bring about the right type of commitment.

It was sad to hear about the Hindustan Steel and other public sector undertakings and how much abuse and criticism they attract. Now, we know that in our country they are not the only ones who attract criticism, I think I am as good a target as they are, and so is the word 'commitment'. It has become a word which is being given many sinister meanings and connotations. But it is a very simple word and when we have used it in connection either with people, not only the general public, not only people who are in public life and in politics but also those who are in administration, we have at no time meant any kind of regimentation or any kind of blind following of any path. Had we been for that kind of system we would not have chosen parliamentary democracy. We would not have chosen the way of free and frank criticism which we have chosen and which we allow to take place. Criticism is necessary, I think, for any good functioning. But it is true that much of the criticism with regard to the public sector has not always been an informed criticism and it has not always been a disinterested criticism. Let us not think that all those who indulge in these rather wild statements are ignorant of affairs. They are not. They do know the state of affairs and yet some of them deliberately continue to make statements even after information has been given to them. So let us put this whole problem in its proper perspective. Why is the public sector criticised? Why are certain words which we use criticised? Not because anything in itself is considered wrong but because it is a symbol of something much bigger which has to be achieved. Therefore, the criticism is not of this particular item, not of a particular person. The criticism is of the much larger objective. But nobody would dare openly criticise the larger objective.

Nobody can openly say that we are against ending disparities. Nobody will openly say that we are even against socialism in a wider sense of the word. Therefore, they have to find other targets. They have to find ways to divert people's interest from that bigger objective. So, while it is absolutely essential that we have such forums of education for workers and for others, let that education be on a much wider screen. Let there be education about these particular problems but also let it put these problems in the perspective of larger national interest and larger national good. The public sector must be efficient, there can be no two views about it. The public sector must make profit, although profit is not and should not be the only criterion of efficiency. But our whole

society today which may be a transitive society. It is going along certain lines. We call ourselves socialists. We may be sincere socialists. But we will not really bring socialism until some very major changes are brought about in the system we have adopted—willingly of course, and we do believe it to be the right system even in our present situation. To bring about changes through this system of persuasion, of free and open discussion, is the task which faces all of us, whether we are workers, whether we are managers, whether we are in the administration, whether we are high-up or low-down. This is a task in which we all have an equal part to play, and it is only if we understand this and we understand that this change will bring sacrifice and hardship to all.

Any change uproots people. Even though it is a good change, even though it is a change which may bring benefit to the weaker sections, even then it uproots the weaker sections from something or the other until something better comes. So, the question before us is : Are we willing to pay the price ? This is a question which I cannot answer; it is the question which every individual has to ask himself. We know that there is no fairness or justice in society today, justice in the real sense of the word. We know that some people have more and others have less. But to change this it is not enough to say that you take certain steps. A few steps have been taken, other steps will be taken. But by themselves none of these steps is going to change society. Society can be changed if along with policy, along with Government directive, there is a movement amongst the people to change it and that movement has to be along very many lines. It is not just going along one path. It is all along.

Today there is a concerted attack on this forward movement towards change of society by our method, our manner of functioning. Sometimes I think even right causes are exploited in order to attack the bigger objective and this is something which you can sort out when you meet.

Better conditions of work are important. Better conditions of work do mean more reasonable pay. They do mean better working conditions such as place, rooms and all that. But, equally, they mean better relations amongst all those who are working together—workers, management, and all those who are concerned in a particular project, in a particular factory and this perhaps is more important than any of the other conditions. I hope such meetings, such seminars and conferences will achieve this type of better work. The Government has a great deal to do and the Government will do it, although in our present situation it is not always easy to do it. It is easy to say we will do it. It is even easy to take up policy decision. But it is extremely difficult to get a decision implemented in the proper manner. Now, I am not saying this as an excuse because difficulties are there to be overcome and we have every intention of overcoming all difficulties that may arise. But you should know that there are these difficulties, and it is not merely by

wishing or desiring or making a statement that [illegible] Steel [illegible]rcome but by an understanding of the situation and the determination to go ahead, no matter how great the obstacles and how great the difficulties. That is the Government's intention.

The public sector has a very important role to play, not only by its performance but by the feeling of involvement which the workers have. I know that today not all of them have that feeling of involvement. I know that this is also not always their fault. We have not made the effort to give them that feeling of involvement. I know that quite often we have workers who are engaged in the building of a dam who have no idea of what it is, why the dam is being built, what benefits it will bring, and similarly with any other project. We have not made that human effort to treat any project as a joint venture of the workers who construct it, the workers who are going to be there, the scientists, the managers and all the others involved. We have looked at the problem as we would in the old days look at anything and divide people into compartments. So this false divisions must break down. In our society, we have many such divisions; perhaps all societies have them. But we have more than our share. There is a division of religion, there is a division of caste, there is a division of language, of region. All kinds of walls divide one person, one group from another. And all these divisions have weakened us as a nation. During independence movement these divisions were used to weaken the solidarity amongst us. Today also these divisions are quite often used to weaken the solidarity of those who want to stand together, who belong to different castes, who belong to different religions, but who are one in a common objective. Now we must see that nothing happens to weaken this group. We must make every effort to enlarge this group so that it encompasses more and more of our people who are pledged to a particular objective because it is in the interest of this country, to strengthen this country, to strengthen its people, which includes all the people, not any one section of the people.

Therefore all education means not only that we fight for our rights, but also see what effect it will have on other groups. The industrial sector is well organised, its voice is loud, united and therefore it makes a greater impact. But there are many sections in our country whose needs are far greater. But they are not united, they have no one to voice their demand and perhaps they do not even know whether they have any demands. But for that reason their voice cannot be ignored. We cannot say because they are not raising this demand, they do not have any demand. We know that they lack basic necessities. So all problems must be viewed in this larger picture. And I am sure that if we do this, it will be much easier to solve the problems which are before us.

I fully agree that it is not fair to say to the workers that they should not demand anything for themselves. When the management of the

higher-ups are which many much larger sums or far more facilities, there is a natural reaction. And for that it has to be viewed on all-India basis and we have to find some way out. But in the meantime if this type of confrontation goes on, it does not help the situation. So, when we sit down we must find some way to make the changes which are necessary without creating a situation where our forward march may stop. We are at a stage of development when any kind of stoppage is very harmful to us. Today we have to view the national problem in the international perspective also to some extent. We cannot be blind to what is happening in other parts of the world because we are affected by them. So all our problems must be seen in this larger perspective. We have naturally to see that workers have a fair deal, but the workers must see how to increase efficiency and how to create a spirit of co-operation in each project, in each unit, where everyone is competing, not for himself but to see how the plan or the project can be more productive, can be better not merely from the point of view of profit or the money it brings but the quality of its product. We should have a feeling of pride in what we produce, a feeling of pride in using what we produce. So there are many problems which are inter-connected and each one is as important as the other.

Some steps have of course been taken; for instance, the payment of bonus and so on which, though limited in their scope, are steps in the right direction. These will help our workers to have a greater desire to help in the better functioning of their projects. But I hope that you will not always look at the problem from the question : If we get certain such things, then only can we work better. That, unfortunately, has been the attitude of the society. But we want to make a new type of society, where this kind of attitude is not there. I agree that you cannot ever remove it from human nature. But it is not the only consideration, it is a secondary consideration. I know of course that it is only when certain basic needs are provided that one can say : "Do not look towards these things." It goes without saying that yet in times of war, in times of grave calamity, people do set aside even what they need. They do give their all to working together to meet that calamity.

Now we are not facing a calamity in that sense, but we are facing a danger—danger to our unity, danger to our progress. It is a big danger and we can meet it only if we are very clear in our mind that this is a threat which has to be met and it can be met only with the unity of workers—of everybody who works in the public sector and all those in other sectors who believe in these things.

I am not giving a definition of our objective because I think most of you are clear in your mind about it. Socialism is not a given, labelled doctrine; it is a changing concept. As we grow, as we develop, as the needs of the nation develop, socialism also will change. But certain basic things are there. The method of functioning—how it should

function for the public good and not for private Steel. the distributive side of it, all these parts are there and they do not change. The main point is that there should be greater equality in the country. That is the basic objective, whether you call it by one name or another. We have accepted socialism because we believe that that is the most effective way of taking us towards this type of equality which is absolutely necessary to any democracy. We believe that democracy cannot be real without socialism nor can socialism be real without democracy. But to make both of them real we should be clear about our objective and we must be clear that the objective cannot be got merely by slogans but by working extremely hard, by being willing to sacrifice and, above all, by being united. That is why the time has come today when we should try to shed some of the constrictions with which we have bound ourselves, whether it is red tape in offices or other types of tapes with which we bind ourselves in our public functioning. It is time when all people who think alike on these fundamental matters, on economic policy and social policy, on the policy of unity and equality and social justice get together to fight the forces which want to resist this progress.

I am sure that your seminar and other similar conferences which you might hold will help in this process of clear thinking which will enable us to go forward. So I give my blessings to this conference which is ending and to all of you individually and in groups so that when you go back to your work, you will go with a new enthusiasm and dynamism because socialism can only work if our public sector is vigorous and dynamic and that responsibility rests as much on your shoulders as it does on ours.

Food for Millions

I AM GLAD to be here with you to give you my good wishes at this important conference. We know what tremendous problems India has faced. We know we have achieved some success—a success due as much to the guidance we had from outside organisations—from the work of the Central and State Governments and even more so from the co-operation and the hard work put in by our own farmers.

As was said just now here, we cannot rest on our laurels. The problem is still a gigantic one. It is still a problem of adequate food, because we must remember that the word 'adequate' does not have the same meaning for all. There are many in our land who live in remote

Inaugural address to the National Food Congress, New Delhi, May 11, 1970

areas or in which many have visited from time to time, who consider adequate what we would not consider as adequate for human beings. So, the problem, first of all, is to reach food to our people. Secondly, to see that it is sufficiently nourishing for them to be able to live a worthwhile and useful life in the service of their region and their people.

We have another problem : even those who can afford to do so do not eat the right type of food. The question of nourishment is most important not only for those who are under-nourished, because they cannot afford anything else, but also important for those who are under-nourished in spite of spending too much on nourishment.

One by one these problems are being tackled. In our Fourth Plan, we have given great importance to the dry land farming and to the people who live in areas which have so far been more backward for various reasons, or who belong to groups which have been more under-privileged. Perhaps the life of any developing country depends a great deal on its food production, its agricultural production. Ours certainly does. Our industrial production and therefore the growth of the country hinges on our agricultural production. It is, therefore, important to the very life of the nation that we should go ahead at a much faster rate. And we have been doing so. But the more we do, the more we perceive the need to go faster still, because all of you, who are field workers, will have realised that solution to any problem raises many new problems. And we have seen how many new problems have been raised in the countryside here.

Shri Jagjivan Ram spoke just now of frustration. Part of the frustration is due to the fact that you see progress in some areas but you do not see it in your village.

You see irrigation in one place but you do not see it in another. And, therefore, you compare and you are impatient. You feel if a thing can be done, why can't it be done immediately. This is one of the big problems that we face.

The problem of unemployment and under-employment is also there. But alongside it is the problem of lack of initiative. I am convinced that if there was greater initiative amongst our people, they could create many new opportunities for themselves, thus not only helping themselves but helping the whole area in which they live.

There are many other problems. I am not mentioning even the problem of agriculture here because all of you are experts and, I think, you know far more about them than I do, and you are going to discuss these matters in detail. I hope that as a result of it we will be fully prepared for the International Conference which we are about to attend and that we would be able to contribute to it usefully with our experience and our ideas for future.

I would like to touch upon a problem which Steel has been concerned with for many years—and I am glad to see that the countries of Europe have now taken it up in a big way—which is the question of the danger of indiscriminate use of chemicals and pesticides and so on. We have heard a great deal of air pollution, water pollution and also the results on human beings as well as the plants and animal life of eating food which has been over-sprayed with pesticides. I am told—I do not know if it is correct and I sincerely hope that it is not—that some tests have shown that people around Delhi have consumed more DDT than almost anyone else in the world.

While pesticides, chemicals, fertilisers and these things are necessary to augment our agricultural production, it is equally necessary that there should be simultaneous education of the people who use these that they should use them with great discrimination, that they should treat their land as not something to be exploited not merely to get as much out of it in as short a period as they can, but as a friend who was helping them and for whose welfare they should be concerned, i.e., the welfare of the land.

We all know how much of our land in India is now eroded because of bad use by the men who live on it or around it. We know what great harm has been done by cutting down of forests or even using grazing land for agriculture. Therefore, in everything that we do, we have to try and find a balance. That is the only long-term view for a better nourished, healthier population.

I hope that you will look into your problems from this larger perspective, that is, the total well-being of the human being and of the plant, animal, bird and insect life which we now find is quite necessary for us in many ways because they keep the ecological balance in nature.

A Charter of Progress

THE DEBATE ON planning is a truly national occasion and I am glad that Hon. Members have taken it seriously even though there has been much criticism. We have got used to such criticism. First it used to be on the very concept of planning. Fortunately, that stage is over and we have come to a phase of development when all parties, I hope, approve of the idea of planning. Some have approved of some portions of the Plan but have reserved their criticism for the

From reply to debate in Rajya Sabha on Fourth Five Year Plan, August 13, 1970

manner in which many programmes have been implemented. There are some who do not at all approve of the manner in which we plan.

Now, obviously, each one of us—that is not as individuals but as representatives of parties—stand for certain ideas and for certain methods of functioning. We have, after considerable thought and deliberation, decided on the sort of Planning Commission which we should have and the manner in which it should work. The Planning Commission consists of independent, non-party, non-political experts; but even they are not solely responsible for the Plan. The Plan is drawn up on the basis of numerous discussions with people at different levels from every single State and, finally, the Plan takes its final shape in the National Development Council in which all the Chief Ministers, many of them belonging to other parties, sit together and express their views. It is true that at these meetings there is also disagreement, not normally on the method of planning but more about how much each State should get. We all know that none of our programmes is adequate for our population's needs. At all times there has to be a balancing between available resources and what our people need, what we think should be done for them or even what should be done for one area or another.

By and large, the Plan is a charter of progress for the next four years. We have some idea of how it has functioned already since it has been in existence for a year. Although this formal discussion on the final Plan is taking place now, we had a very full discussion when the Plan was settled in its draft stage. An Hon. Member said that there was no sense of urgency in the Plan. I think that this is the difference between the Draft Outline and the final document. We have tried to inject a sense of urgency in the final document, and the proof of it is that it has recognised the major problems of the day, whether it be unemployment or regional imbalances or other major problems. The solution to some of these problems brooks no delay and they must be tackled with urgency and with determination. But there are certain conditions in which we must work. There are certain accepted parameters. One is the democratic process. Many people would like us to do several things, some of which, we also agree, are the right things to do. But we are committed to the democratic process, to work with the consent of the people, to take along with us as many of the people and as many of the parties as possible. But sometimes this does slow the process. I think that, even though it makes the process slower, it strengthens the process and it strengthens whatever work we take in hand. Now the second parameter, with which perhaps some people do not agree but which we have set for ourselves, is that of a mixed economy. A mixed economy has many faults but, in the circumstances in the country, our Government—those who preceded me and those who are my colleagues

today—feel that this is one of the conditions which we must set ourselves. I do not think that by 'a mixed economy' it means merely that some big families take advantage of it. Many of the fields, whether it is agriculture or small-scale industry, are in the private sector for the benefit of the smaller man, and under mixed economy of our conception people should be able to take many programmes in hand and work for themselves. I know that some families, some groups, some business houses have taken advantage of a particular situation as it arose immediately after independence, and it is our endeavour to see how we can curb this kind of monopolistic tendency. It is not possible, in the circumstances in which we are, to put a sudden brake. We cannot change this particular situation overnight. It has to be done in a way which gives the least shock to the economy. But it must also be done in a way which lessens the delay. By lessening the shock I do not mean that we go so slow that our programmes become ineffective, because that would be defeating the very purposes for which we are making new programmes. But it does mean that, along with the desire for social justice, which is not only a genuine desire, the practical needs of the country today must be attended to—needs of production and growth.

Sometimes it is said that the Plan is made by city-dwellers who have no idea of the agricultural problems. We have in the Planning Commission agricultural experts and in drawing up the Plan they are in touch with many people all over the country who are actually working in the field or who are themselves concerned with the day-to-day problems of the rural areas. Though I myself happen to be born in a town, not a city, it is one of those hundreds of small towns in India which are very close to the rural areas and are constantly in touch with the problems of the rural areas. My own earliest memories are not only of visits to villages but of thousands, if not lakhs, of peasants, with and without their families, coming to our house to discuss their problems and to put their difficulties before my father and other political leaders who were often there. So, in a way, I have grown up with a very full and deep awareness of the problems of the *kisan*, of his wishes. We realise that the implementation of the land reforms is inextricably linked with the question of social justice for the rural population. In the last twelve months we have tried to mount pressure from all sides so that we could go ahead with these programmes, some of which have been passed but have not been implemented, others which have yet to be enacted. We do realise the importance of this, and when we met the Chief Ministers or the Agriculture Ministers of the States we gave them a time-bound programme and I think that we are going ahead in this. In the States under the President's rule we have tried to set an example by pushing ahead even faster but we cannot slur over the legal, constitutional, and sometimes political difficulties which

State Governments, whether of the Congress or of other parties, have faced when they have set about implementing land reforms. It is these difficulties which, to some extent, have slowed down the pace of implementation. But my own assessment is that these difficulties are increasingly being got over and the State Governments are now displaying a greater sense of urgency and earnestness in enforcing land reforms.

Some parties represented here have taken another method of enforcing land reforms. I must say that this is not a right method. It is not a right method because I do not think that it even gives justice in the long run. It is based on feelings of hatred, of envy and even of the promotion of the acquisitive spirit. One Hon. Member said that had I not been in office, perhaps I myself would have led the land grab movement. I must seriously repudiate this statement. I do not wish to associate myself with anything which will increase lawlessness and the tendency to grab things. In this movement people brought in Gandhiji's name. They also brought in the question of freedom struggle; but the conditions there were entirely different. I had the privilege of being very close to Gandhiji and I know that he did not approve of any movement like this. He had been living under a system which did not permit any change. Often, many things had to be done which perhaps one would not normally approve of. But today change is possible. People have shown that they do change. They have voted for other ideas. They have voted for other parties. They have brought in governments of different hues and views into power. Therefore, all those who are committed to the democratic methods should abide by these rules and processes of democracy.

There are some suggestions for the efficient implementation of land reforms which, in my view, are eminently reasonable. Some Members also suggested that people's representatives at the village level should be associated with the enforcement of land legislation. The central problem which faces our democracy today is to enlist people's participation in the implementation of the Plan, especially in some of those programmes which affect them very closely. No one can sit back and relax thinking that having elected the Government their participation in the processes of Government will be automatically ensured. We have to work actively for such participation and to build up public opinion. But there must be a common understanding between us all and acceptance of the fact that changes will be brought about through persuasion and through peaceful means and that consensus will not be brought about by wielding the big stick by any one. That is why I do not approve of the grabbing because I feel that it is not possible to promote understanding in these conditions.

The other question which has been agitating Hon. Members for some time is the Government's Industrial Licensing Policy and the role of the large industrial houses. We do stand committed to an

equitable distribution of wealth and income, but equally we must have production and growth because without these we cannot make an impact on the great poverty in our country. The House should look at the Industrial Licensing Policy as a whole and its total impact on the economy. We have reserved a large field for the small-scale industry and a far larger field for small and medium entrepreneurs. It is only in respect of the core sector, where there is heavy investment, that large industrial houses have been allowed to come in. If the managerial, financial and technical resources of the public sector, as they exist today, were unlimited, then certainly I would have taken a decision here and now that this field should be completely reserved for the public sector and that no licences should be given to the large industrial houses.

We however know that the situation is not such. The public sector has grown considerably and we want to build it up to a position of commanding influence in our economy. But in respect of projects in the core sector which the public sector is not in a position to take up because of want of financial or technical or other resources, the choice before us is either to import what we need or else to allow some of these bigger industrial houses to come in and give the country the benefit of higher production and employment. No decision has been taken which is in conflict with the objectives of our licensing policy, and Government does have adequate powers to regulate, control and direct the large industrial houses and to ensure that they function in conformity with national interests. We are looking at this problem constantly. Our constant direction to all Ministries is that these houses must function in conformity with national interests.

The other major question is the rise in prices. We have not been complacent about the price situation, nor can we afford to be. I am fully conscious of the deep distress that the rise in prices causes to all people, more specially to the vulnerable sections such as landless labourers, fixed income groups, and so on. But let us not be swept off our feet by alarmists who interpret the rise in prices as a prelude to some kind of galloping inflation. We should get the facts straight about how much rise there is and what items have contributed to this rise. I have the figures for two days; one, the week ending July 18, 1970, and there the wholesale price index is higher by 3.5 per cent as compared to the price index a year ago. The other is the wholesale index for the week ending July 25, and that is higher by 3.3 per cent than a year ago for the same week. The index for foodgrains is lower by 1.5 per cent, and except for rice the prices of all other foodgrains are ruling lower than last year's level. The Government's objective is to hold the prices of four items of family consumption stable.

While rice prices have increased by 1.7 per cent, the prices of wheat, jowar and bajra are lower than they were the same week a year ago.

So the trend in prices has underlined the crucial importance of taking all steps to stimulate the production of commercial crops. Mention in this connection was made of the importance of cotton. Some of these items have been neglected in the past and we must make every effort to get research and other measures—which were taken with regard to wheat—extended to these items. Growth with stability will be within our reach if we do not slacken and maintain the rate of progress achieved in agricultural production. That is why we are also pressing ahead with the building up of buffer stocks of foodgrains.

Some one said that in a developing economy prices must go up, and he spoke just in time. We find that the rise in prices is not a phenomenon unique to India but is found in most places in the world today. At the same time, we want to keep the prices down for the consumer. Simultaneously we have to assure remunerative prices to agricultural producers and maintain incentives for increasing production. In fact, when a statement was made by my colleague, the Finance Minister, in Parliament the other day about rise in prices and the steps taken to arrange for imports of edible oils, etc., one of the Chief Ministers, not belonging to my party, wrote to us immediately stressing the need that we should not in the process overlook the need to assure remunerative prices to producers. Therefore, at all times you have to try and maintain a balance between different means.

The other major problem is unemployment. Up to now the Plans and the National Sample Surveys have all been giving figures. When I said that they were not correct, I was not expressing my personal view or the view of a particular Ministry or Department. The House knows that an Expert Committee was set up to look into this matter. They have come up with the view that the methods for collecting these figures were not right and, therefore, they do not think that the figures are correct. And as we know, these various figures given by different bodies are conflicting. They may be higher or lower. That is not the point. The point is, when we know that the figures are not correct, there is not much sense in placing those figures before the House. But this Committee has also set out the various steps to be taken immediately for getting more correct figures.

We are trying to expedite it. We have asked the State Governments and I hope that we will get the figures, if not of the entire country, at least of the special districts which have been selected for special programmes. I think we will get these figures very soon. Some programmes have been outlined in the Plan for dealing with this problem.

Nobody will claim, neither does the Plan claim—that there will be an adequate solution to the question of unemployment in one stroke. But we have made a beginning by opening out many avenues, schemes for rural employment and schemes for urban employment. We certainly think that these will make some dent in this figure of the unemployed.

I entirely agree with the Hon. Member that the system of education also needs to be geared up so that young people who get their degrees can immediately get into some job. But this is such a big problem—the question of changing the educational system. It can only be dealt with on a national scale and with the co-operation of all political parties. I do not know whether the Hon. Members would like me to go into these employment schemes. Some of them are Small Farmers' Scheme, Marginal Farmers' Scheme, Agro-Service centres, Scheme of Rural Works in Drought-Affected Areas, institutional finances through banks, and also something with regard to employment of engineers and so on. But these schemes are far from adequate. They only make a beginning and I think these will open out a feeling for the young people to use initiative in creating jobs for themselves. This is so with any nation in order to grow, to develop and to advance. They must learn how to make the best use of adversity. It was really out of the drought situation that much of the agricultural strategy had been planned. To be able to go ahead faster, the strategy was accepted by the farmers; they found themselves in a difficult situation where only a change in methods could help them out. So they immediately adopted this change in methods. Therefore, a difficult problem will help to reorient our thinking and the thinking of our young people so that they get more resourceful and use their initiative. Then there are many opportunities for self-employment in our country. There are many villages which need services, which are willing to pay for the services and which can be served by some of the unemployed. But today there is a sense of insecurity in taking up such jobs. The banks are helping in this. Even so, there is some hesitation. I hope this state of affairs will soon change as indeed it is already changing.

When I said earlier that nobody had given an alternative Plan, some friends opposite called out that they had what they called a Swadeshi Plan. Of course, the word "Swadesh", like all words, is sometimes stretched to have all kinds of meaning. The present Plan, as it is today, requires a 28 per cent increase in income to be ploughed back for investment. It calls for mobilisation of resources of Rs. 3,200 crores and most of us here feel that it is very difficult task. This Swadeshi Plan calls for a marginal saving rate of 40 to 50 per cent and involves mobilisation of additional resources to the tune of Rs. 9,600 crores over the five-year period, that is, an additional taxation of Rs. 1,600 crores in a single year.

In a children's classic there is a mention of "Never, Never Land". It seems to me that some people live in the "Never, Never Land". For them the solution of the problem seems to be an easy one. They say "cut out foreign aid, have levies on imports, have a pie in the sky and a bomb in the pocket and you will solve the problem. Economic self-reliance and security all in one stroke". Exponents of this philosophy

are welcome to practise it if ever they have the opportunity of doing so. I personally feel that they will find out that they have been deluding themselves, if not others.

The Government is fully aware of the importance of agriculture. Agriculture, as we all know, contributes 50 per cent of the national income and provides livelihood for about 70 per cent of our people. Apart from the outlay shown under the heading "Agricultural Production", their money needs are being met on a large scale through various co-operatives, banks and so on. Also much of what is put under the allotment for fertilisers, rural electrification, etc., are really all to build up our agriculture. More pump sets were energised during the three years of the Annual Plan than were in position in 1966. In the Fourth Plan 1.55 million pump sets are proposed to be energised. The number of pump sets energised will thus be doubled in the five-year period.

My good friend sitting opposite said that the Plan is out of date. So far as we know, in the first year of the Plan the projected rate of growth, i.e. 5.5 per cent, has been achieved. Food production has been 100 million tonnes and industrial production has increased by 7 per cent. Therefore, the economy should grow at the rate of 5.5 per cent as estimated in the Plan. While reference was made to the downward revision of some targets—for instance, fertilisers and petroleum crude—other items where the targets have been raised were conveniently ignored.

Some very useful points have been made about animal husbandry, especially about the difficulties of the nomadic tribes, and grasslands, and about cutting down of forests. These are very real problems, especially that of forests, because in our earnestness to help the landless, we should not make the mistake of cutting down more forests. As it is, we have cut down far more forests than we should have and this has affected the land around, has affected rainfall and created many new problems. So each problem has to be seen alongside with many others. If we try to solve one problem by itself, quite often new problems are created, which create difficulties even for the original problem.

I have been travelling a great deal and wherever I go, I find the people are very certain of what they want. To be restless is something different. The people are certain of what they want. They are also certain of what changes they want. And it is up to us to try and bring about those changes as quickly as possible through democratic and constitutional means. Well, if it had been humanly possible to have an ideal plan here or anywhere in the world, I am sure, somebody would have produced it. But it has not been produced either in India or in any other country. An ideal is something towards which you work. It is not something that you can immediately put into action. An ideal itself is a moving thing in the sense that the needs of our people are not stagnant. As they get something, they will want, and rightly want, other things, and we are trying towards them.

It is on the whole a small Plan compared with the needs of the Indian people. I want to say—I do not know how many Members will agree with me—that I do have grand dreams for this country and I think all the people of India, especially the young people of India, do have grand dreams. No people can survive or grow unless they do have such grand dreams and unless they aim higher than they can grasp or reach.

All of us have before us a vision of India, an India which is strong and prosperous, a country which will produce some day 100 million tonnes of steel per year, one billion kilowatts of power, when no family will know the pangs of hunger. But this vision has to be translated into reality through hard work and dedication and sacrifice. While drawing up the Plan, we have to combine our idealism with a realistic appraisal of our resources and our capabilities in this short time.

I am sure that Hon. Members know that this Plan is already in the process of implementation in every State, regardless of whether it has a coalition government or Congress government or non-Congress government. Also, while it is being implemented, we are constantly in touch with the Planning Commission, and the administration along with all these bodies at the State level. We should pledge our support to the Plan so that if it is not adequate, we can see how by implementing it and fulfilling the targets sooner we can raise still more resources to do the many things which we have not been able to indicate in the Plan. I am sure that this is possible.

Report on Unemployment

THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS on Unemployment Estimates set up by the Planning Commission has submitted its Report. Copies of the Report have been sent to the Parliament Library for information and use of Members.

The general conclusions of the Committee are :

(i) The concepts of labour force and of measurement of unemployment and under-employment in terms of man-years, as adopted in developed economies, are unsuitable for an economy like ours, with its preponderance of self-employment and production within household enterprise, and considerable seasonable unemployment or under-employment.

Statement in Lok Sabha, November 11, 1970

(ii) The past estimates of unemployment and under-employment have been unavoidably subject to an unknown margin of error. Such estimates presented in one-dimensional magnitude are neither meaningful nor useful as indicators of the economic situation, and might, therefore, be given up.

(iii) Many of the limitations in the estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment are inherent in the socio-economic conditions of our country, and cannot be wholly overcome by conceptual refinements or improvements in the techniques of estimation.

(iv) Studies should be undertaken to obtain data on different segments of the labour force, taking into account important distinguishing characteristics such as region, rural-urban residence, status of worker, educational attainment, age, sex, etc., and to identify separately the employment likely to be generated for different categories of workers in different sectors of the economy.

(v) Various suggestions have also been made regarding the collection and presentation of data by agencies such as the Census, National Sample Survey and Employment Exchanges.

The various suggestions are being examined in consultation with the specialised agencies dealing with employment and manpower such as the Central Statistical Organisation, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, the Directorate General of Employment and Training, the Registrar General's Office, etc. It will take some more time before the various suggestions made by the Committee and the comments received from the various organisations on the Report are analysed and to decide what further studies and surveys should be taken up in pursuance of these recommendations.

Job Opportunities

THE GOVERNMENT ARE taking urgent steps to generate employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas. The details of the various programmes being undertaken in the different development sectors have been spelt out in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) document, and the memorandum entitled "Towards Growth with Social Justice" presented along with the Budget for the year 1970-71.

Statement in Lok Sabha, November 11, 1970

The Fourth Plan lays considerable emphasis on labour-intensive schemes such as roads, minor irrigation, soil conservation, rural electrification, village and small-scale industries, housing and urban development. The Planning Commission has also suggested the necessity of giving greater employment-orientation to the programmes to be undertaken under the Fourth Five Year Plan by the Central Ministries, the State Governments and the Union Territories. Special emphasis is being laid on the promotion of medium and small-scale industries and a scheme for providing technical and managerial know-how as well as necessary credit through the State Bank of India, nationalised banks, and other institutions like the National Small Industries Corporation to technically qualified persons to come forward as entrepreneurs is being implemented. Emphasis is also being laid on the adoption of appropriate labour-intensive technology with due regard to efficiency and economy. The problem of marketing the produce of small-scale industries is also being looked into.

A conference of Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories was held in June 1970 where the various special schemes such as the small farmers' agencies and rural works programmes (including schemes for chronically drought-affected areas) were discussed with the State Governments/Union Territories to ascertain their views and difficulties in implementing these schemes. In order to ensure necessary coordination in respect of schemes for rural development and employment a Central Committee for Coordination of rural development and employment has been constituted. A suggestion to set up employment cell, which would coordinate the effort at the State level, is also under examination in the States.

It is also proposed to take necessary steps for strengthening career advising and vocational guidance in Universities and schools as also to introduce such services wherever they do not exist at present. Simultaneously, a programme of training-in-industry and re-orientation of existing training programmes with a view to making persons, particularly, engineers and craftsmen, better equipped for self-employment and employment has also been taken in hand.

The feasibility of undertaking pilot schemes in selected districts with a view to ascertaining the precise nature, extent and pattern of rural unemployment, and hereafter to provide suitable employment opportunities which would result in the creation of development works and assets is being looked into.

As some immediate steps have to be taken to expand employment opportunities, a special scheme for providing employment in rural areas is also under consideration. The Government are thus making all possible efforts to augment the employment opportunities in rural and urban areas. However, the extent to which new employment opportunities will be generated on account of the various measures

being undertaken cannot be precisely quantified due to paucity of reliable data.

Statistics and Economic Growth

MAY I EXTEND a very warm welcome to all the statisticians of the Commonwealth who are here today, and say how glad I am that they are meeting in Delhi? I hope that they will be enabled to see at first hand something of the changes which are taking place in our country, in our industry and in our agriculture. We have, as you no doubt know, immense problems and vast unfinished tasks. But I hope that you will look upon India not as a country beset with problems but as a country with a courageous heart, engaged in meeting a great variety of challenges.

In our own long history there have been epochs where statistics were collected and employed with the care not generally equalled elsewhere in those days. The great treatise on political economy, Kautilya's *Arthashastra,* gives details of the variety of the economic and administrative information which was maintained by the Mauryan Empire three centuries before the Christian era. In a medieval period a powerful Sultan of Delhi, Allauddin, adopted a policy of price stabilization and rationing, for which he ordered an elaborate programme of fact-gathering. The Mughals also collected administrative statistics as we can see from *Ain-e-Akbari,* written in the time of the Emperor Akbar in the 16th century. Our dicennial census, now a hundred years old, is known as much for its accuracy as for the great variety of economic and social information it records.

After our independence we adopted economic planning as a strategy in our fight against poverty and social injustice. We felt the need for information which until then had not been collected or tabulated. As Prof. Mahalanobis has pointed out, quite often we followed the wrong path. But fortunately we have had some pioneers in the field who have done bold work in social analysis. You are all familiar with their work and I need not name them. Prof. Mahalanobis who is with us today symbolises the intellectual dynamism and creativeness of our statisticians. The Indian Statistical Institute, which he has founded and guided, is one of our finest institutions. With the initiation of economic planning, the rapid expansion of

Inaugural address to the Seventh Conference of Commonwealth Statisticians, New Delhi, November 16, 1970

statistical activity becomes inescapable. The Central Statistical Unit which was established in 1949 was expanded to form the Central Statistical Organisation in 1951. Its main functions are to advise the Union Ministries and State Governments, on procedures of data collection and to indicate standards to improve the quality and content of national statistics. The C.S.O. has also been entrusted with the compilation and publication of national income estimates.

Another important statistical undertaking is the National Sample Survey which conducts countrywide sample surveys on a continuing basis and furnishes data on production and consumption. These organisations have done useful work and have helped us to become one of the more advanced among the developing countries. But it would not be correct to claim that even our statisticians are in a position to give a full picture of our vast country with its complex and contradictory conditions. In India you will find scientific evidence for any point of view that you may wish to advance. Anything that you say about us would be true of some part of India and yet not be the whole truth. Here, as elsewhere, the administration is burdened with superfluous paper work, forms and documents proliferate and much money is spent, but this is not always accompanied by systematic and perceptive analysis of the information collected. I am tempted to agree with Dr. Borlaug, the agricultural scientist, who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize. He was with us a short time ago and in one of his speeches he remarked that if by some mutation, the human stomach was enabled to digest cellulose, then it might be possible to feed all the world's people with the paper accumulated in Government offices.

One of the major debates in our country concerns unemployment, the extent of it as well as remedies that have to be undertaken. Prof. Mahalanobis has already told us something about what was done about this. But recently some economists and statisticians who were asked to examine the available figures in use revealed, somewhat disconcertingly, that the existing statistics were inadequate and unscientific. India is predominantly agricultural and is ruled by the rhythm of the monsoon and our joint family system is still very strong. It is difficult to draw a margin between unemployment and under-employment as can be done in urban industrial societies with the immediate family as a unit. The yardsticks of unemployment developed elsewhere are not strictly relevant to us. Thus we need more reliable figures to assist in the formulation of an appropriate employment policy.

In two decades of development in India growth itself has given rise to new problems. The new wealth and productive capacities which have been added could not be evenly distributed among our various regions and strata of society. The poorest sections are not making as much progress as the better off. Hence in the process

disparities seem to be increasing. These disparities are the biggest political factors in our politics. Economic analysts and statisticians must give us a far clearer picture of development and help us to make purposeful advance with our policy of growth with social justice and social equality.

In the last two decades we have undertaken and completed the development of the infrastructure. We have now to embark upon a series of specific and related policies, designed to find solutions for specific aspects of development. Our statistical tools have, therefore, to become more sophisticated. At the same time, we expect our statisticians to help the general public to understand that our problems must be solved in our own context. Research centres and international organisations sometimes take up exercises in international comparisons. These do help but not in all cases. For they tend to be weighted in favour of concepts which have been developed in advanced societies. For example, the obsession with growth rate creates social problems, if in this effort we neglect the social consequences. Statisticians should educate the people against the danger of over-simplification. They should remember also and help people to remember that the figures which they employ deal with living problems and human beings, not inert abstractions. For example, in a population census an individual might be reduced to a figure. But he continues to exist in a world of reality with his own motivations, hopes, fears, successes and failures. In this sense the 555 million people of India represent as many problems together with their action and inter-action. Non-statisticians often make rude remarks about statistics. However, none can deny that the complexity of our problems can be crossed only with the help of statistics which would facilitate rational decisions at social, economic and political levels.

The Commonwealth consists of advanced and developing countries. Through Commonwealth organisations, we have been able to exchange much useful information. In India we have always followed the policy of placing at the disposal of fellow members of the Commonwealth and the United Nations, whatever skills and training facilities have been established in our country. Indian statisticians have rendered useful service in a number of countries in Africa and Asia. The Commonwealth today is facing many challenges. India has made a significant contribution to the making of the Commonwealth as we know it today. We are, therefore, interested in its survival and renewal. Experts in search of knowledge can help to see our problems in the larger perspective. For if the Commonwealth is to survive and make itself relevant to each of its members we must discover areas of co-operation between us. And co-operation can be effective only if all are equal partners and consideration is given to basic ideals and to the interests and feelings of member-countries. I hope this meeting of statisticians

will help in the process of seeking and finding new relevance for the Commonwealth.

Sharing with the Have-nots

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Associated Chambers is an important event and the deliberations of this conference will be followed with interest by all those who are interested in the progress and welfare of this country.

There is a tendency at such conferences to speak from positions instead of attempting a genuine meeting of minds. There is much that Government and industry can do together, because Government and the business community are partners in economic progress and we cannot really afford to talk across barricades.

I thought it a little intriguing that you, Mr President, should feel it necessary to present what you call the "facets of legitimacy" for private business and entrepreneurship. Surely this has been made explicit in our Plans. From Plan to Plan, the total volume of private sector activity has grown, even though the relative share of the public sector has increased. There is therefore hardly any justification for speaking of any "ideological split" during the Second and the Third Plan periods. The Second and Third Plans have laid the foundations of heavy industry, and this was done within the framework of the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956. Without such widening of the base, further growth would not have been possible. It is this strengthening of the industrial base which has stimulated the expansion of industry in both the sectors—public as well as private.

I am sure the distinguished people assembled here will concede that the contribution which industry has made, or the growth of the industry, would simply not have been possible without the Government's help. But this very important fact is ignored in every single speech. Today also, business wants help from the Government; it wants help from the financial institutions of the Government; it wants all kinds of support and help. It is not prepared to take risk and go ahead with any scheme. So when we are talking of a free and frank discussion, let us not think that freedom and frankness relate to only one compartment. Life consists of different compartments—and certainly in India it does—and if you close your eyes to other compartments I am afraid, it is neither you nor the country, nor any of us who are going to gain.

From speech at the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, December 5, 1970

The rationale of our mixed economy has been the need to steer clear of the extremes of ideologies, whether capitalist or any other. Mixed economy is a third alternative which, while extending the sphere of public ownership and control in vital and strategic sectors of the economy, retains free markets. Several years ago, Jawaharlal Nehru articulated this as a major premise of our emerging economy when he said—and I quote : "If we do not ultimately solve the basic problems of food, clothing, housing and so on, it will not matter whether we call ourselves capitalists, socialists, communists or anything else. If we fail to solve these problems, we shall be swept away and somebody else will come in and try to solve them. So ultimately these major problems of the day are not going to be solved by argument or by war but by the method that succeeds in delivering the goods.....that method need not necessarily be an extreme method belonging to either of these two rival ideologies. It may be something in between". And that is what the Government has been trying to find.

The achievement of social objectives is not antithetical to the existence of the private sector. As Aneurin Bevan used to say : "The victory of socialism does not have to be universal to be decisive". Even countries which owe allegiance to a doctrinaire socialism are gradually realising this and are providing room for individual initiative and the freer working of their economies.

Thus, it is not the legitimacy of the private sector that is in doubt. What is perhaps questioned is its efficacy. There has been widespread feeling in this country that our private enterprise is more private than enterprising. This would not be fair to the more dynamic of our entrepreneurs, but as a description of the larger part of the class, it does not seem to be too wide off the mark.

Sheltered markets, in which buyers chase goods, cannot give vitality to entrepreneurship. Until our economy hit a bad patch in 1967, when the industrial recession set in, marketing was a relatively neglected function. You mentioned some figures. As a good businessman, you should know that figures can be used anyway one likes. You very conveniently forgot that the period you mentioned was the period after fighting on our borders. It was a period plagued by the most severe and unprecedented drought which this country has known in its very long history.

I was speaking of the recession. With growing domestic markets, at that time there was also no thought of venturing into foreign markets. Many observers, including those from the lands of classical free enterprise, often call Indian businessmen rentiers, rather than entrepreneurs. This is obviously an over-simplification. After all, recession did make Indian businessmen seek out new avenues and for a while some vigorous activity was noticeable.

But with economic recovery and the resurgence of domestic markets, the symptoms of relapse into a "rentier" mood are reappearing. The export effort has slackened in recent months. We are behind the Plan target of increasing exports by 7 per cent per year. We do have a protected domestic market, but this market will not survive for long unless we become economically viable in our external accounts.

Again, the tendency to run to the Tariff Commission or the Government for price adjustments to compensate for each little increase in the cost of inputs is hardly in the best entrepreneurial tradition, and strengthens the forces of inflation. Current rates of dividend payments and market quotations indicate that over large areas of the industrial sector, profits are good. Hence a temporary dip in the rate of return as a result of a certain rise in cost should not be so upsetting. Up to a point, the cost increase should be absorbed. A rise in prices while the economy is not moving forward sufficiently will only accentuate social tensions. And it is obvious that this can do more harm than good.

In such forums as the Associated Chambers and in the Press, there has been a great deal of criticism of our licensing policy. I certainly do not claim that it is perfect. We are anxious to avoid cumbersome, unnecessary and dilatory regulations, and any constructive suggestions made in this regard are always welcome. But it is surprising that big business houses have not taken advantage of the new licensing policy which, despite all criticism, has opened up to them what has been described as the "core" and the "heavy investment" sectors. This was a challenge to which our larger entrepreneurs should have responded positively. And these are the areas of industrial investment which require entrepreneurial ingenuity and the skills of modern business management.

The economy can grow only if the private sector contributes its share of investments. Insofar as private sector investments depend upon developments in the public sector, the Government has contributed substantially towards expansion by the larger outlay on the Plan in this year's budget. But there has not been a commensurate response from the private sector. By sitting it out, the industrialists help neither their own cause nor the country's. A deterioration in the rate of industrial growth will lead to widespread urban unrest which will not make it easier for the private sector to register uninterrupted progress.

As you have said, there can be no disagreement about the need to stimulate economic growth. But we must also agree upon the rules of the game of economic development. I think you quoted Prof. Blackett to say that economic growth must be achieved at any cost. What does "Any cost" mean? At the cost of the people? And if it is at the cost of the people at large, are they going to sit by and just watch it happen? It is not only in India that we have seen the results of

economic growth, all of which are not good. We see it in all the advanced countries of the world. We see them even in the two countries which you mentioned, which have registered marked and miraculous growth in recent years. They are not without their problems. Our problems are greater because we are a bigger country. We have been poor—more poor—for a longer period. Hence we cannot divorce any of these questions from the larger question of reality of life in this country—the vast poverty of a large number of our people. Therefore, when I talk of the rules of the game of economic development, it seems that we cannot evolve these rules if we evade the demand of the people at large, namely the fruits of growth should be widely shared. The challenge which confronts us all today is to find acceptable ways of raising productive efficiency rapidly, without making the people feel that they are being deprived of the gains of development.

The notion that the maximisation of private returns on investment is the true measure of efficiency has long since been abandoned even by economists who are by no means socialist. For this kind of economics is only a scholastic apologia for exploitation. Economists now talk in terms of the maximisation of social returns—returns which will maximise the gains to the nation.

If you are in touch with Indian conditions, how can you not be aware of the growing consciousness and impatience of the Indian people? And if you are, you must know that this is not giving a political bias to policies but that it is just better economics. You have spoken as many business people speak, about not bringing politics into economics. But you have no hesitation in trying to influence politics in every way you can to serve your own interests. The other question which arises is—what is politics? Is there any person who is unpolitical? You think that politics is only of those who wish to make a change, but surely, those who want to cling to the *status quo* are no less political or it is no less politics. It just is another kind of politics and it is the kind of politics which, in the conditions of India, cannot survive. It is not a question of whether I like it or not, or you like it or not. It just, in these conditions, does not survive anywhere in the world and it cannot survive in this country. Therefore, the question is—how do we find a way out causing the least harm to our people? In other countries whole classes have been wiped out. We are trying to prevent it. We are trying to have a kind of change which will prevent it, which will be peaceful, which will give a place to all in our country without thinking of wiping them out. It is for the business community to decide whether they will agree to have this sort of change or, by not agreeing to have it at this stage, invite something which will be far more drastic. And certainly people like us will not be responsible for that thing. If the single-minded pursuit of growth creates tensions

which threaten our social fabric, then obviously that kind of growth is self-defeating. Your sentiment that "we should create conditions favourable to economic growth" is admirable. But the single most important condition for that is the honest acceptance of the consequences of our faith in democracy. I welcome your support to the democratic way of life and your abhorrence of the tendency of calling in the army which is sometimes expressed rather irresponsibly by people who should know better.

Our political choice was made more than twenty years ago when we adopted universal adult suffrage. The compulsion that follows from that historical decision is to make increased production and better distribution of wealth concomitant processes.

I also welcome your exhortation to your fellow businessmen to "make your acceptance of a nation's social ideals evident by properly and publicly discharging their social responsibilities." Amongst these social responsibilities I should like to mention specially the one towards our educated unemployed. We want to have the widest diffusion of entrepreneurship. We want millions of self-reliant men and women. Able young people should be persuaded to make their own opportunities. Where labour is abundant and capital scarce, the challenge to businessmen, technologists and engineers is to find technologies which use more labour and less capital. The frustrations of the educated young unemployed pose special problems and the reduction of unemployment must be one of the principal methods of achieving equity. But I am sure you will realise that Government alone cannot provide these jobs.

Today in India we are witnessing a many-sided transformation of society—a transformation which poses challenges and provides opportunities. It is for the captains of industry to formulate their responses. In India life is not easy, it is challenging and it is exciting.

Today we find many people, who were against Gandhiji's thoughts while he was alive, quoting Gandhiji. So I will also quote something which he wrote. He advocated, I quote his words, "a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give, and sharing them for the common good". He wrote and again I quote : "A non-violent system of Government is clearly an impossibility as long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists".

It is not our intention that business and industry should not make profit and prosper. But I do think that to stop there, with no concern for the people from whom the profits come, is to stop short of the moral and civic responses required of leaders of commerce and industry. What is required from the business world is leadership which is enlightened in its own and the public's interest. And for this it must greet change with an open mind.

I happened to look in a magazine the words of Mr. Charles Kattering, who was, I believe, the President of General Motors Research Corporation. He has written : "Problems are the price of progress. Don't bring me anything but trouble. Good news weakens me". Perhaps that is too strong a dose for those who are seated here, but nevertheless I would appeal to you not to be afraid of difficulties, not to be afraid of problems, not to be afraid of risks because it is only those communities—and I include Japan and Germany in them—who have been willing to take these risks, who have been willing to face the challenges which were posed, that were able to go ahead in the real sense of the day not thinking just about the profits today, but the likely markets to be opened out tomorrow and the day after, and the day after, the profits and the growth to come in the future. If you look at it from that angle, I am sure that we will be able to have a better dialogue.

I spoke earlier of the problems in different nations. An unknown American from California in his letter to me writes : "You think you have your problems. But we have our problems. Just opposite my house, the Bank of America branch in Santa Barbara (California) has been burnt down by the students of California University". This was the beginning and the rest of the letter was along the same lines—various things which had happened in this and neighbouring towns since 1970. So we are not the only country with problems and no Government, least of all, in a sort of free society that we have in India, can be omnipotent. These problems have to be faced by a joint endeavour, but not if you look at them from the opposite side of the fence. We have to get on the same side and decide what the aim is. If the aim is really that the great poverty of this country should be reduced, that the gap between the rich and the poor should be lessened, then I think there is an opportunity and there is the base for a meaningful dialogue. But it cannot be if we are across barricades, as I said earlier. We must try to cross the barricades and I can assure you that our politics is not the politics of a group or a party or even of just an ideology. It is the politics for which many of us came into public life many years ago. It is the politics of making a better life for our country and we believe that cannot be done from the top. It has to be done if simultaneously we try and spread the fruits of development and growth, if those who have more are prepared to share some of it with those who have nothing at all.

The Co-operative Movement

YOU HAVE CHOSEN an appropriate time to convene this assembly. Our country is experiencing new stirrings which, I hope, will activate the co-operative movement also. No Government, howsoever strong or determined, can by itself solve all the economic and social problems with which a country is beset. Economic prosperity cannot be air-dropped. It must evolve and grow. The participation of the people themselves is an essential ingredient to this.

The task of the Government is to supplement the people's efforts, to mobilise and make available the resources; to provide a blue-print and a plan; and to ensure that the enterprise and efforts of millions of people have a well-defined aim and that they bear fruit. In the Indian situation, the Government have necessarily to perform the negative task of preventing vested interests from monopolising all the gains.

Whatever the system of government, the people cannot be mere spectators in the war against poverty. Much less so in a democratic society and I know of no other instrument so potentially powerful and full of social purpose as the co-operative movement. It helps people to help themselves. It also enables the State to provide the necessary support and resources, without inhibiting their initiative and individuality.

The results of the recent elections have been universally interpreted as a mandate for peaceful change. The change we seek is not one of mere quantitative increase in economic prosperity. Change must be accompanied by a perceptible movement towards equality. Here again, the co-operative movement assumes unusual importance. It is the only instrument capable of securing economies of large-scale work, without generating the evil consequences of economic concentration. Modern science and technology have to be adopted in agriculture and industry to ensure that the output, quality and cost of production are the most satisfactory, and the consumer is well served. That is why our anxiety to end economic concentration is matched by our search for an adequate alternative which would preserve economic viability.

However attractive the co-operative system might be, it can be a relevant instrument of the people's choice only insofar as it can make good its promise. All conferences such as this one naturally measure the achievements of the co-operative movement, and these are considerable. But it would be worthwhile for this session to look deeply into whatever failures and shortcomings there may be.

It is true that the movement is an ever expanding one, yet the community as a whole, does not appear to have gained greater con-

Inaugural address to the Sixth Indian Co-operative Congress, New Delhi, April 8, 1971

fidence in it. I wonder why this should be so. We must do all we can to foster people's faith in the co-operative movement. Hence the need for an enquiry into the problems which face your movement. Perhaps you could make a start with your apex national institutions and then go down to state level unions and finally to primary societies.

I am told that over a period of time, thousands of institutions, registered as co-operatives in India, have become defunct. Dead wood must be cut down. There is also a danger of the word "co-operative" becoming synonymous with a special kind of vested interest. It is unfortunate that some co-operatives are looked upon as exclusive clubs, which shut their doors to those who do not belong to their circle and which do not adequately help the cause of the weaker sections, which they claim to serve. Small farmers, tenants and Harijans are seldom members of co-operatives. It is also said that only a small number actually gets loans and assistance. Unless these trends are reversed, co-operatives will not be able to make their contribution to the solution of contemporary problems. To do so, co-operatives must try to universalise and activise their membership.

The national and state level centres of the co-operative movement must reflect the purpose and vitality expected of the movement. They should establish effective and competent machinery to work in unison with national plans and development programmes in agricultural, industrial and consumer fields to ensure our swift advance. Opportunities for the co-operative movement are indeed stupendous. These must be seized.

Our agricultural economy is moving forward and will gain momentum in the coming years. The modernisation of agriculture will necessarily require an under-pinning of an agricultural co-operative system. This system can provide the entire package of inputs, credit and services in an integrated manner to our farmers. The experience of Japan and other agriculturally developed countries has shown that there is close relationship between the process of agricultural development and that of co-operative development. The two reinforce each other, in isolation neither is effective beyond a point.

In our own country, we cannot but take note of the fact that wherever an agricultural breakthrough is perceptible—whether it is the wheat revolution in Punjab or sugarcane development in Maharashtra—the development has been largely facilitated by a vital co-operative structure in the area. In several other parts of the country, despite the availability of the known technology, the pace of agricultural development continues to be inhibited, partly because of the absence of a co-operative system which could offer credit, material inputs, marketing and processing services. Thus it is in the interest of agricultural and co-operative development that, while devising certain transitional arrangements in these areas, we should make a serious

effort to create a co-operative infrastructure as a necessary and long-term adjunct to our agricultural economy. In order to become active agents of development, co-operatives should mobilize rural savings. Otherwise, they will be mere conduits for the transfer of resources on concessional terms from Government and governmental agencies to the movement.

There is an allied problem. Of late, some apprehensions have been entertained in some quarters about the role of the public sector *vis-a-vis* the co-operative sector as regards agricultural credit etc. I do not share this fear. While co-operative institutions and public corporations may have different forms of ownership and management, they have similar social purpose. I visualise a growing and collaborative relationship between the public sector and the co-operative sector.

The Reserve Bank has recently taken steps to enable the nationalised commercial banks to finance primary agricultural societies in certain areas where the district co-operative banks are weak. This is still at an experimental stage. I hope the experience will succeed and will help develop a framework of collaboration between primary credit co-operatives and public sector banking institutions. As regards agricultural marketing, the Food Corporation of India is already trying to make maximum use of local co-operatives as their agencies for procurement. I hope that a suitable working relationship will be evolved between the newly established Cotton and Jute Corporations on the one hand, and marketing and processing co-operatives on the other.

Another important sphere in which co-operatives can play a significant role is in the distribution of consumer goods. The pressure on prices is of serious concern to our economy. The Government are adopting necessary measures, including the building up of buffer-stocks of agricultural commodities in the public sector. However, these measures need to be reinforced by organised action by the consumers themselves. I hope this conference will give detailed consideration to consumer co-operatives. The development of a sound consumer co-operative structure needs attention and persistent effort.

During the last decade, we have undertaken the development of consumer co-operatives. Some co-operatives have succeeded, but their total impact has not been very significant. Consumer co-operatives with growth potential should be identified and enabled to enlarge their operations, thus exerting a beneficial influence on the trade in consumer goods.

I am confident that our recent political gains will be matched by a dynamic economy. Our people do not expect magic from the Government and the leadership. They do expect and they are entitled to hard and honest work; and the intelligent and unrelenting pursuit of practical programmes. In this exciting endeavour, I hope the co-operative movement will play a decisive and distinguished role,

befitting its high ideals and in this, you can be assured of the fullest support of the Government.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Sixth Indian Co-operative Congress and may I echo the sentiments expressed in the beautiful invocation :

"United be our hearts and minds
and common be our purpose."

Working in Unison

THIS IS AN occasion which gives me an opportunity of renewing my contacts with the members of the Federation and to exchange thoughts about various matters concerning our economy. There is always scope for an honest difference of opinion regarding the wisdom or otherwise of particular policies. But mutual recriminations do not take us far. As good democrats, we all have to function within a common framework which has the support of the people.

The process of history is relentless. No matter what we do, we cannot flout it, else we shall be bypassed and left behind. That is the danger in clinging to earlier conclusions reached on the basis of premises which are no longer relevant. The more we harp on old problems, the further we move away from our real context.

No one of us, whether in Government or outside, is infallible in his judgment. We learn as much from one another as we do from our own experience. This is part of living. Government is always willing to listen to the views of leaders of industry and business on economic, industrial and trade policies. After all, despite your often expressed fears about the encroachments made by Government, as much as 85 per cent of our economy remains the domain of the private sector.

Many of the crucial decisions which shape our economy are taken in the private sector. If these decisions go awry, it is the economy which has to bear the consequences. That is why we are so anxious for proper understanding between the Government and the private sector.

Mr President, you have referred to some imbalances in our economy. Certain imbalances are inherent in the nature of development. How is it possible to move simpultaneously all along the front ? Economic growth cannot take place at the same rate everywhere in the country. Nor can it be the same in all activities. Some imbalances emerge because in restrospect our judgment turns out to have been

Inaugural address to the 44th annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, April 10, 1971

faulty. We are not omniscient and there is always the possibility of an inaccurate assessment of particular needs of the economy. The forecasts of even the best statisticians and experts often suffer from large margins of error. Demand forecasts may have been over or under-estimated. Expected supplies may not materialise on time. These are the hazards of economic programming.

The really irritating and unnecessary imbalances are the ones which are deliberately created. Imbalance between supply and demand in the case of essential goods are sometimes created by artificially starving the market, or by a deliberate diversion of resources from required areas or uses by powerful groups and individuals for use elsewhere. Not all businessmen indulge in such activities but even a few instances are sufficient to create an adverse impression on the public mind and in such a situation drastic remedies become necessary to restore some balance.

In Parliament and public forums, the importance of price stability is often stressed. As businessmen, you have understandably emphasised the need to increase production and to link wages with productivity as one of the most effective means of maintaining costs and prices at reasonable levels. As a general proposition, this approach is unassailable. But when we seek to identify specific measures for holding the price line, we meet with resistance. This is because no one wants to get hurt in the process of price-stabilisation.

Farmers want higher prices for their produce even when unit costs have gone down as a result of higher yields. They would like the parities between farm produce and manufactured goods to shift to their advantage. Understandably, workers want the rise in the cost of living to be neutralised, so as to prevent any erosion of their standards of living and in their turn, industrialists expect to be compensated for every item of increase in cost.

The imperative need to increase exports requires our prices to remain competitive in world markets. The procedure and practices of the Tariff Commission seem to have sanctified the concept of price fixation on a cost plus basis. This vicious circle has to be broken. A critical scrutiny of costs and prices is essential if we are to hold the price line. This can happen only if there is all round efficiency and if different sections of society moderate at least their sectional bargaining power.

Productivity is important. In fact, it is essential if we are to develop as a major industrial power. The Government has promised to hold discussions with leaders of Trade Unions and Managements to see how best productivity can be increased.

Mr President, you have advocated the decentralisation of powers regarding industrial licensing. It seems to me that no such gathering can take place without some reference to the licensing policy. As you all know, a very large segment of industry is already outside any

scheme of licensing. The whole field of small industry as also large units involving investment up to a crore of rupees are not subject to licensing. Thus there is a very wide area in which the States can play an active promotional role in industrial development. We shall assist them to play this role vigorously. The free area of industry is significant from the point of view of the generation of employment and the improvement of the standards of living of the people, as Punjab has so dramatically demonstrated.

But if it is your suggestion that the States should license large units and allocate foreign exchange, then I am afraid you are ignoring certain basic factors. We have a national market. The development of industry and the allocation of foreign exchange must necessarily be fitted into an overall scheme of national priorities. How can this be achieved with the decentralisation of licensing and allocation of a scarce resource such as foreign exchange ?

The need to create greater employment opportunities is self-evident. The task has to be shared between industry and Government. Since the bulk of our economic activities is in the private sector, a major responsibility for creating additional employment also devolves on the private sector. We all expect some initiatives from you in this matter.

The Government on its part will do everything possible to create employment, consistent with the need to maintain a high rate of growth. You are probably aware of the various Government schemes which have been recently initiated. When completed, most of these schemes will strengthen the infrastructure of the economy and therefore create opportunities for investment in secondary manufacture and trade. That these programmes are labour-using in addition, doubles their value.

However, we must not forget that important as these programmes are, they are essentially supplementary ones. We can reshape the technological pattern of our investments here and there, but whether or not we make a real dent into the problem will depend upon the scale of investments in the Government and the private sectors taken together. Moreover, we shall be in desparate need of additional resources if we are to activise the kind of schemes which your President has mentioned and if we wish to deepen and widen the infrastructure.

Mr President, you have also asked the Government to expand its investments in the economic infrastructure, and have observed that by virtue of its nature and capability, the corporate sector is in a position to provide the funds which are crucially needed for balanced development. Presumably this means an effort on your part to generate more resources from within and to lessen the burden on financial institutions. This is indeed a challenge to take up. This is where genuine entreprenurial vigour and skill are required. A good entrepreneur is dynamic and responds positively to challenges and he spurns

aid and assistance. He is driven forward irresistibly by what Max Weber called a sense of 'calling'.

I should like our entrepreneurs to move boldly into international markets. Businessmen are constantly reminding me of the importance of efficiency. This principle is often invoked against protective measures for small and new entrepreneurs at home. But then they ask for similar protection against foreign competition. It is therefore a welcome sign that members of the Federation are now offering their co-operation for the development of small-scale units and have volunteered to advise their counterparts in the small-scale sector on matters of production, marketing and finance.

For an infant industry protection is a legitimate demand, but infants must grow up one day. How else can we complete the industrial revolution which bypassed us while we were under colonial rule?

In the course of the past two decades there have been several false starts and weak endings in our planning endeavours. But no nation—perhaps no individual—has progressed without mistakes. A reappraisal of the planning process will soon be undertaken.

In his speech on the interim budget the Finance Minister made it clear that we intend to augment the scale of public investments. This will supplement and strengthen what you do on your own. If your accent is on growth, you will find that there will be sympathy and support from the Government. However, if there is hesitation on your part the Government may have to encroach on what you would normally consider your territory.

Without constant reform and renewal we shall be swept away by succeeding events. This is why I cannot wholly agree with your President's conclusion that it is only by strengthening the apparatus of production that we shall be able to travel faster on the road to social justice. This is only partially true. Increase in production and better distribution must go together. Any other patch will ultimately lead to the decline of production itself and our carefully laid out schemes and projects may well be engulfed by the despair of the masses.

In planning our economic growth, we cannot brush aside the people's expectations and impatience. You have spoken of another kind of impatience—impatience with official procedures. I agree that some of these procedures need to be streamlined. The Government is looking into this aspect. At the same time, industrialists should realise that our controls are not for stifling industrial growth, but for ensuring that such growth gives the most social benefit.

Unfortunately, self-restraint as an instrument of economic policy has not proved altogether efficacious. Gunnar Myrdal while surveying what he calls the *Asian Drama* laments the reluctance of our government to place social obligations on the people. He calls us a "Soft State". He says, and I quote: "... development cannot be achieved without

much more social discipline than the prevailing interpretation of democracy ... permits". We would do well to remember that this is the observation of one who is not an authoritarian.

I hope you will not mind what I have said and will take it in good spirit, that you will regard the Government not as your adversary but as your friend. We want industrialists and businessmen to prosper. This prosperity should not be at the expense of the general economic welfare but rather a byproduct of it. Your prosperity has to be reconciled with the well-being of the people. For prosperity itself cannot exist without the satisfaction of the basic needs of the people. This is the fundamental truth which we must all face and I hope it will infuse your deliberations.

I have spoken of economic problems because that is your special concern. But in today's world life cannot be divided into compartments. We must all take an interest in and work for the good of the whole. In our country, as perhaps in others also, different groups or interests seem to function as rivals to one another. Faced as we are by monumental problems, this is a luxury we can ill-afford. The human race is caught in what Alvin Toffler describes as a "current of change, a current so powerful today that it overturns institutions, shifts our values and shrivels our roots. Change is the process by which the future invades our lives, and it is important to look at it closely, not merely from the grand perspectives of history, but also from the vantage point of the living, breathing individuals who experience it". The change is not merely of better goods or faster speed, nor even of ecological imbalances—it has "personal and psychological, as well as sociological consequences". Each section of society, each activity is so closely linked. In these circumstances, is it too radical or too idealistic to hope that each group should by its own work help to promote the work of others, that the output of one group might become the input for many others? We can change our cities and villages if we are sensitive to all that is around us. If we are constantly on the look out to see what we ourselves, as groups and individuals, can do—small acts of kindness, concern with the cleanliness, health and beauty of our environments, of people no less than places. If an individual cannot do things in a big way, let him at least look to the small details which are within his reach. If our purpose is common, let our endeavour be united. Let us all co-operate so that our goal can be achieved in partnership and in harmony.

Rural Employment

I AM GLAD to have this opportunity of meeting all of you. You know that we have called this meeting for a very important purpose, which is to see how certain programmes for rural employment can be activated, expedited and be made more effective. Obviously, this is a problem in which the Central and State Governments have a common interest.

Some time ago, I had a meeting here of the Secretaries of the Government of India and I tried to stress the point to them that so far, to a large extent, many of us here in the administration have been functioning in compartments, so to say, each person saying, "Well, this is my domain and I am not concerned with anything else". And to some extent, of course, this is true of the States. Each State thinks, "Well, these are the problems and I must push them". "This is what my State needs", or "What I think my State needs", regardless of the overall picture of the country as a whole.

No country, and least of all a country which is as vast as India, can go ahead while we have this sort of divided loyalty, if I can put it that way. We all have many loyalties. Each person has loyalty towards family, perhaps to his community, to his city, to his State, and all of them are good. I am not against any of these loyalties. But if at any stage there is a conflict between a smaller loyalty and the bigger loyalty, then it is the larger loyalty to the country as a whole which must hold the first place.

So, we must see the States' problems in the perspective as what the country needs. Of course, so far as this particular problem is concerned, there is no conflict at all because we are interested in greater employment in each State. That is how the problem of unemployment can be solved, and obviously it cannot be solved merely through schemes drawn up by the Central Government. Every scheme has to be implemented with the participation and initiative of the local administration as well as of the public of each area, and while Central co-ordination and guidance is necessary, there should be a constant feed-back of ideas and suggestions based on the experience of field workers. This Conference is intended to provide a forum for such an exchange of ideas.

We always welcome suggestions from as wide a group as possible, and we have thought at all times that the States should feel free to comment on the suggestions made by the Centre and if they can suggest improvements or something that they think would be a better solution, they should not hesitate to give those suggestions.

Remarks at State Chief Secretaries' Conference, New Delhi, April 12, 1971

This meeting has been going on for some time. Some of the points that I am going to make have already been made. For instance, the various special programmes, which have been drawn up to stimulate employment, are in the nature of supplementary or additional programmes. They are not intended in any way to supplant the Plan, even though we intend to have a reappraisal of the Plan to see if it can be more employment-oriented. But we do believe that a more vigorous implementation of the Plan is by far the most effective contribution which we can make towards solving unemployment and many other problems. The Chief Secretaries who at the administrative level have overall responsibility for the proper implementation of the Plan should not lose sight of this and whatever they can do through the improvement of administrative and financial procedures and better co-ordination to push through the Plan will make a significant impact on the employment situation.

Usually in the debates in Parliament and other public forums there is a tendency to measure the growth of employment by the outlays on certain specific programmes such as the crash programme for rural employment. Obviously rural employment cannot be removed through this scheme alone or any other one or several schemes. It can only be mitigated when the schemes for agricultural production and supporting programmes such as irrigation, rural electrification, rural roads, etc. are vigorously implemented. I am glad to say that the States have done reasonably well in the last two years in these sectors. But many States have defaulted on the mobilisation of resources for the Plan. Had they mobilised the resources on the scale agreed to, it would have been possible for them to enlarge Plan outlay and this would have helped in increasing employment opportunities.

How resources should be mobilised is not an administrative problem so much as the political one. But, I think, senior civil servants such as the Chief Secretaries have also a responsibility to place all these issues in proper focus before the planning executive to see that they have all the information available in order to take decisions. A matter which has been causing some concern is that the States tend to neglect social services and these are precisely the sectors in which opportunities for the absorption of the educated unemployed are considerable. Of course, neglect of these sectors adversely affects the interests of the weaker sections of society—backward classes, Harijans, low-income groups in general and so. So in the interest of employment as well as of social justice, outlays on social services need to be raised and I think this aspect should always be kept in view and we should try and see that this is reflected in the State plans.

Now, in spite of the fact that there is a very serious constraint of resources, the Government of India initiated a number of special programmes last year for the expansion of employment opportunities

in the rural areas. There are programmes, as you know, for special farmers, marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural works in drought-prone areas. All these schemes were finalised and large funds were allocated and since I was in Finance I had given a special directive that adequate provision should be made for all these programmes. The initial response from the States was very good. In fact, it seemed that each State was competing with another in asking for allotment of a larger number of projects and funds. We had given special importance to the rural works programmes in areas which were liable to drought.

But we found to our great disappointment that there have been serious shortfalls in expenditure in relation to these budgetary allotments. It may be that the programmes have not yet gathered momentum and that the shortfalls will be made good in the coming years. But this conference should examine how far deficiencies in administrative and financial procedures have been responsible for this lag in performance. If the poor performance is due to delay in the examination of the proposals by the Central ministries and agencies, this will, of course, have to be looked into at this end and remedial action undertaken. In fact, I did speak about this at my meeting with Secretaries here and we have been trying to streamline the various procedures for some time. But there is considerable scope for improvement still and we hope that improvement will be made, but it has to take place all along the line and also at the State level.

I do not know whether the same situation exists in the States, whether with certain delegation of powers things would move faster. Each person should then see his own situation and along with his colleagues see how it can be improved.

Our experience with the rural works programme has also not been altogether happy. Some works are taken up on an *ad hoc* basis and have not made much impact on the life of community. That is why we are now laying so much stress to see that rural works are related to local resources and local potential for development. Whatever work we undertake should form part of an integrated plan for the development of the area, and from the beginning we should devise satisfactory arrangements for the proper maintenance of the assets which are created under this programme. This is very sad when we have such limited resources, that we should, for instance, make roads which are washed away in the next rainy season. There are many such examples which I come across during my travels across the country.

As you are aware, the present rural works programme is intended to be a nucleus of a far more comprehensive programme and it is all the more necessary that the best administrative and technical talent at the disposal of State and Central Governments should be deployed in

ensuring that the results of this initial programme conform to our expectations.

I have always been convinced that people will be willing to bear the burdens involved in expanding a particular programme if the initial results are encouraging and if they feel that these will give some direct benefits to them.

It is a cliche to say that the most valuable resource is manpower, but it is a cliche which has to be repeated because we are neglecting our manpower. We know that it can become a liability if it is allowed to remain unutilised, breeding disappointment and frustration and sometimes even violence. And the same manpower, if used in promoting economic growth, can become a tremendous asset and can build up a good and solid foundation for the progress of the country.

So the crash scheme is very important and I hope you will not look upon it as another developmental programme and judge it not in a routine way in terms of the money spent. As I said in the beginning, just now we are all engaged in a very great task. I doubt if any country in the world has faced such an uphill task in the conditions which we have in India. We are trying to achieve our objective democratically. Many revolutions are taking place here simultaneously. Practically all the countries of the world have had various revolutions —industrial, political, social—but here we are going through all these processes at the same time, and we are also emerging from a feudal set-up into a modern society. Well, many sections have broken out of the old mould, and there are many sections which are still in the old set-up. So it seems that different parts of the country are living in different stages of history.

So far as the economy is concerned, part of it is—I do not know whether 'backward' is the right word—at a stage at which we were 100 years ago and part of it, for instance atomic energy and so on, is up to the most modern that one can find anywhere in the world. So these very different levels of development also cause great tensions. Of course, we have other tensions—tensions of caste and community and other things created by various emotions. I do not think that it is surprising that we should have these divisive tendencies. To me it is always a miracle that having all these difficulties we have been able to be a united country in spite of the vicissitudes of history. With all the divisions we have always been united at any time of difficulty, and there has been a very strong base of Indianness amongst us regardless of what religion, what caste, what language or what part of the country we belong to.

I think whether we are considering the employment problem or any other problem, we must keep this in view and look at all these problems from the larger point of view of how to make this country united and stronger. Whatever our policies are they are formed with

this in view and not because we happen to belong to a particular party or even because of a particular programme or policy. Whatever we undertake is guided by these considerations: Will this programme take the country forward? Will it strengthen the country in a free way? This is our point of view always.

Recently we had general elections all over India for the Lok Sabha. It showed something remarkable, namely that except in limited areas, the people by and large did not go in for communal voting or caste-wise voting or voting even on a regional basis. By and large they voted for certain all-India programmes and they voted against certain things which they thought cannot be of all-India basis and which they did not approve of. I think we owe it to the people that we should help to take the country along this path.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding deliberately created about the word 'commitment' because we have used this word and because we thought that people should be committed. Now 'committed' does not mean that you are committed to what the Government of the day is saying or what a political party is saying. When we say 'committed' we mean commitment to policies which are agreed to by the elected Parliament or the elected Assemblies of the States. Not only that but commitment to certain basic ideals for which the country has stood and stands today. Unless civil servants have that kind of commitment, no policy can work, and there can be no kind of efficiency. The task is far too great to be viewed coldly. You have to feel a certain involvement.

All of us should feel: "This is my problem because how the country will go forward will affect me". By "me", I mean all of you and all the country. Whatever we do affects the generations to come, in which are included our own descendants. Unless we have that feeling of involvement in all these programmes, unless we point out what is wrong not because it does not suit us or our particular group but because we feel this may not bring the desired results in the manner in which we want, we cannot progress. That is what we mean by commitment and involvement, that each person at all times would, as you would in a family, look at everything from the point of view of total interest. In that way, you should feel involved in the country's future and the country's progress all the time all around you. Even though it is not your specific job, be vigilant to see how things can be improved, how work can be more efficient, faster, more honest and more effective. This is the kind of atmosphere we want within each State, between one State and another, between the States and the Centre, and I sincerely hope that you will keep before you all the time this spirit of co-operation and of working together for the larger good.

We are gathered here to discuss employment and it is one of the most important problems causing the greatest concern. It has caused

hardship to our young people and their families. It is also a danger to peaceful progress of the country. It can be exploited by people for their ends, causing great harm to society as a whole. So it is not just a problem of unemployment. It is a problem which affects all of us and it is linked with other problems of the country. It is linked with production, it is linked with the standard of living in the rural areas as well as the cities. So while considering a particular problem, although you must concentrate on that problem, you can never view it entirely isolated from what is happening in other sectors or in other areas.

You are capable, competent and experienced people. I am a great believer in the fact that the human mind and body can be stretched almost without limit, that they give us the service that we ask of them. I think that most people do not take as much from their minds and bodies as they could. This is what we need today, that is, to make a far far greater effort than we have ever made before, because time is not going to wait for us in India.

The people are impatient not because we have raised certain slogans. Our press is very keen on saying that we have aroused the expectations of the people. What has aroused expectations of the people is not the slogans raised by anybody but the development that they see taking place in the country. If they had seen that nothing was happening I think it would not have mattered what we said. They would not be aroused. But people see that things are changing and when they see that they are not benefitting by the changes but only some people are benefitting, they feel impatient. If they thought that it could not have been done they would not have bothered. They say if you cannot do it for us, you cannot do for the other people. This was the state of affairs before Independence. When we went to the villages, people said : Well, we do not believe this is going to change. But you want us to do this and because you say so we do but we do not believe. But nobody says that today. They say it can be changed. But it is changing only for a few people. We see things are growing. We see that agricultural production is growing, but we see that the benefits are going only to certain sections. This creates frustration and has aroused their conscience.

So, whatever we have to do we have to do very fast and we have to show that our intention is to raise the standards of those who have been neglected. Nobody, even the most unsophisticated person in the country, thinks that we can achieve miracles or that we can overnight remove poverty. Whatever they say when we talk to them, they know that this cannot be done in a hurry. But they want visible evidence that we are going in that direction where these changes will come about in such a way as to give them some benefit. I do not think that they are asking too much of us.

The work before us is something which no Government or administration can do alone. The problems are so large, that they need involvement of the Centre and the State administrations and also of the general public. We must not only work to make the programmes efficient but we must work them in such a way as to get the greatest possible public enthusiasm and participation. Only then will they be successful. This is a very big task which we are undertaking and I hope that with your help we shall achieve some measure of success in it.

The Role of Trade Unions

IT MUST BE over a year since I first expressed my desire to have a frank dialogue with the representatives of organised labour. I am glad that my colleague, Shri Khadilkar, has now arranged such a meeting, and that you have responded to our invitation. This is one of the most crucial meetings in recent years. We are at a significant stage in the evolution of our political and economic system.

Trade union leaders owe allegiance to different political ideologies. Such diversity is expected in an open, democratic society. I do, however, hope that within the broad spectrum of organised political opinion ranged around this table, there is a basic unity of purpose and a determination to jointly explore avenues of co-operation in tackling our problems of poverty and social injustice.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has posed certain specific issues for your consideration. I sincerely hope that at the end of our deliberations certain definite conclusions are reached. For this it is necessary to approach the problems facing us with the temper and spirit required for their solution.

We have here leaders who speak for organised labour, who seek to reflect their hopes and aspirations and to ventilate their grievances. It is, perhaps, understandable that a segment of society should equate its own sectional interests with those of the whole. During the last two or three years, I have been deeply anxious about the deterioration in industrial relations. Strikes, lock-outs and closures have become more frequent and less peaceful. One wonders whether those who speak for labour or for management always keep in view the larger picture of Indian poverty.

Inaugural speech at the conference of the representatives of Trade Union organisations, New Delhi, May 20, 1971

We have strong trade unions to struggle for the interests of labour; we have equally vocal and close-knit organisations of management, keen and able to project their point of view; but who is to look after the interests of the vast numbers of the unorganised and the voiceless? I am not speaking merely of consumers, although their interests must also be reconciled with those of labour and management; but in a country with depressingly low standards of consumption, the emphasis even on the interests of consumers becomes irrelevant beyond a point.

When trade union leaders talk of protecting the living standards of the working class, or when managements use sophisticated jargon about 'incentives', they hardly seem to show any concern with the question whether or not the economic philosophy which lies at the root of these demands has any relevance to the problems of the really poor. Please do not misunderstand me. It is legitimate for trade unions to champion the cause of their members, and it is not unpatriotic for workers to try to secure a larger share in the fruits of economic growth. Similarly, the question of incentives for innovative enterprise cannot be completely brushed aside. But at the same time, it is worthwhile noting that the industrial relations are too serious and important to be left entirely to the employers and the employed. The maintenance of industrial peace is an issue in which the poor and the unemployed, who stand outside the serried ranks of organised labour and industry, have a vital stake. Indeed it is an issue of national survival.

When we talk of the larger social responsibilities of labour, it is said that labour will give of its best only if economic and social policies are more radical and the fruits of economic growth are not monopolised by the few. I believe in radicalism but it must deliver the goods. I am against any kind of privilege, if it means reward or recognition unrelated to functional efficiency. World economic history and our own experience point to the fact that privileges, however defined, become entrenched in a period of economic stagnation, rather than in a period of growth.

The emphasis on a faster rate of growth does not, therefore, represent any retreat from radicalism or egalitarian principles. On the contrary, a higher rate of growth is an essential prerequisite to welfare on an enduring basis. It does not matter to the privileged whether the growth rate is 2 per cent or 6 per cent for, they already have the means of a good life at their command.

A higher rate of growth is vital for those who are currently unemployed or under-employed. A speedy and substantial increase in production is necessary to generate resources for expansion of employment. Ever since Independence, industrial expansion has acted as the pace-setter for our economy. But in the last two years, it is the increase in agricultural production that has kept the economy moving forward.

The growth of agricultural production since 1967-68 has been satisfactory and has helped to maintain a moderate increase in per capita income, but industrial production has failed to reach its targets. In the first two years of the Fourth Plan it has been only around 6 per cent, instead of the expected 10 per cent. An increase in industrial output is essential to the structural transformation of our economy. It is also vital for economic and political self-reliance.

Not for a moment am I suggesting that the lower industrial production in the last few years is due solely or even substantially to industrial strikes. Shortages of raw materials, obsolete administrative procedures, mismanagement and misdeployment of resources have also hit production. But no observer of our scene will fail to concede that lack of industrial harmony has surely been an important contributory factor. I understand that the number of man-days lost as a result of strikes has risen nearly three times—from about 6.5 million or so in 1965 to about 19 million in 1970. It would be a sterile exercise to seek to apportion the blame for this situation now. What we have to consider is whether we can reduce this wastage within the framework of our present social and political order; or must we wait for the fulfilment of the ideal social order which each political party may have in view.

Let us be frank enough to recognise that this increase in the intensity and duration of stoppages of work has prevented our economy from realising its full potential. Whichever party to the dispute may have emerged victorious from these confrontations, so far as the nation is concerned the strikes have inflicted unmitigated loss. We need industrial harmony not for the benefit of the classes who control the means of production, not for the further advancement of the affluent sections of the society, but for the sake of the poorer masses, who suffer an erosion of their low standards of living as a result of these interruptions in production. The unemployed whose only hope lies in a higher rate of capital formation and investment, whether in the public or in the private sector, suffer most in the process.

We are all here today to find a solution to this grave industrial problem, and to consider how to mitigate, if not to end the present stage of anarchy in labour-management relations.

The Ministry of Labour has made several suggestions to promote industrial harmony such as ending the multiplicity of trade unions, the recognition of a single bargaining agent and so on. These lead to other related issues such as how to promote internal leadership within the Trade Union Movement and what agencies should be set up to consider and resolve disputes as they arise. Shri Khadilkar tells me that these points were set out more as a basis for discussion and to help in your deliberations. I do not wish to go into these issues in detail; nor to prejudge or prejudice the discussions. But may I suggest that you

evaluate these points and any others with one criterion—whether they will accentuate or abate industrial disputes.

Trade Union leaders have always been in the vanguard of progressive forces in our public life. Whatever their other differences, they have stood for the uplift of the poorer sections of the society and for the subordination of personal interests to larger ones. They would be untrue to this tradition if they do not focus their attention on the problem of augmenting production at this critical juncture, when apart from our other problems, three million victims of the reign of terror unleashed across our borders have sought refuge in our land.

The shortfalls in production have also affected Government revenues and reduced potential levels of investment. The increase in unemployment in the last few years, particularly among technical personnel and skilled workers, is directly traceable to lower investment. When you consider ways and means of improving industrial relations as a whole, please do give special thought to the evolution of a healthy and fruitful partnership between management and labour in public undertakings in which the nation has such a large stake.

The working class and their leaders have been among the foremost in urging the expansion of the public sector and the nationalisation of key sectors of the economy. The Government and the public are, therefore, entitled to expect of workers in public enterprises greater devotion and dedication to work than has been so far evident. I must admit that there is scope for the improvement of communication between management and workers in public enterprises. I do not think that it is enough to give workers representation merely on the boards of management. We need to involve them more intimately in the problems of the enterprises at various levels.

We constantly hear of the need to check the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few in the private sector. I believe that by far the most effective means of checking these trends is to enlarge the role of the public sector and to upgrade its efficiency. The formidable managerial problems of the public sector need immediate attention. But the acceptance of a greater measure of discipline and dedication on the part of labour in public enterprises is also an essential element in our strategy to make the public sector the pace-setter in our economy.

It is hardly necessary to remind you that labour is a major participant in the productive process, and the quality and intensity of its efforts are critical in increasing the rate of growth of production and therefore of investment in the economy. The demands for higher wages and other benefits by organised labour are understandable. But these have to be pursued within a policy framework which pays due regard to the general state of the economy and the interests of the unemployed. In a country like ours, where there are millions of unemployed and underemployed, what is needed

is a fair distribution of opportunities for gainful employment. In this sense, the employed, particularly in the organised sector, who enjoy a measure of special security, should recognise that in our country, to be employed is in itself a privilege. Hence they should not merely seek unilateral gains for themselves but should also have some compassion for those who are willing to work yet are unable to do so because of the comparatively low rate of capital formation.

I am sure that trade unions will interpret their responsibilities in this wider sense and work to secure for the employed as well as the prospective labour an increasing equitable share of progressively rising national product. Our country has gone through a very difficult period but there is every indication that we are poised for rapid advance. Hence it is specially disturbing that we should be quarrelling amongst ourselves instead of being partners in the common endeavour to take the country forward and give a better life to our people. I have great pleasure in inaugurating this conference.

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I WARMLY WELCOME my own countrymen and all those who have come from countries far and near. The solidarity of trade unionism and the upsurge of Asian consciousness have brought you together.

As Shri Mirajkar has remarked, great changes are taking place in the world and more specially in Asia. The war in Europe ended in 1945, but in these 27 years, hardly a week has passed without fighting in some part of the Asian continent. Much, if not all, of this fighting, has initially been due to the reluctance of imperialism to abandon its hold and lately to the resort to new forms of intervention.

Vietnam is a classic example of the old colonialism yielding place to new intervention. But the courageous resistance of the gallant Vietnamese is a historic object lesson for us all. The urge for freedom and the rise of nationalism gives strength and coherence to any people. A small nation has been able to withstand the world's mightiest power. Could there be a more glorious example of the immortality of the human spirit? I have no doubt that the people of Vietnam will triumph in the not-so-distant future. The peoples of the world, not least in the United States itself, sympathise with them and send them their greetings.

Their heroic sacrifices will not be in vain if they succeed in convincing the big powers that intervention does not pay and that policies of deluding Asians to fight amongst themselves will not be tolerated.

Peace and stability can be achieved not by giving a new face to the old discredited doctrines of balance of power, but when all nations, whether big or small, acknowledge one another's right to exist on a basis

Inaugural address to the Asian Trade Union Seminar, New Delhi, April 24, 1972

of equality, and all pursue a policy of non-interference. Can anyone doubt that the split-up of Pakistan was caused by the policy of hegemony which attempts to prop up nations in order to serve big power interests? This policy gives a false sense of security to unrepresentative Governments, lulling them into the complacent belief that national strength can be built on outside military equipment, bypassing their own people. The so-called friends of Pakistan who proved to be the undoing of Pakistan have, unfortunately, learnt nothing from the disaster but persist in encouraging postures of confrontation. They continue to base their decisions on entirely erroneous assessments. Those who are responsible for the most prolonged and pointless conflict of modern times, for the killing of countless innocent civilians, not excluding women and children, today presume to lecture us on the maintenance of peace.

Shri Mirajkar has referred to Bangladesh. The victory of Bangladesh has thrilled all freedom and justice-loving peoples. But what a price they have paid. Rarely has human history seen such concentrated cruelty in so short a time and space. The very brutality led to the exemplary unity of the people of Bangladesh, and fanned the flame of freedom. The victory of the people of Bangladesh is the victory of the principles of freedom, and defeat for the doctrine of spheres of influence.

Asian countries follow different systems of Government and ideologies. Yet one sentiment is common to the majority of the people of Asia. And that is revulsion against an outside presence. We do not want any foreign presence. We know that the presence of one power attracts the presence of others and leads to competition in pressure.

Foreign presence or pressure can be counteracted only by one's own inner strength, which in turn must be based on a firm commitment to the objective of self-reliance and on social systems which genuinely endeavour to remove injustice and disparity. A discontented people cannot be strong. A people who look outside for help cannot be strong. The pursuit of economic self-reliance and social advance also acts as a deterrent to new forms of economic and political colonialism.

Industrial workers are amongst the most politically conscious sections of the population. In most countries the trade union movement and the nationalist movement have progressed hand in hand. It was no coincidence that Jawaharlal Nehru was President of the Trade Union Congress and of the Indian National Congress in the same year.

Trade union movements in developing countries must realise that the fight for freedom is a continuing one. They should think of their political duty to the country as a whole and not merely in terms of economic gain to themselves.

During the days of colonial rule when the trade union movement was making a modest beginning in Asian countries, it was understandable that it should look largely to the West for guidance. But after two

decades of independence, the forces of neo-colonialism and economic imperialism are still at work and have perpetuated an unnatural situation in which Asian countries have perhaps more intimate economic and cultural contacts with Western countries than with their own neighbours. This sorry state of affairs has to be redressed.

Opportunities for fruitful exchanges in various spheres amongst countries of this region should be consciously explored. So far as India is concerned, we should like to work with other countries on a basis of equality, friendship and co-operation.

In the affluent countries social conscience has been blunted by the emphasis on acquisition. Our working classes can ill-afford to consider themselves distinct and separate from the rest of society. Trade unions must lead, educate and serve the progressive elements of the nation.

We in Asia are mostly agricultural societies. Compared to the majority of our people, agricultural labourers or small farmers, who live on the land, our industrial working class is in an advantageous position. Should trade unions not make a special effort to identify themselves with the aspirations of the poorer sections and to fight for the rights of all who are exploited?

The countries of our region are in various stages of development. We are in a desperate hurry to build our economies and to assure a decent standard of living to our people. In my own country, about 40 per cent of the population does not have its minimum requirements of food, clothing, shelter and medical aid. The problem which confronts us is how to raise these fellow citizens above the poverty line. We are convinced that a better life for them can be assured through a fast rate of sustained growth with simultaneous emphasis on developmental programmes designed specially to meet their needs. We are equally determined that development should not be debased by any form of exploitation.

I find that you will discuss industrialisation, working class struggles and the inter-related problems of wages, prices and employment. These themes are important for better working and living conditions for industrial labour; for industrial peace and for increased productivity, and hence for national advance. However, at each step we must re-examine our goals—what sort of progress do we desire, what future world do we envisage and what is the quality of man we seek?

The Industrial Revolution has completed nearly two hundred years. We are witness to the convenience and comfort it has brought. We are also aware of the cost—the havoc it has played with all life, plant and animal, not excluding the human being. Is contemporary man, especially the industrial worker who is so conscious of his rights and so alive to his interests, willing to make do with a system which depletes nature and diminishes man?

I hope that your deliberations will be concerned not only with your own problems but with larger questions.

I have pleasure in inaugurating the Asian Trade Union Seminar and wish it success.

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I AM GLAD to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. An active and vigorous trade union movement is an essential ingredient of a democratic society. Democracy is a fine balancing of the rights of the individual and his responsibilities to society. Freedom of association is enshrined as a fundamental right in our Constitution. Trade unionism is an instrument to make this right meaningful to the large mass of our industrial workers. Trade unions have played a signal role in every country in the battle to obtain democratic rights.

Even during our struggle for freedom, we had determined that independent India would adopt a radical economic programme, which would give priority to the improvement of the condition of those who toiled in field and factory. Our leaders were conscious that the common man could reap the fruits of liberty only if freedom became an instrument to build a more humane social and economic order. Thus it was natural that many who were in the vanguard of the freedom struggle should also have taken the initiative in organising the trade union movement.

The silver jubilee of the I.N.T.U.C. is a reminder of the contribution of industrial workers to our freedom struggle and to the task of consolidating our freedom and our democratic system. During the last twenty-five years, the I.N.T.U.C. has projected the needs and aspirations of the working classes. During this period, the industrial base of the country has been vastly strengthened and diversified as a result of the investments made in the public and private sectors. Many sophisticated industries have been successfully organised and the country has moved closer to its goal of economic self-reliance.

While industrialisation has brought new opportunities for workers, it has also brought new problems. In this situation, trade unions helped by State policies, have ensured that workers are not subject to the form of exploitation which had been witnessed in the early stage of industrialisation in many developed countries. In a society riven by differences based on religion, caste, language etc., trade unions have been a unifying force, rallying the working classes together on the common basis of economic interests.

A silver jubilee should be an occasion to assess past achievement and to chart new paths and decide on new initiatives. I should like the

Free translation of the inaugural address in Hindi at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Indian National Trade Union Congress, New Delhi, May 3, 1972

I.N.T.U.C. and other trade union organisations to address themselves to the problems which lie ahead rather than get bogged in past controversies.

Our greatest problem in the foreseeable future is the abolition of poverty. No progressive element in our public life can ignore the implications of this national commitment, or refrain from assisting in its fulfilment. Should not the representatives of the I.N.T.U.C. who are assembled here consider their own part in this assault on poverty?

Poverty can be abolished if special attention to the weakest sections is built into a strategy of sustained development. Rapid economic growth is governed by several factors, especially an accelerated investment programme. This can materialise only when production is increased and consumption kept under restraint, thus generating surplus for investment. Obviously, the more affluent sections of society must bear the main brunt of the sacrifices involved in the process of enlarging investible surplus in the economy. Those who are on the poverty line cannot be asked to forgo essentials. On the contrary, larger resources will have to flow towards providing them essentials such as food, cheap clothing, low-cost housing, free education and medical relief. Resources will have to be diverted from the production of luxury and semi-luxury articles which cater primarily to the needs of the rich and the middle classes. In other words, a selective approach based on a broad division between the poor and the not-so-poor is necessary in settling their claims on national resources.

While the standard of living of industrial workers in organised industry and services may still be low in absolute terms, and certainly in comparison with the affluent countries, it cannot be denied that they are better off in relation to that vast section which lives below the poverty line and whose needs should constitute the first charge on our national resources. Not for a moment am I suggesting that organised labour should not legitimately look to further improvement in its standard of living. Much less am I implying that it should accept any erosion of its standards of consumption. Any such suggestion could be neither fair nor realistic. But collective bargaining and threats of stoppage have sometimes been used by many categories of higher-paid workers who may have grievances but not hardship. Workers and their leaders owe some obligations to poorer sections of our society. In pursuing the advancement of their own interests they should not resort to measures which hurt other under-privileged sections of society and would, therefore, lead to social tension.

In spite of the progress that trade unions have made in terms of membership and organisational strength, the base of our trade union movement is still narrow. Employment in the organised sector, public as well as private, is only a little over 17 million and membership of trade unions is smaller still. Trade unions can gather greater strength

and become a far more potent force in our national life when they also speak for a larger constituency. Trade unions should keep in mind the need to bring increasingly larger sections of the population within the sphere of gainful economic activity. They should be the guardians not only of the interests of the employed, but of the much larger number who are yet to secure productive employment.

The interruption of production in essential industries affects the poorer sections of society far more than employers and their class. It also adversely affects the growth of national revenues and thereby undermines Government's ability to push through developmental programmes. It accentuates our dependence on external sources for vital needs. These are the larger imperatives of our present economic situation which leaders of trade unions should keep in mind in pressing the demands of workers.

During the last twelve months, trade unions themselves have shown increasing awareness of these obligations. I am glad to find that there has been some improvement in the general state of industrial relations since I met the leaders of the central trade union organisations last May. I understand that in 1971 the number of man-days lost, as provisionally estimated, is 13.65 million as against 20.56 million man-days lost in 1970-71. Improvement was specially noticeable in the last quarter of 1971 when the country was faced with aggression. The working classes displayed an exemplary sense of patriotism and devotion to duty and kept the wheels of production moving without interruption.

It was in the light of this experience, that the suggestion was made to trade union leaders, whether we could not generate a similar spirit of understanding of national needs among workers and enlist their co-operation in the far more important war on poverty? Industrial workers have been in the forefront of many progressive movements. They have led the fight for egalitarianism. By and large they have stood for secularism. Trade unions have also constantly stressed the need to make our economy self-reliant and to free it from external pressures and influences. They should, therefore, ensure that their own demands and policies assist, and not impede, the present two-pronged drive towards greater self-reliance and the mitigation of mass poverty.

Why should there be a competition between unions as to who get more for the workers? There should be no exploitation of workers for political purposes. These are not competitive games. We are dealing with a responsible section of our population—a section whose importance and responsibility are proportionately far greater than its numerical strength. I cannot believe that industrial workers will not put the national good before all else, if they are taken into confidence and the situation explained to them.

Industrial peace is vital for national survival. We just cannot afford loss of production, whether it is due to strikes, go-slow methods, lock-outs

or closures or managerial incompetence. But good industrial relations do not merely mean the absence of strikes and lock-outs, any more than good health means the mere absence of illness. We should secure the voluntary and whole-hearted commitment of labour and management to our national objectives in the performance of their daily tasks. The nation needs, especially at this point of time, higher standards of performance in all critical industries, the fuller utilisation of productive equipment, higher productivity and the elimination of inefficiency.

Industrial societies are becoming increasingly complex, hence disputes regarding wages and other conditions of service are inevitable. I hope it is possible to evolve an effective system to resolve these disputes in a manner which does not hamper production nor hurts the overall interest of the nation. It is only when we have strong and united trade unions enjoying the overwhelming support of labour that we can arrive at peaceful settlement of disputes on an enduring basis. In the last 12 months, the Ministry of Labour and trade union leaders have been working hard to evolve a common approach to issues such as the recognition of unions for purposes of collective bargaining. I commend the spirit in which leaders of central trade union organisations have approached this delicate task. I hope that the I.N.T.U.C. and other central trade union organisations will work together to resolve the points still in dispute and will contribute to the evolution of healthy industrial relations in our country.

There also seems to be some misunderstanding about the role of the State in settling industrial disputes. The ideal arrangement would be for all disputes to be settled between management and labour through mutual discussions and negotiations. But may I reiterate the statement I made at my meeting with trade union leaders last year, that industrial relations are far too serious a matter to be left exclusively to employers and labour? The community has a vital stake in problems affecting relations between management and labour, and can legitimately seek a voice in the solution of these problems through peaceful means. Organised labour rightly looks on the strike as the most powerful weapon in its armoury to be judiciously deployed in its struggle for a higher standard of living. But in a planned economy which seeks to promote economic growth, with progressively more equitable distribution of the gains of development, the rights of management as well as labour, like other rights available to citizens, must be subject to some regulations or restraint in the national interest. I hope that trade union leaders will display realism as well as statesmanship in appreciating the stake which the State has in the maintenance of industrial peace.

The I.N.T.U.C. is celebrating its silver jubilee at a crucial stage in the evolution of independent India. The events of the last few months have given the nation, amidst all the stresses and strains, a new sense of confidence. It should be the duty of us all to respond to this national

mood and move forward significantly in tackling the problems of low production, unemployment and mass poverty. I hope that the I.N.T.U.C. will play its own distinctive role in this task.

The Civil Services

YOU ALL KNOW that in the last four or five years there has been a general quickening of political consciousness. It has been obvious in India. But this consciousness of the people is a phenomenon which is visible, I think, in every country of the world. At some places it takes the form of protests, movements and in other places different forms, but it is really different aspects of the same thing, that is, through education, through growth, people wanting to have greater participation in what is happening.

In India because of our own problems, our own economic backwardness, naturally the people are not satisfied with the existing state of affairs. They want a much faster rate of growth. They want more equitable distribution of the fruits of our national endeavour. They want greater social justice and greater equality. They expect a great deal from political parties. They want from them service; they want changes in the legal system and, I think, it is this general ferment which is at the root of the demand for administrative reform. To achieve these objectives the administration must be imbued by a sense of this need for change and development—the technical competence, the necessary knowledge and also the necessary attitude of mind.

Nothing in the world is ever static, and we are at a time when things are moving much faster than ever before. So, whatever plan or programme we take we have always to be looking into the future, that is, even in the training which is given. We should not only think of the particular situation which exists today but simultaneously should be looking into the future to see how that situation can be improved as you go along step by step, year after year. I find this is what it lacks. It is so obvious in the educational system not only of this country but of other countries that everybody is being prepared for *status quo* for a society as it is, for conditions as they are, rather than what sort of society we want to have—what is the ideal society. I think any training institute must deal with both these points of view simultaneously.

Here in India—and perhaps everywhere—the Government's activities have increased in range, in volume, in complexity in the course of our

Speech at the annual meeting of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, October 22, 1971

planned economic development. The number of public employees has also increased and amongst those who invoke the so-called Parkinson's Law are many whose aim is not efficiency but reluctance to accept the need for the Government to undertake new responsibilities. The Government's functions have increased as people's assertiveness and requirements have increased. Our country has rightly refused to adopt a negative attitude towards the functions of the Government and the role of civil servants. If Government has to do more for the people its employees must play a more dynamic and more creative role, as the instruments of Government policies and programmes.

To be able to discharge its new responsibilities the civil service must change itself. Some transformation has already occurred but much more is required in the years to come.

Development, even more than maintenance of continuity and order, has become the business of the administrative apparatus. The implementation of Plan programmes requires a greater say for the expert and the technician and re-examination of old axioms so that the desire to enforce obedience to rules does not hold up work. At the same time, the general administrator himself has to acquire a greater understanding of economic and technological forces.

In all countries today there is a kind of battle between the expert and the generalist. Our aim should be to ensure that the country gets the best from both. Sometimes I find that our experts are not expert enough. Nor are they immune from the common human frailty of in-fighting or a sense of hierarchy. Expert and generalist are both products of the same social milieu, and both must strive to equip themselves for future tasks in a world where inter-disciplinary approach is becoming the key to advance.

It is against this perspective that we should keep under constant review our policies regarding recruitment and training of civil servants of different categories and the procedures for appraisal of their performance. No Government can possibly be run without rules and regulations. But these rules and regulations cannot be static. They must fit into the dynamics of a changing situation. We cannot consider satisfactory a state of affairs in which it is easier to amend a Constitutional provision than some so-called "fundamental rule" or "civil service regulations".

I am not here to spell out the required changes in rules and regulations; it is for experts in administration like you to think about these things and to find a way out. I would only like to stress that the procedures and practices should encourage initiative, foster innovation, match responsibilities and powers, and create a sense of participation at all levels. We call ourselves a participatory democracy; our administrative system should reflect the spirit of involvement. The

question of rank should give place to sense of partnership and working together.

The vast majority of Government servants—whether they are clerks or engineers or tax officers or general administrators—have a career extending over nearly three decades. During this long period every civil servant will necessarily witness striking changes in the society around him. When the young civil servant of today—whether he is in a technical or a non-technical post—rises to the top, he will see a world which will be vastly different from the one in which he had joined service. Obviously he should strive for a continual upgradation of his skills.

I, therefore, attach great importance to the programmes of training—initial training as well as in-service training to all categories of civil servants. Apart from formal training, I would consider it even more important for a civil servant to develop an enquiring mind receptive to new ideas, and a restless spirit which keeps urging him constantly to find ways of doing the assigned tasks better and more efficiently. These are the positive qualities which the country expects from the civil servants of tomorrow. Negatively, they should try and keep away from cynicism and the line of least resistance. We should place on a rational basis our procedures for the identification of talent, nurturing of talent and of rewarding such talent. Nothing can be more frustrating than talent unrewarded. A society cannot progress if only seniority or rank counts. Public administration must get out of the shadow of feudalism.

One important administrative problem of today—and the subject of many of your studies—is delegation. But we can interpret this narrowly to mean that an agency or executive should be in a position to make day-to-day decisions without the Secretariat in Delhi (or in the State capital) breathing down his neck. Often the heads of institutions to whom power is delegated do not share it with their colleagues, and do not develop the spirit and mechanism of team work. The aggrieved go back to the same old central authority for redress. This is an area in which there is great need of new practices and conventions.

Another problem is that of attitudes. Our civil service is largely drawn from the urban areas and is urban-oriented, while the majority of our people live in rural areas. With the broadening of the base of our educational system and the wider dispersal of facilities for higher education, we should expect the class composition of our services to change. But this will take time. In the meantime the problem of how to impart to the civil servant—whether he is an administrator like a collector or a doctor or an irrigation engineer—a sense of identification with the problems of the poor of the rural areas remains. How are we to ensure that they have intuitive sympathy

with the people and have a livelier appreciation of their problems and difficulties? The inculcation of proper attitudes should perhaps begin in our educational institutions. But the process must be carried through and completed in the course of the civil servant's career under the Government.

Our civil servants had to undergo a major process of adjustment at the time of transfer of power in 1947. Because of the need for continuity we did not then make structural changes in the system which was necessary. By and large the process of adjustment was smoothly completed. As Government's policies are becoming increasingly egalitarian a similar process of adjustment is now called for. There is urgent need for radical attitudinal changes—particularly at the points at which the administration comes in contact with the people. For example, the block development office, the taluka office, the police station, the post office, the railway ticket booth and so on. Greater courtesy, speed and consideration in dealing with the people, is called for.

The co-operation of civil servants and their associations should be enlisted in bringing about a visible improvement in the manner in which these public offices at the grass-root level function. Higher ranks of civil servants have a special responsibility in providing effective leadership to bring about such improvement.

In the process of expansion of our social welfare and social security schemes, we are setting up new agencies and institutions. It is particularly necessary that these agencies and institutions, for example, the Employees' State Insurance hospitals and dispensaries, and offices which give scholarships and aid to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, should have men imbued with genuine compassion and concern. But the complaint at present is that the smallest Government functionary acts with condescension and callousness towards the villager, while he himself resents the same attitude on the part of higher officers.

Much of what I have said applies even more to our public sector undertakings. There we need a greater sense of commitment to social objectives, greater scope for the technical element, greater delegation of authority down the line, greater involvement and the development of a corporate spirit. In short, a new culture. The public enterprises must primarily fulfil their economic role. By efficient functioning they should add to the nation's economic strength and also to budgetary resources. They should help to foster a new ethic in administration.

Democracy has struck root in our country. Whatever theories of administration we may evolve, or whatever system we may fashion, these should be acceptable to the people and promote their interests. Our democratic system has enabled an increasingly large number of

people to acquire direct experience of administration through elective offices as members of panchayats or panchayat samitis, zila parishads, state legislative assemblies or Parliament. We thus have people in different walks of life who have had occasion to observe our administrative system from positions of vantage, and have some ideas on how the machinery functions and how it could be reshaped. I hope the Institute has devised or will devise arrangements by which there could be mutually beneficial interaction between experts and holders of elective offices.

I am very glad to hear from Shri Asoka Mehta about your proposed work in the regional languages, because it is obvious that we can deal with the people only through their languages and we can understand them much better if we know those languages. So we have to develop the regional languages and we have also to promote the knowledge of Hindi which, as you know, I always call the national link language. It is not because we want to force the language on anybody, but merely from the very practical point of view of getting to know one another, of communicating with one another, it is absolutely essential to have one language which all the persons in this country can understand and speak. Of course, for those who are in administration, it is even more necessary than the ordinary person.

We have very many problems in this country, because we are backward, because we are big, because we are newly free. But actually even the smallest country thinks that they have an equal number of problems. So problems are not merely because of bigness. I think there are problems wherever there is man, and if we can learn not just to deal with the problems but to deal with the man behind the problem, or concerned with the problem, I think we can find more durable solution. In the modern world, I find that more and more we think of people not as individuals with problems or difficulties or joys and sorrows but as statistics—either one is a Harijan, or one is some other caste, or one is educated unemployed. Everybody is in some category very neatly labelled and so we forget that behind these labels each person is an entirely different person. Of course, no administrator can deal with each individual but at least if he thinks of these groups as composed of individuals, it makes a difference to attitude, if he looks at each person not as a person who has come with the problem but as a person with whose help we can solve the problem, I think we already are one step towards finding a proper solution.

Shri Asoka Mehta has said very kind words about me as leader and so on. But perhaps you know that I have quite strong views in the matter. The whole point of democracy is that we should not work in a concept of leader-and-led but we should evolve a concept of partnership. We are here all involved to try and create a better

standard of living without damaging or diminishing the spirit of the people, because we find in many places where the standard of living has gone up, it has not really always made them better people or happier people. So we have this tremendous task and we can only do it in a spirit of co-operation and partnership, and I think this spirit is perhaps the most important thing that all of us, whether we are in the administration or not, have to learn—how to work together for the common good of all. I sincerely hope that this Institute will work towards this end and I am sure all those who come out of here will help us to take our country forward and to bring it to the light about which our leaders have taught and dreamt.

A Self-reliant Economy

IN DEVISING APPROPRIATE policies for the economy, we must consider three sets of factors : (a) the need to quicken the pace of self-reliance; (b) the need to achieve the socio-economic aims of the Government already announced; and finally (c) the need to provide assistance to Bangladesh.

Our plans cannot be based on the assumption that external aid is a permanent feature of our lives. External assistance has been to work as an instrument in the hands of foreign Governments to be used at critical times to the disadvantage of the recipient country. Excessive dependence on foreign aid also develops an attitude of complacency towards inefficiencies in our economic system. In the Fourth Plan, we had already decided to adjust the economy to lower levels of external aid. It has become necessary to carry out further adjustment to still lower levels of foreign aid.

It has been sometimes assumed that foreign assistance is absolutely necessary to cover what is described as the trade gap. Actually it is mainly a saving gap. We should call less and less upon foreigners to add to the savings which we should generate ourselves. We did need external assistance in the past and we have put it to some effective use. The situation has now changed. External assistance is decreasing. At the moment the net foreign aid constitutes less than 1 per cent (0.8 per cent) of our national income. Indications are that this fraction will further go down.

I am not suggesting that we deny ourselves all forms of external assistance. In some critical sectors and for specific purposes, we would

Address to meeting of the Planning Commission, New Delhi, December 21, 1971

welcome external assistance but it cannot continue to weigh substantially with our overall economic strategy. We have now a diversified economy which is in a good position to generate the necessary physical resources to become self-reliant. We have witnessed significant improvements in agriculture.

Unfortunately, we are not taking full advantage of the productive assets which have already been created. There is under-utilised capacity in steel, fertilisers, machine tools, railway wagons, coal and some other important industries. In certain other important cases capacity can be expanded with the import of small quantities of investment goods. We shall, therefore, have to adopt all measures that will result in immediate activation of existing under-utilised capacity. This capacity has to be activated throughout the economy.

However, the full utilisation of capacity will have to be matched with greater efforts at resource mobilisation. The urgency of the resource problem has been well recognised. Basically, the problem has arisen from the difficulties of the Government to collect more resources from sectors of the economy where bulk of the additional income has arisen. It has also been due, in part, to lagging growth of industrial production. Since our socio-economic objectives place a great deal of emphasis on public investment expenditure, it is necessary to effect economy of non-essential Government expenditure which will lead to more public savings.

It is also very disturbing to find that the contribution of public enterprises has been much smaller than anticipated. In view of the size of the public sector, every effort has to be made to make enterprises major resource generators. I hope that the committee that has been set up for the purpose will soon come up with effective remedial actions.

Coming to our socio-economic objectives, we have already recognised the need for greater expansion of employment. No doubt, the activation of capacity in the economy will lead to more employment in certain organised sectors but it should be our policy to introduce a set of measures as soon as possible with respect to agriculture, construction, etc. where the bulk of labour force is concentrated. The growth of employment has been very uneven as between regions. Our employment policy should help to mitigate emerging regional imbalances. It is, therefore, necessary to devote attention to regions where growth has been particularly slow.

It should be our policy to utilise available human resources to the utmost. Our strategy for human resource development should be designed to change the quality of life and also to accelerate the pace of development. We must ensure that the less privileged sections of the community get a much better deal. With that in mind, our emphasis in educational programmes should shift to primary education, adult literacy, vocationalisation of secondary education and other quality

improvement programmes which would have considerable impact on large masses of people. Similarly, expenditure on health services has to shift in favour of preventive medicine. At the moment, rural areas have very little access to health facilities. The training of doctors and para-medical personnel should be oriented to rural conditions. Only an integrated approach to health, education and nutrition can really lead to the success of the family planning programme.

We are committed to assist Bangladesh Government in rehabilitating their economy. At this point of time, we have only very sketchy information about the size of assistance required, but work on it has already started. Whatever may be the exact quantum of assistance we must not be alarmed by the burden that will be imposed on our economy. Luckily the damage inflicted on the productive assets of Bangladesh has not been as great as was feared. There is also complementarity between our economy and theirs. For example, we can export to Bangladesh coal where production can be easily increased. Again, the opening of inland waterways for traffic from the rest of the country to Assam will have a salutary effect on the economy of Eastern and North-eastern regions. This will help us in reducing our cost of transport and help Bangladesh in earning Indian rupees. The export of vegetables, fish, newsprint and raw jute will also have an establishing effect on the prices of these commodities in the neighbouring areas.

I have no doubt that the Planning Commission is aware of all these problems and are devoting their attention to their solution. I am mentioning these points to indicate that only through devising and implementing a set of bold and yet realistic programmes can the country move faster in the direction of socialism, economic independence and improvement in the conditions of living.

Evolving a Joint Sector

WE MEET AGAIN to compare notes and to exchange thoughts on the state of economy, which is naturally a matter of vital concern to us in Government and to you the leaders of trade and industry. Some arguments at such meetings tend to be familiar. But every time there is something new to disprove the feeling that the more things change, the more they are the same.

Your address for one thing had many new ideas. It was a forward-looking address and I think that this year we start on a more cheerful

Inaugural address to the 45th session of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, March 25, 1972

note of co-operation and what I hope is a sounder basis for a fruitful dialogue on the direction in which our economy should move. Your statement that the members of your Federation are in accord with the "socio-economic objectives to which Government policies are directed" is very welcome. Also your recognition of the wider responsibilities of business which transcend the earning of profit to which I have often drawn attention.

Public financial institutions have consistently helped the expansion programme of industrial units. Now when we are poised for rapid economic growth and there is political stability in all parts of the country, it is the responsibility of the industrial groups to move forward with renewed zeal and enterprise. The budget represents a considerable effort to raise the level of the public investment. This should help industrial revival over a wide field.

One of the most controversial subjects is that of what are now commonly known as monopoly houses. There is a certain advantage in size. Economies of scale can be reaped with advantage. On the other hand, size can also lead to exploitation. The Government attempt is to ensure benefit from economies of scale without the evil consequences which flow from the excessive concentration of the means of production and distribution in limited hands. One of the objectives of Government policy, therefore, has been and will continue to be the promotion of small-scale and medium-scale industries in areas of production where technology does not conflict with scales.

For large industrial houses, the main scope for expansion exists in the 'core' and 'heavy investment' sectors where their contribution can be commensurate with their expertise and experience. However, even large houses cannot develop these sectors without substantial assistance from the public financial institutions. This is why we emphasize the importance of evolving a joint sector where the managerial ability of the private sector could be harnessed with support from financial institutions. Because of their sizeable equity holding, public financial institutions could ensure that larger social and economic objectives are not sacrificed in a relentless and often short-sighted and even surreptitious pursuit of private profit. I hope you will participate in evolving a vigorous joint sector.

A dynamic industrial society needs large organisation which cannot all be built in the public sector alone. But a democratic or open society also requires an open corporate structure—open to those who save in small amounts and invest in shares, open to the workers who toil and sweat, open to institutions which are trustees of the general public whose resources and savings they mobilise, and open also to the consumer who ultimately pays the bill not only of the profits, but also of wages and interest and the cost of materials, an open sector whose resources

are not syphoned off clandestinely for the ostentatious living of a few but are ploughed back for further growth.

Better industrial relations are as important as additional capital investment. Loss of output due to industrial strife reduces national income and the potential source of capital for the creation of additional jobs. The number of man-days lost in India is staggeringly out of proportion to the volume of our industrial output. It is a test of managerial skill to create an atmosphere of solidarity between workers and managers. We can seek the co-operation of workers only if we can assure them of justice and fairplay.

In order to achieve self-reliance, substantial expansion of production in the 'core' sectors is particularly urgent. Otherwise, we shall continue to be dependent on the whims of aid-giving countries for critical raw materials and machinery. There is no doubt that large industrial houses can play an important role if they are not afraid of subjecting their efforts to public scrutiny. At the same time such public scrutiny through financial institutions should not become a witch-hunt for minor blemishes.

To adjust the economy to lower levels of external assistance, we must increase our exports significantly. Government is providing various measures of support and assistance to stimulate exports. A scheme to facilitate the speedy grant of replenishment of licences to exporters as well as early payment of cash assistance is being worked out by the Ministry of Foreign Trade. But what really counts in world markets is quality and price. You must be able to compete if you are to go ahead.

It is not unnatural that industrialists should have doubts about particular nuances of official policy. The consequences of particular policies must be weighed for the nation as a whole, and not for individual groups or sections. We must all concentrate on the essentials. Industrialists will find that their long-range interests lie in moving forward with bold investment decisions without being deterred by temporary difficulties. The challenge lies in overcoming difficulties, in reorienting mental attitudes and the broadening of horizons and, if I may say so, you have given indication of this in your address.

I am not taking up the various points you have mentioned in your address. Government's policy is clear. We are committed to certain objectives and cannot deviate from them but wherever it is possible to simplify or rationalize procedures or to remove difficulties and obstacles, we shall certainly try our best to do so. I should like here to mention another aspect which, I think is worthy of consideration at this point of our development. I have a problem, which is not mine but India's and therefore equally yours. The dismal and abject poverty which was prevalent all over the country before independence is no longer seen. But we all know that poverty does exist and that it is all the more stark

because of greater political awareness, more education and the growing knowledge that things can change. We speak of growth and development. But it is the uplifting of man and not the increasing of productivity which is the proper concern of development. When we speak of the removal of poverty, we do not mean what has been called the 'trickle down' process of ecoonmic development which has characterised the West.

We do not have the time nor will our people be prepared to wait. There is a logic about providing resources to those who use them most productively. But it can develop only a part of society. As everyone knows, this can lead only to dissatisfaction and chaos. Our present fiscal system has a narrow base and it is not possible to enlarge it easily. This means that a large number of people are left out of the productive process, for it becomes impossible to redistribute incomes to those who are outside the economic system. Once resources are committed to luxury goods it is not possible to convert them into commodities of mass consumption like bus transport or houses for the poor.

The western economists who enjoin us to follow their pattern are today the first to decry the inequality of our social growth. The very institutions we have created for promoting faster growth and capital accumulation now seem to frustrate our attempts for better distribution and greater social justice.

We have adopted western economic and fiscal system and we tend to judge progress and development according to western standards which are little relevant to our conditions and even less to our goals.

I have long felt that the prevalent economic theories tend to aggravate the problem of developing countries. In fact I think it is obvious now that they do not entirely solve the problems of the other countries either. We, in India, have all to think what is our basic objective towards which we must strive? Is it merely to raise the G.N.P.? Neither increased production nor export can be the end. Today even professional economists are realising, talking about or writing that 'growthmanship' which results in undivided attention to the maximisation of G.N.P. can be dangerous for the results are almost always social and political unrest. Therefore increase in the G.N.P. must be considered only as one component of a multi-dimensional transformation of society. Other aspects of this transformation process are : increased self-reliance, wider diffusion of employment opportunities, reduction in the concentration of economic power—all of which are equally important objectives of economic policy-making. But even all these are merely the means to give a better life to our people. This obviously leads us to the conclusion that the necessities of the very poorest must be rather their first concern. Development goals should not aim at proliferation of consumer goods or services which benefit only a certain section, but must be defined in terms of progressive

reduction and eventual elimination of squalor and inequality, of malnutrition, disease, of illiteracy and unemployment. We must think in terms of minimum goods and services which are to be provided to the common man in order to eliminate the worst manifestations of poverty. I was glad to hear in your address a reference to the evil aspects of industrialisation. It is one of the many paradoxes of our decade that affluence does not always improve the quality of life and industry which provides us with our necessities and our luxuries is also largely responsible for the pollution of air and water. I hope our own industrialists will take active interest in ecology in ensuring clean living and in preserving the beauty of our environments whether it is natural beauty or man-made monuments.

Today there is an unmistakable climate of resurgence in the country. There is optimism and self-confidence. There is also impatience. You have referred to the war. And there is no doubt that our victory there has contributed to this feeling of self-confidence, the feeling that we can undertake a task, we can meet a challenge. But I think that the optimism of the people is not merely due to this but to the feeling that at last a turn has been taken where their needs are being considered, at last there is an effort to change things if they are considered to be not adequate to the situation or adequate to the speed which we want in our programmes to eradicate poverty. It is this which has reached down to the people in the remotest areas and it is up to all of us who are in the forefront of our respective professions to mobilise all our resources to move forward at this decisive moment. We do not have all the time in the world. As I have said on an earlier occasion, I think that we must make a dent in the next three years or four at the very most. If we are able to show that our path which is the democratic path, the peaceful path, the path of co-operation, of helping one another, if in three to four years we can show that this path does lead us forward then, I think, we have nothing to fear for the future of India. But if we fail for whatever reason, whether it is mistake of the Government or the mistake of business and industry or any one section feeling more concerned about their rights and needs than of other sections we will all suffer together; not that one section or any other but the entire country itself. So, we are at a cross-road and it is the time when we have to re-think about everything that we have done before. I do not say that we have to sweep everything off but we do have to make many changes and I must confess that the path is not at all clear and we can only make that path. We can only evolve a policy of change with your co-operation and help in even deciding how to go about.

The President referred to one of the books which is making an impression on the thinking of the people in the world over—he has referred it in his speech *Future Shock*. But among people in the

field of economics, in the field of health, in the field of social welfare all over the world there is new thinking because obviously the old way is no longer enough for what people want. Maybe, our people are not fully alive to this as the young and the thinking people of other countries but they are not far from. So, this is the moment when we must have courage and the boldness and the daring to think new on all aspects of our life and to forge a path on which we can move forward as partners, as good companions to move towards our goal. Our goal cannot be reached in a few years nor do I think anybody expects. Even the poorest do not expect the miracle. But they do expect us moving in the right direction. They do expect to see things changing ostensibly towards what they consider are their interests. So, I hope that we will be able to demonstrate the same strength and unity, the same concern for the national good as we did during last year's crisis. This crisis—economic crisis—is no less serious for us and this goal, the goal of giving better life to our people, is greater than any victory a country can win even in a war.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and give you my best wishes for your deliberations.

Savings : A Necessity

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in inaugurating this new savings scheme. Sushilaji has already dealt in details on the importance of savings in the reconstruction of our country. Savings, I think, are important from many points of view: Firstly, savings in themselves are important; Secondly, we should cut down on all unnecessary consumption. There should be a feeling of self-reliance not just for the country, but for the family and the individual as a whole and savings can help in this. And by each person undertaking this type of work, helping in the savings movement, there is also a sense of participation in a national movement and a sense of partnership of all people at different levels.

We all realise the magnitude of the task of eradicating poverty or of bringing in an egalitarian society. But I think it is not yet understood how much responsibility lies on the individual, on the family and on society as a whole. This is not a task that can be done by Government passing laws, merely by Government showing a

Inaugural speech at the Mahila-Pradhan Kshetriya Bachat Yojana, New Delhi, April 1, 1972

direction, especially now when we find that some of the directions which we had taken in all good faith are not perhaps entirely adequate to the needs of our people. Therefore they have to be changed. We have to take new directions, we have to move much faster with certain programmes and this can happen only if people as a whole not only understand the situation, but are also prepared to give their time and energies to help bring about these changes.

When we speak of changes, unfortunately in our country, as in many others, people are so used to cliches that they think along certain lines. Whenever I have said that we have to go further, they have taken it for granted that what I mean is more nationalisation, more of something else. I am not saying that it may not be done or it may be done. But this is not what I meant when I talked of big changes. The big change necessary is in the whole attitude and outlook of society. We find today that whether it is education or health, no matter how much we spend, those services are only for a very limited section of the people—for the highest class and may be percolating a little bit into the middle class. But three-fourths of the people are not really benefitting from education, from health services or any of the other services provided. Experience of other developing countries has shown that merely having more schools, merely having more hospitals or more doctors is not going to solve the problem except to a very limited extent. That is why I say that a radical change of outlook and appreciation of these problems and how to solve them is needed.

Any change means a certain amount of disruption. It means difficulties for existing people in particular positions. But it need not be so. If people are adaptable and if they are willing to help us in bringing about these changes, then with some difficulty and some adjustment, they will fit into the new scheme of things.

Although I have talked a great deal about these matters, I am not at all clear as to how this is to be done. The reason why I talk about it is that it is necessary for people to think and discuss so that there is a public dialogue on these matters and together we can evolve this new path. Many of the suggestions have been thrown up in other countries but everywhere it is still in the state of loud thinking. Nobody has really outlined a programme of work where these massive changes could be brought about democratically with the people's co-operation and in a way that they really do reach the people and that a change does not mean that instead of serving one lot of people, you switch over to serving another lot, leaving the general situation not much changed.

I have wandered off from the main subject which is that of savings, but only to highlight that no matter what programme we want to undertake, whether it is at the Central Government level or the State

Government level or even the local bodies level, the base of it is the savings of the nation because those are the resources. There are bigger mobilisations of bigger resources but just as important is the mobilisation of resources which are small in the sense that they involve small individual amounts, but taken as a whole it is not a small thing. The bigger we can make this movement, the more people we can involve in it, the more successful it will be and will create what I mentioned earlier a sense of people's participation. Incidentally, of course, it also gives jobs to people—the women. I think this sort of work makes people more self-confident, gives them greater poise and all of this is also equally important in building up national confidence.

So I have great pleasure in inaugurating this scheme and I sincerely wish it all success.

A New Priority

MAY I FIRST of all welcome all the Chief Ministers ? It is for the first time since the elections that we have gathered today. I would welcome you and like to congratulate through you the people of your States for the way in which they are showing increasing maturity and withstanding the obstacles and difficulties which come in the way.

As you know, we are here to discuss the Approach Document which has been circulated by the Planning Commission. Many of the points are those which we have all been stressing for some time. The most important problem before all of us is the poverty of large sections of our people and the fact that in spite of several plans and many programmes on which lot of money has been spent we have not made much dent on problems faced by the lowest strata of society. In this Approach Document you will see that there is a new priority of providing basic amenities to meet the needs of the poorest and the lowest. This is a departure from our earlier documents and it will influence the pattern of central assistance. I think the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission will deal with this matter; this in my view is the most important thing. It is no use blaming the past that this was done or not done because we were not always in a position to do many of the things which we can undertake today. But today we are not to be excused if we do not go ahead with these programmes. They are not made for any pure ideological reasons. We are all committed to a certain ideology; but the programmes that we have put before the nation

Opening speech at the meeting of the National Development Council, New Delhi, May 30, 1972

or in the Planning Commission document are very practical programmes, programmes which are absolutely essential, not only to help the people directly but also to get peace in the country which is a prerequisite to any kind of progress you want to have. During the last one year or so the country has shown unity, solidarity and endurance and we have faced many problems. We ourselves were doubtful about our strength to face them but we faced them, if I may say so, fairly calmly and confidently. This does not apply only to the people here but also to the ordinary man in the street, I think, it is because of his attitude, his faith, that the country was moving in the right direction. Now we have to justify his faith and trust in our programmes not merely by talking about them but by showing that we can implement them in the most effective manner.

It is, of course, very necessary to have these discussions on these matters, but sometimes I feel that we have so much of discussion that we have hardly any energy left to implement the real work which has to be done in the field. And I think we would make a far greater impact on the people if we go to them to say that this has been achieved rather than to say what we are going to do, though to some extent, we have to say what we are going to do. I think this will strengthen us about further action.

The objective of ensuring the minimum standard of living to everyone can be achieved only with a substantial increase in production. It is not enough if we are concerned with employment programmes only. It is not enough to provide employment. As the Approach Paper points out the income generated must be matched by increase in production of the consumer goods so that they are not eroded by rise in prices. Also, we cannot provide educational facilities, electricity, water to the rural areas and better amenities to the urban slum dwellers without a corresponding increase in the production of such vital things as steel, cement, power generation equipment and so on. The objective of self-reliance should also take us in the same direction of increasing production. We have to produce all these things especially steel, fertiliser, etc. and increase the output of industries. We are laying, as you must have seen, greater emphasis on self-reliance.

But I am sure what we are really concerned is that we should produce those kind of things without which life would be difficult for our people in times of war or in times of peace. This is the over-riding consideration. I think it is rather difficult to remove poverty or eradicate poverty without this kind of an approach. This programme of self-reliance will impose great responsibility and burden on us and also on the State Governments.

What we need in the present stage of our development is not an approach in terms of choice between this or that but to decide what kind of an effort we all have to make together on a variety of fronts

simultaneously and whether the policy must be woven into planning. This is all the more important because although we have dealt with matters of land reforms or the concentration of economic power or great inequalities of income, we have not yet made much advance in the matter of implementation. That is why, the need is to have a new approach or a sharper look and, as I said in the beginning, to see how we can make a dent, which is tangible and which makes a difference in the structure of our society and to see that not only do we have commodities and services but that they get to those who need them most. This is where we have been weak. Facilities for education have increased; everything has increased but we have to see whether they have gone to those people who are most in need of them. This is possible only with the help of the States. Many of these subjects are State subjects. We are deeply concerned with them and we consider them essential to peaceful progress and towards an egalitarian society to which I believe all are committed, even though some of us belong to different parties. I think all of us are committed to the direction which the Government have announced.

Often in these meetings of the N.D.C., I have noticed the State Governments or the State Chief Ministers are concerned with specific projects and specific problems of their States. This is only natural and we should certainly be concerned with them. At the same time it is important for them to help us devise the overall strategy and overall policy because we should have that cleared and it is no use just having an approach here or a scheme there. It will not help in the real way. We all know what we want to do for our people. It is equally important that all of us pay greater attention to these. We must see that if we make progress in one direction it should not affect the progress in other directions. If we take a step, it should not be a step which would take us backward economically and socially. We should have an overall view of what exactly we want to do and how soon we would like to do it. If we are agreed on that, then, there must be a give and take policy. We also feel that we cannot do everything that we would like to do and that is necessary. We are all here as part of one big family—one part of a great nation—it is only if we understand each other's difficulties and problems and are willing to help other persons in case of need that the entire nation can make progress. If every State says my responsibility is only this much and I am answerable only to my people and it does not matter what may happen to others, in the long run it does not help that State itself. I hope we will talk here in a constructive manner, in a harmonious manner and take decisions. The Approach Paper is still not very definite, and perhaps deliberately so. You should help in giving it more definite shape. I hope we will not spend too much time in a kind of cross arguments, but will devote

ourselves to giving form and substance to this Approach Paper, so that all of us are enabled to do a better job for our people.

I think a plan of this size naturally demands a commensurate effort in terms of mobilisation of the required resources as well as in Approach Formulation and Implementation. The need to mobilise the economy fully for an effort of this magnitude is all the greater because of our determination to reduce our dependence on external assistance. We are faced with the greatest economic and political challenge of a self-reliant economy in an egalitarian society. At the same time we have to stand up to the pressures which vested interest throws on us within and outside the country.

This is not the occasion for discussing foreign policy but I would like to just say a few words. Because of our very success the pressures on us are likely to grow. While somebody is weak, many people will have pity; but human nature is such that we do not like any people becoming stronger. This is one of the reasons why India is faced with special problems. Even though we are not very strong as a nation yet our very size does give us strength. The fact that we have been able to make democracy work, that we have been able to make it work in spite of different parties and many disagreements amongst ourselves and we have been able to provide a united front in times of difficulty has made an impact on the rest of the world. The impact to an extent is good. That is, they see us with greater respect. But we will have less help and greater difficulties in many ways. All these stress the need for our working together and for seeing problems in the national perspective and even in the international perspective.

I do not think even a small State could ignore what is happening in the world. You know what is happening in the world. I would request you to see all your problems in the context of national needs, demands and interests and also in the context of international affairs. Once more, I welcome you all. We are starting here with a useful slogan which exhorts us to unity. I sincerely hope that this is the spirit which will take us all through the discussions here.

A Proud Day for Our Navy

THIS IS A proud day for our Navy and a very big day for defence production. A warship built in our own country, by our own technicians is being handed over to the Navy. It is the first of such frigates

Address on the occasion of commissioning of the first India-built frigate, *INS Nilgiri*, Bombay, June 3, 1972

built at the Mazagon Dock and will add considerably to our defence strength.

Bombay has been famous all over the world as a great port. Strewn around it are many other ports which at one time or another in our long history were great centres of maritime activity. Indian merchantships had sailed to ancient Babylon in the west and the Chinese Seas in the east and ships of all nations frequented our great ports all along the coast from Kathiawar to Bengal. Until the early part of the last century, we were amongst the great ship-builders of the world—merchantships as well as warships. Many of our warships were even bought by the British Navy.

One of them built by Wadi and Sons was the flagship of the British Fleet under Nelson's successor. But more than a century and a half had to pass before we could again begin building warships. I am reminded of this history because this year is the 25th year of our freedom and we are still engaged in the task of making up for the opportunities of which we were deprived for a long time. But step by step we are coming into our own. Our every forward step has strengthened us because our sight has been clearly fixed on the objective of strengthening the nation through the development of our own capabilities. In the recent war, our armed forces gave a wonderful example of their courage and capacity. Every boy and girl, every man and woman, admired the performance of our officers and men on land, on the sea and in the air. Here was an instance when each service vied with the other in defending national interest and demonstrating its quality. The Navy won its share of glory. I have paid tribute to the Navy for its brilliant contribution to our success. I should like to do so once again and specially to the gallant men who went down on the *Khukri* in the highest traditions of the Navy. The undoubted gallantry and professional ability of our fighting forces was anticipated. But what helped them was the fact that most of our equipment, arms and ammunition is made in our own country. We speak of the three forces. But defence production is the fourth force. And unless the fourth force is strong, the other three cannot give of their best and a country cannot be truly strong.

In modern warfare, industry is the true base of military strength. It is our industrial development persued through our four plans and specially the emphasis we have laid on the basic industry and on machine-building that has stood up in such good stead and has gained respect in the eyes of the world. It is this that has enable us to speak with credibility about self-reliance. A large degree of self-reliance has already been achieved. We can confidently claim that we shall go ahead along the path of self-reliance. Economic *Swaraj* becomes a reality only when self-reliance has been fully achieved. A vital segment of our industry as I said earlier, is that of defence production. So we

must attach particular importance to it, not only in increasing the quantity of our production but see that in effectiveness and quality it is amongst the best.

The *Nilgiri* which has been commissioned today, is the symbol of the growing vitality of our defence industries. It was built in Bombay and equipped with the help of our own industries, by our own technicians. It is a shining symbol of the growth of our self-reliance. More than 50 per cent of the material that has gone into it was manufactured within our own country. The other frigates, which are now being built in the Mazagon Dock, will have a far greater proportion of India-made material. As I was sitting here, my thoughts went back to the day when this beautiful ship was launched. And I am glad that the Navy feels it is a happy ship. Vice-Admiral Samson spoke of the obstacles and difficulties and the frustrations which were faced in the building of this frigate. All of us who sit here know that these frustrations or other frustrations are shared by all of us here, and many who are not here. The difficulties and obstacles are a part of life. Whether it is the ship or the crew, or whether it is people in other fields of activity, they are judged by the good humour and grace with which they overcome all these obstacles. I think it is not for nothing that a ship is a "She", if you excuse, and not "It". And I am sure that with a special resilience and endurance and grace of woman, this ship also will overcome any other difficulty which may come in her path. And that all those who serve her will have the company of the dame good fortune in whatever they do and that the ship will bring greater glory, greater success to the Indian Navy. I am proud of our ship, of our officers and seamen and of the naval technicians and various other people who have been concerned with the building of this beautiful ship. In formally handing over *INS Nilgiri* to the Navy, I give my best wishes to the Navy and the Mazagon Dock.

Problems of Science and Technology

Science to Solve Man's Problems

WE HAVE AN unusual person with us today. Mr. Fuller is described as an architect. He is that because of his intense concern with living space. But he is something more than an architect because his obsession is with the architecture of the universe.

We all have heard of Mr. Fuller's invention, the geodesic dome, which are known and seen all over the world. It is a brilliant use of space and material. Then there is the world map and other items. But what is far more important is that Mr. Fuller has shown how to get the maximum from the minimum material by making the most intelligent use of the resources available on earth.

He has often spoken of how he was born with the handicap of farsightedness. As a child he could see the far-off things clearly and as a young man he lighted upon the idea that if Einstein is more right than Newton then the mind ought to live in tune with the speed of light.

He has known failure and he has shrugged it off. He has known material success and it has not meant much to him. Our ancient sages urged that we should be unruffled by joy or sorrow. Mr. Fuller proves that this is an invitation to more action and not a counsel of passivity. This outlook is the link between the lecture of today and the person for whom the lecture is named.

Ancient axioms need to be reiterated and put into contemporary idioms. Jawaharlal Nehru sought to impress on the country that change is normal and that we must, therefore, take it for our companion on life's journey. He taught us to use the insights and assistance of science to remedy the ills of history. In the realm of the mind he asked us to beware of ideas which are dogmatic, ideas which claimed to be finite, perfected, unalterable. To him ideas did count, but what mattered more was the human mind which conceived the ideas, and the human spirit which lived for them.

In his *Discovery of India,* which in a way was a fuller discovery of himself, my father wrote—and I quote :

> "How amazing is this spirit of man! In spite of innumerable failings, man, through the ages, has sacrificed his life and all he held dear for an ideal, for truth, for faith, for country and honour. That ideal may change, but that capacity for self-sacrifice continues; and, because of that, much may be forgiven to man, and it is impossible to lose hope for him. In the midst of disaster he has not lost his dignity or his faith in the values he cherished. Plaything of nature's mighty forces, less than the speck of dust

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speech welcoming Mr. Buckminster Fuller at the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture, New Delhi, November 13, 1969

in this vast Universe, he has hurled defiance at the elemental powers, and with his mind, cradle of revolution, sought to master them..."

It is often said that Jawaharlal Nehru set us on the course of economic development. What he did in fact was something far larger. He set us on the course of scientific thought and of deliberate, self-directed technological change. He was convinced that the injustice and inertia of our history could be changed only through the liberation and acceleration represented by science.

Economic development involves unchaining the hidden and unused resources of nature and of the human mind. It involves digging coal and metals, searching for oil and drawing it out, smelting and refining ores, catching and conduiting water to grow crops and to produce electricity and so on. But development also means training the mind for scientific research, for technological management, for social administration.

We have started on this journey a hundred or two hundred years later than the countries of Western Europe and North America. It is said that this late start might enable us to avoid some of their mistakes. We can and must avoid the criminally wasteful ways in which the pioneers have exploited mineral ores. We can take advantage of the concepts of conservation and recovery which have since been developed by scientists. One of Mr. Fuller's favourite projects is to prepare an inventory of the world's resources. Man has to learn to use them with far greater efficiency. Here is where the experience of other nations can help. But let us not always think along the path chartered by others. Rather let us also seek new paths, new methods and new uses for new purposes. This is one of the justifications for developing nations to give priority to scientific research and not be content merely with begging or borrowing technology and referring all their problems to others for solution. That is why Jawaharlal Nehru gave such importance to laying the basis for science.

Mr. Fuller's faith in the ability of man's mind to find answers refuses to be awed by Malthusians, whether old or new, or say that man will eat up all there is in this world and die of hunger. The world must find solutions for problems which are inherited from the past and, at the same time, it must anticipate future problems and work out some of their solutions in advance. Mr. Fuller knows that to be modern, to be in tune with the contemporary, one must have an attitude of mind which looks forward and works for the future. That is why my father found his conversations with him so interesting.

Today Mr. Fuller is speaking of planetary planning. He is one of those who have spoken of a one-town world—a challenging way of describing the fact that new communications have made all nations neighbours.

Instrument of Social Change

THIS ANNUAL MEETING between the Prime Minister and the country's leading scientists, around the time when the old year yields place to the new, is symbolic. It is a recurring reminder that politics and science must go hand in hand. We have entered a new decade. I hope that the seventies will be a decade of decisive development and a decade in which we shall have accomplished economic self-reliance.

The last few months have been exciting ones. Swift and dramatic events have taken place. As a result, you will find everywhere a sense of quivering urgency, an atmosphere of heightened expectations, and a demand for quick results. The economy is already in a position whence it can move ahead faster. There are no magic solutions, but there is no doubt that the process of change can be quickened and this is vitally necessary. We can bring it about by altering our methods of functioning by infusing scientific methods in administration.

In 1958, Jawaharlal Nehru proposed a resolution aiming "to secure for the people of the country all the benefits that can accrue from the acquisition and application of scientific knowledge." This places a certain responsibility squarely on the Government and on our scientists.

We regard science as a powerful instrument of social change. Modernisation is not merely production through improved technology. It means changing the lives of individuals and of the nation. Science is as greatly concerned with distribution as with production. It implies the best use of material and human resources, of equipment and social organisation, so as to bring about the widest possible diffusion of welfare. Human welfare should not recognise national boundaries but, in the world as it is organised today, we have still to think in terms of what Governments can do for their peoples.

In the last 11 years our expenditure on scientific research and development has increased from Rs. 27 crores to currently Rs. 136 crores, and now constitutes somewhat less than ½ per cent of the Gross National Product, and about 3 per cent of the National Budget. While in relative terms, the amounts do not seem large, in absolute terms our expenditure on research and development does not compare unfavourably with many of the more advanced countries. For example, Japan spends about Rs. 200 crores a year on research and development. Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia spend less on scientific research than we do.

However, except for a section of our urbanised population, our society has remained essentially a pre-technological society. Unless

Inaugural speech at the 57th annual session of the Indian Science Congress, Kharagpur, January 3, 1970

we can accelerate the pace of social change, our scientific activity will remain peripheral, and the country might be left farther behind.

A major role of the scientific community in any country, whether it be capitalist, socialist or Communist, is to develop universal norms and a rational approach to social and economic problems. The oligarchical or hierarchical aspects of society do affect the scientific community. So, unless scientists are conscious of their responsibility to withstand the pressures of tradition and hierarchy, they cannot forge a community which is truly scientific in character. The hierarchy of a scientific community is only to enable it to act purposefully and in unison, not to silence the voice of the dissident or the innovator.

Obviously, once decisions are taken, all members of the scientific community must work together to the best of their ability for the accomplishment of given tasks. The real tests are whether or not the scientific community is dynamic and forward-looking; whether every scientist, regardless of his age or status, can present his views and feel that he is one of a team; whether there is opportunity for the full and unhindered blossoming of the considerable talent among our young scientists and technologists; and whether the community is self-critical and capable of keeping itself abreast of and in tune with new knowledge. In the scientific community at its best, we see thousands of scientists of various disciplines and levels of expertise working together voluntarily and harmoniously in such magnificent efforts as the moon landings and the Venus and the Mars probes. Yet, the same community does discuss and criticise its own objectives and tasks without prejudice.

In the past it was only in the Armed Forces that large numbers of people could act coherently and in a disciplined manner. But in the large and complex scientific and technological efforts of today it is not governmental authority which makes such effort possible, but the voluntary inner discipline which is brought about by common objectives and by a rational approach. Discussion, analysis and criticism precede the initiation of any effort. In our country, this pre-project or pre-research discussion is generally absent in scientific laboratories as well as in larger technical projects. This arises partly from an apprehension that credit will not be given to the initiator of an idea he discusses it with others, forgetting that the best ideas are those which survive criticism and are sharpened by discussion.

The Department of Atomic Energy, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Defence Research Organisation and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research account for nearly 70 per cent of the entire research expenditure of our country. These organisations have, therefore, a great responsibility to ensure a high pace of technological change and to undertake a succession of improvements and the substitution of scarce raw material or intermediates. Our labora-

tories should tackle the problems which confront industry and agriculture, continually upgrading products and processes. Industry must either do its own research and development or, if it lacks the means and the competence, must transmit its problems to research laboratories.

Some people favour the import of foreign know-how to hasten the speed of industrialisation. Developed countries often advise us that it is more profitable to buy technical know-how from them, rather than to re-discover it through expensive research, development and our own effort. By this they usually mean that we should accept imported turn-key factories and plants. This is not as simple as it sounds. Imported know-how also becomes obsolete at a later point of time unless it is accompanied by a continuous effort at modernising and upgrading it. There is a wide gulf between the transfer of know-how and the sale of equipment. A turn-key factory obtained through foreign assistance is not a transfer of technology but a transfer of equipment. Most countries do import foreign know-how through licensing and other agreements. Japan had consistently bought or imported foreign know-how, but she has spent four times that amount in backing up the import of technology. These industrial sectors which have spent the largest amounts in importing foreign know-how in Japan have also spent the most on research and development. This is in sharp contrast to our country where the import of foreign know-how is unrelated to research and development expenditure. This situation has sometimes led us to buy the same technology several times over.

In the long run, it is the ability of our scientists and technologists to develop the country's capability to absorb and improve technology which is relevant to economic growth. Industry must be encouraged to refer problems to our laboratories. These laboratories will then be better able to master new techniques and to innovate. The younger generation of scientists will work more readily on new techniques and new problems, and will have more basic orientation if they are encouraged to take up the problems of research which arise from the felt needs of industry. Such new orientation will enable our young scientists to gain experience much faster than by the traditional method which confines the younger scientist to problems which are formulated by his superiors.

A number of crucial sectors of industry and almost all research laboratories are in the hands of Government. Hence it should not be difficult for laboratories and at least the public sector industries to come close together. Each Government laboratory should function as a research and development organisation for a public sector industry and there should be the closest association between these two. However, no research laboratory would retain its vitality merely as a service organisation. Objective-oriented research also involves some basic research. These two are rightly the domain of Government laboratories. If instead they concentrate on other fundamental research, which could best be left

to universities, the public sector industries might well be tempted to set up their own research and development organisations. There is already some pressure in this direction, and if the pressure is to be resisted, the outlook of the laboratories must change.

While we can take some comfort from the fact that scientific activity in the country has been increasing substantially, this large growth has created certain problems. Many scientists feel frustrated. Research institutions suffer from lack of flexibility. Certain tasks cannot be carried out owing to 'procedural' difficulties. There are also unnecessary irritations from the interference of bureaucracy at the headquarters. We are not getting all the returns possible from our investments in scientific research; nor are we utilising the talents of our young people in the best manner. These problems can be partly solved by decentralising our scientific organisations. This is especially important as regards decision-making at the laboratory level, and even within the laboratory, if it is a large one. After a task and a quantum of funds have been assigned to a laboratory, it should be able to run its own operations without interference.

Some areas of scientific research which have hitherto been somewhat neglected will also have to be strengthened. One such is that of the earth sciences, such as geology, geophysics, meteorology, palaeontology, hydrology and geochemistry. These are basic to the investigation, discovery and estimation of our natural resources. These earth sciences are good examples of how basic research could be related to objective-oriented research and could be undertaken to the economic advantage of the country and the scientific advantage of the research community.

The biological, ecological and health sciences have also not been given due recognition. Increasing activity in these sciences in developed countries indicates the social and economic benefit which they can bring through preservation and prevention. The conservation and utilisation of our natural plant and animal resources will be an important and primary scientific task and can usefully engage a considerable number of scientists. Our most urgent problems today are unemployment and inequality. The people are asking questions to which answers can be found only if politics and science work together.

Life is not lived in compartments. Research and development are not the whole of science. Science cannot and must not be imprisoned in the laboratory, the modern industrial plants or educational institutions. It must be integrated in our thinking and be a part of our daily lives.

Our system of education is not entirely related to our conditions and the needs of our society. Our proclaimed aim of encouraging science has so far taken a quantitative form without bringing about basic changes in science-teaching. Even engineers and higher technologists unfortunately have the same condescending attitude towards manual work as our civil servants. Many engineers and technologists have to be re-trained

to hold specific jobs. As our development programme regains the tempo which it has lost, some unemployed technologists will be absorbed. But the ultimate solution will be found when our centres of science and technology instil in the younger people the spirit of doing things with their own hands and to discard the out-dated officer mentality and seek new avenues of self-employment.

In every society there is a "minority in league with the future." The majority, which is almost always in thrall to the past, shows scant appreciation of these few. In fact, in earlier ages, they were often regarded as mad or worse. The forces of the past are afraid of change and the fight against them is never an easy one. And yet it is inevitable. It is part of evolution. The scientist is as involved, as responsible as any other citizen. Can he afford to live in an ivory or a steel tower, ignorant of and unconcerned with what is happening around him? His future is tied up with the future of India. He must, therefore, be committed not only to the cause of science but to the larger cause of a forward-looking, rational society where the scientific outlook is the rule rather than the exception and which alone can provide opportunities for worthwhile and original scientific growth.

Science is the search for truth. We can practise it only if we value the truth. But truth is an individual value and can "become a source of social value only when a society accepts the assumption that no people will survive if society conflicts with what is true." Can we say that this is so in our society and, if not, what do we do about it, we the Government, the scientists and the intelligentsia? As the world becomes more uniform, man seeks an identity for himself. This individualism is not the same as the old, for today it must harmonise with his social identity.

We know that the scientist in India does not have the advantages of the scientists in the developed countries, that he has to work with limited resources, inadequate and sometimes antiquated equipment, that he has to face the scrutiny of the unimaginative and the ununderstanding. This is the challenge of contemporary India. We expect from our scientists the devotion to science as well as to their country which will enable them to face this challenge to be partners in the gigantic task of reforming an ancient society through consent and co-operation. And this we must do by remaining vibrantly and dynamically Indian, by sweeping away the cobwebs of superstition, hypocrisy and humbug, which were no part of the basic Indian view of life and which have shrouded our thinking for so long and have taken us away from the roots of our culture. An Indian need have no conflict with modern man, or, for that matter, with universal man.

I am glad the Congress is being held in a technological institute, but not merely because of its isolation, for today the scientist no less than the politician must learn to be alone in the midst of a crowd, to be centred in his work and objectives in spite of distractions. And also, if

I may say so, be able, when he is alone, to hear the voice of the masses and feel the urgency of their needs.

* * *

THE FUTURE OF our society, its development and direction, is vitally linked with the activities of our scientists and technologists. The annual session of the Science Congress is an exciting event, giving one the opportunity of meeting many incisive minds. So I am particularly unhappy not to be with you at the opening of the 58th session.

This is an occasion when scientists of all ages and different disciplines from universities, research institutions, industry and production sectors of the economy, meet and discuss one another's work. The scientific community is able to review its achievements and failures, and to search for new opportunities. To the young, it gives the great experience of making acquaintance with and seeking inspiration from savants while the mature scientists can keep in touch with the point of view of fresh and creative young minds.

Our country is in the midst of several transformations. A social order based on subsistence, agriculture and authoritarian feudalism is being reshaped into a technologically progressive economy—in agriculture and in industry—and also into a modern, egalitarian democracy. Underlying the political, social and psychological processes through which this great change is being wrought, are two levers which are not always tangible—science and technology. The interaction of science, technology and society is fascinating and complex.

Science is supposed to be neutral—morally and ideologically. But can it be independent of the social and cultural climate in which it operates? Science in ancient Greece was part of the society based fundamentally on slavery. Consequently, the science of that time justified the need for slavery, often in absolute terms. Again, during the early stages of its development in the 16th century, what we know today as "modern science" was part of an aggressive mercantile capitalism. Two centuries later, it became related to early industrial capitalism, during which period many scientists produced elaborate justifications for the exploitation of labour. Thus it is important for Indian scientists to be consciously imbued with the value system and social goals of modern India.

We must rediscover the scientific and technological content of our past civilisation. For centuries, science and technology were an intimate part of our culture. In fact, until the very recent past, the science-technology-society link had been vital and productive. Historical studies have shown that as late as the 17th century, there was no resistance to

Address read out at the 58th annual session of the Indian Science Congress, Bangalore, January 3, 1971

technological change and innovation in a wide range of industries. In metallurgy, weapons manufacture, horticulture, ship-building, engineering and architecture, our society was not only absorbing inventions made in other cultures, but also innovating internally. This productive and creative capacity was the magnet which attracted European mercantile explorers to our shores.

So dazzled have we been by recent developments in the science and technology of Europe and North America, that we have come to regard all science and technology as a Western phenomenon. Even our scientists regarded this as an import which should make no difference to inherited ways of thought. Culture cannot be imposed from outside but must develop from the people themselves. It was my father's endeavour to make science an organic part of our national life. He wanted the country to become science-minded, and our scientists to be nation-minded. Science is an essential ingredient of the growth principle.

One has a feeling that our scientists and technologists are so heavily preoccupied with the limited framework of their own specialisations and institutions that they seem to regard the larger social and cultural setting, which our country is cultivating and applying science and technology, as someone else's concern. Should this not be at least as important to scientists as their immediate professional pursuits ? For, they can pursue their projects only so long as conditions in the country permit them to do so.

Why do the people of India support science and technology ? It is well known that the degree of support provided to science for its own sake is limited. It is so in nearly all societies. Our lack of resources is a further constricting factor. The main reason for the support is the hope that science and technology can contribute to the betterment of the living conditions of our people and to the solution of some of their basic everyday difficulties.

Poverty and illiteracy, unemployment and mal-employment, urban-rural gulf, social tensions arising out of parochial feelings based on religion, caste or region—these are the problems threatening our future. They demand radical solutions, which the people feel can be provided by science and technology. Have our scientists really offered socially relevant solutions to these problems ? Have the vast institutional framework of laboratories, institutes and universities, which we have set up since Independence, not been given rather narrow goals ? Have scientists made sure that their conceptions of scholarship and international frontiers of knowledge are relevant to our effort ? I do recognise that many of our problems are not amenable to scientific solution in the narrow sense of the term. At the same time, science and technology can create the atmosphere of confidence and creative endeavour which can help us towards solutions.

Science can and must cement society around a new set of values. The search for truth and the verification of evidence are major values of science. A true scientist is always ready to discard even a life-time's work, when a new fact which negates his assumptions is discovered. But the constant re-examination of beliefs is not amongst the virtues of people at large, here or elsewhere. In our country, some are too prone to act on hearsay or out of intolerance. Agitations in defence of superstitions or unfounded reports are not unknown. Democracy is based on the assumption that the other person could be as right as oneself. Our scientists should not hesitate to shoulder the responsibility of promoting a temper of tolerance and respect for facts.

There is a second set of issues which perhaps falls within a narrower area, but is linked with your professional interest. These issues are the allocation of resources committed to different areas of science and technology; the evolution of policies involving domestic as well as imported technology for each industrial sector; the implications of projects based on capital-intensive advanced technologies for the balanced development of our resources; and the organisation and management of scientific institutions. The manner in which these and similar issues of science and public policy are decided will vitally affect our scientific and technological potential and also the character of our scientific community.

A broad-based organisation such as the Science Congress is the appropriate forum in which both sets of problems should be considered. The Science Congress should structure its activities, particularly at the annual session, so as to make scientists more sensitive to the issues involved in decision-making and help the scientific community to arrive at a consensus. This would give direction to our scientific effort and indeed to the balanced development of our society.

No one can deny that science and technology are vital tools to solve the problems of poverty and to keep abreast of developments in other countries. Yet we cannot help noticing that single-minded concentration on a particular type of progress has not brought contentment in advanced countries. Increasingly, thinking people, young and old, are wondering what kind of living can preserve man's values against the domination of the very forces which he has created. Can we be true to ourselves and to the people whom we seek to serve if knowingly we lead them to the tensions produced by over-emphasis on material progress and the negligence of harmonious development? The need to leap-frog over certain phases of technical development is well recognised. But is it not equally important to avoid the harmful effects which industrial and urban development has caused in other countries?

As scientists, technologists or even ordinary citizens, we must think not of exploiting human or material or natural resources, but of employing them with discernment and imagination to derive maximum benefit for human welfare and to ensure that the inevitable changes in living

conditions and the environment do not despoil nature or create a sense of alienation in the people. The discipline and order of a modern society must have the flexibility to allow for the full blossoming of different personalities and for the strengthening of their inner resources.

Man's needs go beyond his material wants. We in India must attempt to readapt technology and place man and his spirit at the centre of science. It is up to us to see that in the pursuit of the material necessities of life, we do not lose our human values or our distinctiveness as individuals and as a nation. To find this new path is perhaps the greatest challenge to Indian scientists and technologists.

Tarapore : A Dream Come True

TARAPORE REPRESENTS THE partial realisation of a dream shared by two people—my father and Dr. Homi Bhabha. Jawaharlal Nehru was convinced that only science and rational thinking would help us to overcome our old and deep-rooted poverty and win the respect of other nations. In Dr. Bhabha he found a kindered soul.

It seems hardly necessary to tell this distinguished and knowledgeable audience about the project itself, of its utility and importance to us. You all know that the Tarapore Power Station has been in operation for the greater part of a year. It has enabled Maharashtra to overcome its shortage of power to a large extent and to make fuller use of its industrial force. Gujarat has similarly benefited. In the coming years, Tarapore will increasingly contribute to our national wealth.

The project is also a symbol of international co-operation. It would not have come into being but for the world-wide urge, which was promoted by the Geneva Conference under U.N. auspices, to work together for the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Tarapore marks the beginning of the second stage of our technological revolution. To those who made wry remarks about a cow-dung economy wishing to go in for nuclear energy, Dr. Bhabha convincingly explained the "technological fall-out" which results from atomic energy, and the impact it has on other fields of economic and scientific activity. In the last twenty years, we have been engaged in building our infrastructure. The developing countries are in the advantageous position of stepping over several intermediate and not-so-essential stages. If the building of the infrastructure itself incorporates higher technology, future progress will be

Speech while dedicating the Tarapore Atomic Power Station to the Nation, January 19, 1970

further accelerated. It is this point of view which gives significance to the work of the Atomic Energy Department.

The Atomic Energy Commission has already been working for the application of atomic energy to agriculture, food preservation, medicine and industry. It has also taken up studies of the benefits that will accrue to agricultural regions through the establishment of low-cost energy centres.

Tarapore is the result of co-operation between the United States and India. It is a turn-key project, planned by U.S. scientists and built by U.S. technicians, but our own scientists and engineers were closely associated with all the stages of its construction. From Dr. Bhabha and Dr. Seaborg down to the youngest scientists, there has been a sense of partnership. Indians have thus gained valuable competence which will enable us to build the Kalapakkam Atomic Station on our own.

We feel that a country as large as ours, with its rich and variegated technical talent, should work progressively towards self-reliance. Our past experience has been that aid can be stopped at crucial moments. Also, the cost of repaying and servicing old loans is assuming proportions which cut severely into the net aid available. However, the development of indigenous know-how does not mean the end of international co-operation. We welcome such collaboration on a basis of mutuality, for we should like to profit from developments in other countries. In turn, we are eager to make whatever contribution we can to the world-wide development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. We think our experience could be particularly useful to other developing countries.

Tejo-si, teji mayi dehi (Thou art Energy, give me Energy) was the prayer of our ancients. The growth of man's mind has been marked by the ability to discover and utilise newer sources of energy. What a long way we have come from the days when man first lit a fire to the present when we tap the vast store of energy packed in atoms!

Science is neutral and its discoveries can be used for good or evil. How sad that it has so often provided the tools for war. Actually it was the two world wars which gave contemporary scientific advance its thrust. The scientist himself does not always have much say in the uses of science, and sometimes even worthwhile uses have harmful side-effects—the upsetting of natural balances, the extinction of species, the pollution of air and water. Atomic energy itself represents the most fearsome aspect of destruction. Yet the role of science, especially that of atomic energy, makes itself equally felt as creator and preserver. When my father visited Trombay, he remarked on the coincidence that just opposite, across the waters of the Bombay harbour, in Elephanta, there is the famous old sculpture representing Mahesha in one form as creator, preserver and destroyer.

India's long tradition of humanism has endeavoured to synthesise human values. It is all the more necessary to remember these values

when we handle forces which are so full of destructive potential as atomic energy. We have declared that we shall use atomic energy only for preservation and not for destruction. We must all work to make the kind of future we desire.

Jungk quotes Heisenberg as saying : "The space in which man has developed as an intellectual being, has more dimensions than that of the single direction in which he has moved during the last few centuries", and from this he draws the conclusion "that human capacity for observation and judgment has its limits". But why need it remain so ? Can we at this exciting phase of development lose our initiative and our faith in ourselves ? Can we allow our destiny to be shaped by impersonal forces ? Man's sensitivity to evil has increased and, for the first time, these matters are being discussed not by a few philosophers but by large numbers of people, and specially the young all over the world. Man has always aspired to surpass himself. Surely, development in one direction does not preclude the future possibility of exploration and evolution in other directions. But for this to come about, there must be a conscious effort far greater than ever made before, for such development may well mean a fundamental change in the very nature of man. The gains will not be the familiar and tangible ones in terms of material goods but the deeper, more satisfying ones of understanding and compassion. If any item of consumption is in short supply, what is there to prevent us from replacing it or adapting ourselves to something different ? From this viewpoint, the future becomes one of vast potential. And if this is possible, it means that no one need fight or compete with another for the sharing of limited resources.

Man's expanding knowledge and power render largely obsolete the scarcity logic on which much of the world's planning and programming are based. Today we can undertake undreamed of tasks. Can we then afford to live or think in compartments and to function within the limits of narrow specialisation ? The greatest need is for a comprehensive readjustment of our thinking and our attitudes. We must break the many artificial barriers which separate man from man. We must strive to build a way of life which treats all men, whatever their race, religion or caste, with dignity and respect. We must be committed to the welfare of all humanity.

Is there a conflict between realism and idealism ? Can there be a long-term realistic picture of the world which is not based on idealism ? I have posed questions. Neither politicians nor scientists, nor indeed any one group of people can by themselves provide the answers. Only a co-operative effort, a pooling of ideas and experiences of all disciplines and all nations could even attempt a quest of this magnitude.

This formal dedication ceremony is taking place in the first month of a new decade. May I express the wish that this decade brings progress for India in her long battle against poverty.? May I also wish

that this and the coming decades will not witness the use of atomic energy for destruction in any part of the world. Let us assert the force of man's spirit which is unconquerable. Good wishes to our scientists and technicians and all those connected with this project.

Taking Science to Rural India

I AM GLAD to have this opportunity of greeting the Institution of Engineers and of giving it the good wishes of the people of India on its Golden Jubilee.

Our engineers have been serving the country with earnestness and ability. Much of the progress that we see today, in industry and in electricity, in transport and communications, is indeed due to the work of our engineers. In fact, the entire process of development is now called social engineering, which is a direct compliment to engineers as nation-builders and agents of the process of modernization.

Development and modernisation do not consist merely in establishing new industries. They involve basic changes in the economic structure of the nation as well as in the outlook of the people. They imply that we identify the structural weaknesses in society and strive to overcome them. Development is not only increase in economic production or an addition to the national income; it is a well-thought-out programme to ensure that the increased resources are channelled into areas which need care and attention and also ploughed back into activities which ensure further growth. If development does not concern itself with righting old wrongs, future development will itself be endangered.

In the last 20 years our economy has been growing vastly in size and in diversity. The growth of the membership of your Institution is an index of the country's growth. Engineering today is not a single profession but a generic name to a large number of professions. The founders of your Institution would hardly have foreseen the fields into which engineering has branched out. At the tremendous rate at which new technologies are coming into being, you should soon have several more divisions and groups in your Institution.

The more specialisation there is, the greater the need for seeing matters in the larger perspective. The new discoveries of science defy old classifications and labels. Hence the need for co-ordination and the inter-disciplinary approach. It is not enough for different types of engineers to get together to sort out their problems. Engineers must

Address to the Golden Jubilee session of the Institution of Engineers, Calcutta, February 5, 1970

also meet the delegates of other branches of learning. Each engineer must develop within himself the faculties of social understanding and aesthetic judgment.

I am glad to learn that one of your groups is devoted to agricultural engineering. Until recently, except for irrigation and some related activities, engineering was largely an adjunct of urban life. The village house-builder built with his own folk wisdom and without the aid of the modern engineer. Today villages need and demand the discoveries of science. It is of the utmost urgency that technology should reach the villages. Economic progress elsewhere has meant remorseless urbanisation. The growth of big cities is probably inevitable in India too, but the long-term solution of our major economic problems is possible only if the village is a more attractive place to live in, is able to offer employment to the school-leaver if not the graduate, and provides a modicum of medical aid and recreation.

Electricity makes it possible to shorten the distance between town and village. Power enables farming to move to a higher level of technology and become a remunerative industry. It can also mother a wide range of small industries based on agricultural produce and on the manufacture and upkeep of small tools. I hope that the best engineering minds in our country will give greater and more creative thought to rural problems. They will find themselves richly rewarded when they see how millions of people benefit from their creative ideas.

We have just entered a new decade. In this decade we have to achieve self-reliance and also complete the many unfinished tasks of the sixties.

We are now busy determining the shape and reach of our Fourth Five Year Plan. It is an exciting thought that after so many years of heartache and struggle against natural calamities and other obstacles we are again in a position to draw up the general lines of our general advance and to specify the details of projects. As the tempo of development increases, it will partially solve one of the difficult problems facing us today, the unemployment of technicians and engineers. This problem was one of the temporary imbalances which characterise even the most carefully drawn-up plans. Additional training facilities were added in the late fifties and early sixties when it was not possible to foresee the severe drought or the economic recession. The key consideration at that time was to forestall a shortage of trained manpower.

The Fourth Plan does not merely carry planning forward. It seeks to redress many of the problems created by the early stages of development. One cardinal objective is to set right disparities between classes and between regions. Another is to speed up the advance towards self-reliance. Self-reliance is dependent on having our own organisations for design and construction of projects, machinery and instruments.

Dependence for equipment and for design is financial waste and exposes our own development to uncertainties and pressures. Whenever a project or programme comes to me for approval and sanction, I ask whether it is being done by our own people and can it not be so? We have been applying this test to many collaboration proposals. In fact some of the accusations of delay in decision-making are because of this.

Your suggestion, Mr. Chairman, that foreign collaboration agreements should be arranged only through Indian consultancy has not, therefore, fallen on deaf ears. I am glad that you have undertaken the work of compiling a register of competent consulting engineers. I hope that the register will be comprehensive in the details which it furnishes.

You have also spoken about giving engineers greater voice in management and administration. In many of our public sector projects we have made an earnest attempt to bring in professional managers. Many of them have a technical background. This process must and will continue. But running a large undertaking, whether in the public or in the private sector, is not entirely an engineering matter. It involves the difficult art of administration which in turn requires skill in political assessment and personal judgment. You should ensure that our younger engineers receive special training in management science and in the art of economic and political assessment. I am glad to find that management science is one of the disciplines which you recognise.

Engineers must themselves strive to bring about a climate of opinion in which more engineers can be called upon to bear administrative burdens. They should educate the public and also the workers who work under them. I remember how once when my father visited a large project, he found that the labourers on the project knew nothing about what it was or about the benefits which would result from their labours. Engineers should build projects; even more, they should build the feeling of involvement in progress and development.

Recently my remarks that we needed Government servants with commitment have been, perhaps deliberately, misrepresented to mean that I wanted civil servants to support me or my political ideology. On the contrary, I do not want politically convenient or servile civil servants. Their job is to give frank advice, but they should feel committed to the objectives of the State which have been approved by Parliament. They should have unreserved faith in the programmes which they have to administer. An official who has no active faith in secularism cannot deal with the communal problem. We must all have a commitment to the development of the country and a sense of personal involvement in the welfare of all our people.

Need for Inexpensive Medicines

No matter where you go in India, you find visible traces of history. This is specially so of Delhi, and of this area where the remains of our old citadel dominate the landscape.

There may be moments when we feel, with Carlyle, that "happy are the people whose annals are blank in history-books", and long for a chance to start on a clean slate. Yet, on balance we cannot but feel grateful to belong to a land so full of event and experience. This wisdom is for us to use as a guide in our journey. History is neither an inventory nor the static past; it is a chronicle of change, an explanation of how and why change occurs.

Science and technology themselves are concerned with change. This is why many institutes of science have departments which specialise in the history of science and technology. Historical studies provide an insight into the processes of change. They suggest and spark off new investigation or re-investigation. The story of science is full of instances where ideas were not followed up at once, but someone else, years later, took them up, and made important discoveries

This has happened in medicine too. It is customary though not necessarily correct to make a distinction between "modern medicine" and "indigenous medicine". However, many traditional remedies, local to some part of the globe, have been investigated and widely applied. Reserpine, emetine and cocaine come to the mind as examples of this process. They were all ancient remedies, known to the medicine men of one or the other old civilisation and have proved efficacious once again in our days.

I am sure that there are many more remedies in the Ayurvedic and Tibbia systems, and in some folk remedies which will prove invaluable in our fight against disease. These systems have served our people for centuries. The effort now should be to apply to them the rigorous test of rational, scientific analysis. Such an effort is indeed being made, notably by Hakeem Abdul Hameed and his devoted band of scientists.

Modernisation cannot be imported. It has to grow out of our own soil in order to take root. That alone is real transformation.

There is a saying that the herb that grows in our own backyard is no medicine. There is a tendency to look to others for remedies. But in true development, one must make the best use of resources which are at hand and are easily available.

Speech read out at the inauguration of the Library and Museum of the Institute of History of Medicine and Medical Research, New Delhi, February 14, 1970

I am convinced that the "Indian" systems of medicine (as they are called) have continued utility and a bright future.

One of the major challenges in our country is to provide inexpensive drugs and medical aid to the people in our towns and our half a million villages. The cost of drugs can be brought down only if their production is based on Indian research and on pharmaceutical processes evolved within the country. Patent agreements have been making even the ordinary drugs unduly costly. Even affluent countries are grappling with the problem of unfair margins of profit in the drug industry. For us it is crucial to evolve a system of medicine which is within the people's means.

I am particularly glad to note that one of the departments in this Library is devoted to rural and domestic medicine. Indigenous systems perhaps contain answers to some of the problems which have been baffling "modern" medicines. More systematic research will bring them out.

Museums and libraries are storehouses of knowledge. They are indispensable tools of study and adjuncts to research. Every true scholar and scientist is aware of the debt he owes to those who preceded him, not only the great and the famous, but the humble workers whose work is marked "anonymous". However new medical knowledge may be, do not our doctors still take the oath of Hippocrates or Charaka? Is not Ibn Sina still an inspiration to them?

The Institute of History of Medicine and Medical Research embodies a valuable idea. I am glad that it takes all medical knowledge, irrespective of divisions of geography and time, for its province. It puts the present in its proper perspective as a link between the past and the future. There are not many other such institutions in the world. So they are a welcome addition to the intellectual resources of Delhi and India.

It is a matter of special gratification that this function is being held in the birth centenary year of Hakeem Ajmal Khan. Hakeem Ajmal Khan strove to remedy not only personal illnesses but the nation's illness also. He was a great physician and a great representative of our traditional knowledge and culture as well as an outstanding patriot and nation-builder. He remains an inspiration to all those who seek to serve our people. These institutions are proof that the work which he started continues and endures.

I congratulate all those concerned with this Institute and extend my good wishes for its future. May its work keep it in the forefront of medical research and bring it renown!

The Relevance of Ayurveda

AYURVEDA IS ONE of our noblest and most ancient traditions—the tradition of healing. Ayurveda is generally understood to mean the science of health and medicine. But the word—Ayurveda—means knowledge of life itself. It has an integrated approach to mind, body and environment.

From the earliest days our medical men not only cured ailments and diseases but sought to understand the nature of life. They were scientists and philosophers, not mere dispensers of drugs.

Practitioners of our indigenous system of medicine sometimes have the feeling that the Government does not approve of them. This is not correct. We do not regard Ayurveda as a relic of the past, but as a branch of knowledge which has a role and a relevance today.

You represent an ancient tradition which has had an unbroken continuity of nearly three thousand years. Through the centuries this tradition has influenced the countries around us. In turn we have also imbibed elements of Greek and Arab medicine and more lately we have been influenced by the modern medicine which has grown out of scientific discoveries of Europe and America.

But even now it is not a one-way traffic. Modern medicine has itself acknowledged that long ago medical men in India had found remedies for many ailments that had baffled experts in the laboratories of Europe and America. There are numerous instances of Ayurvedic remedies having been investigated, proved, accepted and also assimilated by modern medicine.

Science seeks to explain natural phenomena. It searches for the relationship between cause and effect. It arrives at formulations of predictability through a series of experiments, by questioning various possible postulates. This is the secret of the power of science. In medicine, in particular, diagnosis and cures have to be based on a very large number of observed cases.

In every country, medicine was in the early stages allied to magic. Certain remedies worked, others did not; and both were attributed to the intervention of gods or demons or to the efficacy of incantations. Every human society has little by little liberated itself from the hold of demons.

This is the victory of science. It is due to the growing faith in our own power to be healthy that several epidemics have been checked and even wiped out of our country. It is because of the expansion of medical aid that the death rate has fallen and people now live longer and healthier lives.

Free translation of speech in Hindi at the 46th session of the All-India Ayurvedic Congress, Patiala, November 7, 1970

Health and education, along with employment, are essential to a better life. We do not have enough doctors or hospitals. Probably nowhere else in the world are clinics and hospitals so over-crowded as in India; nowhere else is so much expected from doctors.

We must ensure that the simple drugs needed for every day ailments are within the reach of all at really low prices. Also, the most important life-saving drugs should be available in the required quantities at the major medical centres.

It is obvious that we must make the best use of all available medical skills, whether these have been acquired through colleges which teach modern medicine or through colleges which teach Ayurveda. With the impact of the new scientific method the teaching of Ayurveda itself has undergone several important changes. Those who believe in Shudh Ayurveda, that is those who do not want to borrow from other pharmacopoeias, are also discarding on their own, some of the older assumptions which could not be corroborated by logic and experiment. Modern medicine will probably adopt some of the proven drugs and remedies of Ayurveda.

We recognise that Ayurveda has a right to exist, to flourish and to evolve. However, there have been spectacular advances in modern western medicine—in diagnosis as well as in the prevention and treatment of disease. If Ayurveda is to keep pace with these developments, it should take from them what it can utilize.

Ayurvedic and Unani doctors are reaching a very large number of our people, in villages and in urban areas. We must give them every help to serve the people and the country. It is important to have good schemes of training, well-enforced professional standards and scrutiny of performance.

Simultaneously, we must bring together and preserve the Ayurvedic knowledge developed in various regions of the country. Even today there are special cures which are known and practised in one region but are unknown in others. In the treatment of allergies especially, there are traditional specifics which could be investigated and popularised.

The great physician Charaka said that there was no plant in the Taxila region which did not have some medicinal or other use. We must explore and utilise all the medicinal uses of the plants and herbs which grow in India. Learning about plants and herbs should be a part of the natural history course so that all are able to recognise the plants and herbs in their surroundings. We are exporting large quantities of some of these herbs. Ultimately we must process them ourselves.

There is a growing realisation that the headlong growth of technology has upset the delicate balance of nature. Reckless use of modern chemicals has polluted rivers and lakes. Fresh air which we thought would always be in free and abundant supply is also being polluted. This poses new dangers to health. Forethought on our part can prevent,

such needless hazards. In many western countries there are already movements to return to natural and herbal remedies and to eat wholesome food in their natural form. In a way this is coming to the same conclusions as already exist in Ayurveda and other indigenous systems.

When we consider the larger social problems in depth, they all form parts of the same whole; industry, education, health influence one another. Therefore, our programmes should be planned and implemented in an integrated manner.

The Challenge before Scientists

WE OFTEN REFER to the Science Policy Resolution which was adopted in 1958. It was a declaration of Government's resolve to provide continuing support for science. It was not a blueprint of a well-defined programme for implementation. It is important to bear this distinction in mind.

The problems of science are many—some specific and some general. Since 1958, there has been a five-fold increase in the annual expenditure on scientific research and development and a four-fold increase in the number of personnel engaged. Our scientific research has expanded into many new areas.

The most important sector of our national life is agriculture and we can truthfully say that the application of science and technology has rescued this sector from stagnation and has infused some dynamism into it. An equally enduring, if less spectacular, contribution has been made in transportation and communication and in certain sectors of the manufacturing industry. But in spite of this expansion, there is concern that the nation has not secured sufficient returns from the quantitative expansion of scientific research and education. And it is true that we are not using our considerable potential to the fullest. I hope this conference will identify the factors responsible for this state of affairs and formulate measures to tackle them with a definite time frame, short-term as well as long-term.

We have to formulate a series of research and development programmes which are related to specific socio-economic goals and which are integrated financially and institutionally into an overall strategy.

Some of the questions which we are constantly asked are : What are the goals to be achieved in terms of enhanced production capacity, or

Inaugural speech at the third conference of Scientists, Technologists and Educationists, New Delhi, November 28, 1970

the supply of new goods and services? What are the scientific and technological means available to achieve these goals? What proportion of these can we provide with our existing knowledge and institutional capabilities? We have to find answers to such questions in these sectors of the development plan.

The prime responsibility of evolving such an overall strategy should lie with this conference. But major contributions have also to be made by the institutional representatives of the scientific community. It is rather disturbing to find that the leaders of this community, who should guide the Government in identifying the imbalances to be corrected and initiatives to be taken, themselves seem to look towards the governmental bodies most of the time. In a recent article, I read that scientists have been called "the minority in league with the future". I do not know if I am wrong in saying that in our country signs of such conspiracy with the future are not visible. Our science seems to be growing within water-tight enclosures without the necessary communication between the different units.

This conference could identify some of the major national problems with a high science and technology content and indicate how all the available scientific and technological resources in the country could be mobilised to manage and tackle these problems. There are many areas in which work has to be done. For instance, we have done hardly anything in the field of using the resources of our seas which, from all accounts, contain great riches. Even in surveying our natural resources, we have not worked as intensively and extensively as is necessary in our national interest. Therefore, the management and organisation of our scientific research needs to be studied in greater depth. I do not know if the major scientific agencies in India have a well thought-out and coherent policy guiding the research grants and fellowships which they provide to the universities.

A great deal could also be done in the formulation of joint research projects between groups in Government laboratories and universities and by joint appointments of scientists between universities and laboratories. I know of many seminars and conferences, but I do not know if any really serious programme has yet been presented. I hope that concrete shape will be given to an item which I saw on your agenda, that is, the Regional Educational Research Centres.

If we are to go forward with confidence to plan and organise our scientific and technological programme on a realistic basis for the coming decade, we must bring about a basic change in our approach to the management of scientific and technological institutions which are engaged in research or in instruction. Three important issues arise :

(i) The balance between the need for freedom of research and the requirement of accountability of research institutions;

(ii) Basic change in personnel practices as applied to scientific and educational institutions. But assuming that we replace the prevailing system of selection through the U.P.S.C. by a decentralised selection system, can the scientific community take the responsibility for operating it with the utmost integrity and objectivity ?; and

(iii) Finally, the democratisation of decision-making in laboratories, universities, scientific agencies and, indeed, in the scientific system as a whole.

These questions also should be considered.

This conference will discuss matters which directly concern scientists and technologists. So, it is important that we also bear in mind the social and psychological environments in which Indian science and technology must grow. Our society is emerging out of a prolonged social, cultural and intellectual stagnation. This in itself would produce stress and strain for any society. The fact that we are in the midst of many revolutions simultaneously makes the tension most acute.

I hope, therefore, that the conference will not merely diagnose the malaise afflicting science and technology, but, will focus attention on these basic problems of high priority and formulate specific recommendations for action. In doing so, clear distinction should be made between the responsibility of the scientific community and its leadership on the one hand, and of the Government, on the other.

I have spoken of some of the specific problems which arise in our country. But you all know that these are all part of the general problems which face the human community as a whole. We have various national weaknesses, some of which were mentioned by the Chairman. We still are shackled by many old traditions which come in the way of rational or scientific thinking. By 'we' I do not mean the scientific community, but the environment in which they live, the society in which they function. There is still lack of depth in our thinking, lack of commitment to the future of the people of India.

I believe fully in the freedom to the scientist to do what he can best do or what attracts or interests him most. But we cannot ignore the compulsion of our situation and of our times. And whenever we think of science and technology, the major question that crops up is: Science and technology for whom and for what purpose ? These are questions which are not new. They have troubled the scientific community for a long time. But, I think, the community and the general public is becoming more aware of them today because we see the results of some of the very important scientific works all over the world.

I would not like to blame the scientist because it is certainly not his fault. Perhaps you know the old story, I think, from ancient Rome. A cook was asked to cook whatever is best in the world and he cooked a tongue. But the man said, "This is a very ordinary dish to cook".

The cook replied, "You know, the tongue is the most important thing. It is through the tongue, through the word, the most beautiful poetry has been written, the most wonderful ideas have been expressed", and so on. Then the man said: "All right, tomorrow I want the worst thing". When he came to the table the next day, he had exactly the same dish. On being asked why the same dish has been served, the cook commented: "Well, the tongue is the worst thing because the worst quarrels and all those things also arise from people talking". This is true of everything and equally true of science. The same process can be used either for good or for evil, and that is not always in the hands of the scientist. But the scientist is also a citizen of the country and of the world. So he can no more shake off his responsibility for his own work than can those who use that work for evil purposes. I do not think this is the occasion for you to get involved in this discussion here because in the limited time available it is better, perhaps, to deal with some of the questions which I raised earlier. But I think this is something which must be kept at the back of your mind, especially of the younger people, as a framework of the work which they do.

It has been said that quite often science does not offer new models of civilisation, but only more and more sophisticated forms of barbarism. Technology takes us to the moon—I was told by the American astronauts who came—and very soon to Mars. But what do they say when they get to the moon or Mars ? Are they, because of going there, better citizens, better human beings ? We add to knowledge, but what do we do with the knowledge. This is a question which must always go side by side with whatever other work we do. We have to look at our work from all angles. We have to see the probable effect of what we do on its use by the community, and if there is any possible evil effect, we have to take simultaneous steps to see how this can be minimised or, if possible, completely avoided.

I have great respect, regard and admiration for scientists. In India, I know that they work in very difficult circumstances. We are not able to give them the equipment they need. Sometimes we are not able to give them the freedom they need. But I think that instead of being discouraged by it, we should regard it as the greatest challenge. It is easier to work in a bigger, better equipped laboratory. But some of the great discoveries and monumental work of the world has been done in not so well-equipped laboratories.

All nations have been through these phases of scientific and technological development. If we take it as a specific challenge related to a specific situation in our country, which is not duplicated anywhere else in the world, neither in the developed, nor in the developing countries, then the magnitude of the challenge is all the greater. But I think that the rewards of bringing a better life to our people are also much greater than any scientist anywhere else in the world can dream of. Therefore,

it becomes much more worthwhile and rewarding. So, I hope you will look at your work from that angle and while it must be in the spirit of science and search for truth, I hope it will be related to the truth and the reality of circumstances of our country and of the different areas in which this work must be done.

Basic Research

THE TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH occupies a special position in the scientific system of our country. It owes this position not to the beauty of its location or the splendour of its buildings, but to the steadfastness with which it has pursued high standards of scientific performance.

As we celebrate its Silver Jubilee, our thoughts inevitably go to Homi Bhabha. His sense of dedication to India and to the cause of Indian science made the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research a reality. With singleness of purpose, he pursued his resolve to establish, in his homeland, a school of nuclear physics comparable to the best in the world, rather than accept a chair in the international scientific capital of the time. Homi Bhabha was fortunate in being able to enlist the financial support of a private charitable trust as well as the co-operation of the Government in Bombay at that time.

The Institute has grown since then. It has created a scientific community of a significant size with its own value system. It has been able to establish a correct relationship between research and the other elements of the innovation chain. The Institute has also set an example of judiciously combining the choice of scientific areas with the availability of talent of the requisite standing. Without this, a country like ours, with limited resources, could not hope to get the maximum out of its basic research effort.

Scientists of this Institute and others have written and spoken with eloquence and conviction regarding the benefits of basic research to a developing society. Admittedly, fundamental research is an essential ingredient of the higher educational system. Without it, education becomes sterile. Equally important is the psychological impact of research centres, working on the frontiers of knowledge, on the development of a modern scientific tradition in countries with developing economies. Over a period of time, these centres serve to endow the

Speech at the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, April 10, 1971

embryonic scientific community with the self-confidence which is so essential to progress. In recent years we have also come to appreciate the fact that it is often through institutions devoted to basic research that a nation acquires the expertise to sustain its efforts to apply science and technology to development.

These arguments are persuasive. Yet, I sometimes wonder if we are getting adequate returns from basic research. For instance, the striving to meet international standards of scientific performance seems to isolate many of our basic research institutes from the rest of the scientific and educational system within the country. This makes their scientists somewhat disoriented. We accept as a desirable goal the need to integrate basic research substantively and institutionally with higher education, but is our intellectual and organisational effort on the scale needed to achieve that goal? For progress in science, we must not only solve scientific problems with determination but be equally effective in overcoming institutional rigidity. I hope that the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research will give the country a lead in this matter. As a concrete measure, I suggest that the Institute "adopt" one or more departments in a university and draw up a plan of collaboration which would enrich both institutions.

A closely related aspect is that of reconciling the demands of excellence in fundamental research with those of relevance to developing economy. This issue is an important part of the social responsibility of scientists. That is why I was happy to learn from Professor Menon that with the Institute's growth to maturity, its scientists are increasingly aware of their wider responsibilities. With such an awareness, the self-selecting processes which are so characteristic of the scientific community can be relied upon to turn from the conflict between relevance and excellence to the aim of relevance with excellence. I hope the Tata Institute will act as a pace-setter in achieving this task.

The Social Responsibility of Engineers

LAST YEAR I inaugurated the Golden Jubilee session of the Institution of Engineers in Calcutta. I am glad to be once again in the midst of eminent engineers.

Planners and economists build models of growth, which are useful theoretical concepts. But it is the engineers who mould these models

Inaugural address to the 44th annual general meeting of the Institution of Engineers (India), New Delhi, May 21, 1971

into coherent forms. Engineers belong to a wide spectrum from chemical technology at one end to social engineering at the other. No nation can develop without them. Since Independence, Indian engineers have been playing a vital role in national construction through the building of dams and power houses, through the erection of factories and other installations which are basic elements of national economy as well as of social welfare.

Our engineers have earned a high reputation in some of our neighbouring countries for project planning and consultancy work. Indian engineering products are adding to our foreign exchange resources. However, some of our domestic needs such as housing, communications, agricultural machinery and implements, fertilizer, steel, cotton textile, medicine—which are all needed by the common man—remain largely unsatisfied. We shall need increasing help from our engineers in the formulation and execution of our Plans.

Engineers are not only builders in steel and concrete but also builders of the nation. They can give expression to their intellectual processes and creative vision only when the nation itself is pulsating with life, and there is intense activity and construction all around. Such activity would be concentrated in laboratories and workshops, and also on roads, bridges and dams.

Previously, engineering was looked upon merely as one aspect of construction, of erecting structures, laying roads, bridges and railway tracks. But as the economy grows and diversifies, engineering involves far more sophisticated activity. The destiny of engineering is thus inextricably linked with the future of the economy and the multitudes who make up the nation. An engineer cannot prosper in isolation.

We have, therefore, to think in terms of integrating the planning of engineering and technical personnel with the perspectives of economic development. The planning of engineering manpower can sometimes go awry. There cannot always be reliable forecasts for the future. Unforeseen circumstances may hamper the execution of carefully drawn up plans. Delays and inefficiency may interfere with time schedules.

In recent years, a crisis has developed in our engineering sector. For a variety of reasons, the rate of industrial growth slackened and the demand for engineers fell behind the planned supply. Imbalances emerged. We had shortages of technical manpower in certain fields and excessive supply in certain others.

Such developments are unfortunate and we must do our best to prevent them. The country and the Government are responsible for providing trained people with opportunities for productive employment. However, this responsibility can hardly be unilateral. In their turn, engineers themselves owes something to the nation which has invested precious resources in their training, in making them conversant with specific skills, and turning them into a special kind of citizens. Since

engineers are the key to basic capital formation activities, we cannot afford to lose them. Nor is it fair for them to expect their poor country to compete for them in international markets. They have to stand by the nation despite their current frustrations and despite the fact that, in affluent countries, they might get a better price than India can offer in its present economic circumstances.

This then is the social responsibility which engineers have to face. The slackening of the pace of growth in recent years can be attributed to several factors, some of them outside our control. There are also delays for which the administration can be held responsible and general economic inefficiency. This point is well taken and the Government is trying to improve its administrative efficiency. But the quest for efficiency should not be confined to administrators or 'file-pushers' as you describe them. Engineers also must promote better utilisation and handling of materials and better inventory control. These and other similar improvements could result in reduced costs and higher efficiency. This would mean a larger volume of activity with a given quantum of resources and faster growth. It could strengthen the economy and enlarge the aggregate volume of employment including that of technical manpower. If the country is to advance and engineers are to prosper, they must give the highest importance to considerations of production and efficiency in their spheres of activity.

Late starters on the road to industrialisation have to progress by adopting and adapting technology from other countries. They have the advantage of being able to skip various stages. It would be futile to attempt to buy all the required skills and technologies from elsewhere. We can spare neither the funds nor the time. We need a generation of inventive engineers who will learn by doing and do by learning. There are instances where miracles have been worked in some countries by this method. For us also there is really no other way.

Our engineers, technologists and scientists will have to keep their eyes open and their minds alert so that they know what is happening where, and can think constructively about the technological possibilities of adapting innovations elsewhere. Naturally they must keep in view our environment as well as the limited stock of our resources, including technical manpower. I am glad that already in individual fields, Indian engineers have performed well in grafting their own ideas on to those from abroad. There have also been instances where technologies have been successfully combined but this process has to be taken very much further.

In working out this alchemy of technologies, engineers will have to appreciate that ours is a developing economy, and that while the country will support their inventiveness by whatever resources can be assembled, they must deploy these resources most carefully. They will have to accept the responsibility to develop the proper technological base for

the growth of agriculture and small-scale industries. Given our population problem, the accent in technological adaptation must be on the absorption of manpower simultaneously with increasing productivity per unit of capital deployed.

The situation is challenging but it has to be faced. In the past, not much attention was paid to develop equipment which would suit our agro-climatic conditions and the economic state of our cultivators. Rural industrialisation also poses certain specific technological problems which have not so far attracted the attention they deserve. Whether the poverty of India can be eradicated smoothly in the near future will depend largely upon whether or not we can achieve a real breakthrough in these directions. Despite the apparent lack of glamour of such activities, it would be worthwhile for the alumni of this Institution to devote some of their effort and resources to this crucial task.

Mr. Chairman, you have complained that engineers and scientists are unable to make their full contribution because they are rated below file-pushers and speech-makers. I sympathise with your point of view. There should certainly be fewer files, but there is more to administration than file-pushing. Also, may I remind you that by insisting on having inaugural functions, you force people to make speeches. If I had my way, I would ban most formal functions for I personally would rather spend the time in meeting and talking to engineers and scientists. Incidentally, may I say that you yourself made an excellent speech!

I have always expressed my concern over the dominant position occupied by the generalist in our public administration structure and our determination to effect a change in this situation. In the managerial hierarchy engineers should certainly be given the powers and status necessary to discharge their duties to the satisfaction of all concerned. Some progress has been made. Recently, for instance, a high powered executive body, the Electronics Commission, composed largely of scientists and engineers, has been charged with the responsibility for the development of a vital industry. We hope that many more steps will be taken in this direction. However, while specialised jobs do require expertise, the assumption that specialisation is the key to success is an over-simplification in our complex world. Mere specialisation precludes comprehensive thinking. It often prevents us from taking an overall and integrated view of the techno-economic advantages which come to society from many different specialisations. Thus, we are apt to deal with most problems in isolation rather than in perspective and in the process the whole as well as the part suffers.

Life is a continuous and changing process and all parts of it are inter-linked—each one constantly acting and reacting on the other. Even specialised disciplines are being merged into even more inclusive field of consideration. Therefore, whether from the point of view

of being more effective in one's work or the larger aspect of the future, which we wish to mould, people must have a wider focus than the merely professional. In your speech you have given some indication, Mr. Chairman, that you have this larger focus and larger vision. Let men and women of all professions co-operate to make this a better country to live in.

I should like to give my good wishes to all those who are assembled for this meeting. As I have said they have a very important role to play. I have confessed also that they do not always get the opportunities which are their due. But in life, opportunities are not given; opportunities are made and taken and it is for our young people to have the courage, the determination and the perseverance which is needed to attract an opportunity and to make the best use of it when it comes.

Agricultural Research

I AM GLAD to be present on an occasion which marks the addition of further facilities for agricultural research which, as we all know, is fundamental to our progress. Before we achieved freedom, our economy had been stagnant for several centuries and there used to be recurring famines. Our problems still remain gigantic but we are solving them one by one. In agriculture, we had disproved the prophecies of certain experts and have achieved near self-reliance. Bumper wheat crops have been the result not of good weather only but also of the systematic adoption of high productivity techniques. The hands of our farmer have been strengthened by a powerful weapon—science-based technology. This is evidence of what can be achieved when there is team spirit amongst scientists, administrators, extension workers and farmers and when plans and implementation are dovetailed.

All over the world, whenever new facilities are created those who are already in a position of comparative strength take advantage of them and weaker sections are left out. The programme of science-based agriculture had to be initiated in irrigated land and depended for its success on farmers who were capable of adopting the new cultural practices. Hence, it increased the disparity between them and poorer farmers in irrigated areas as also farmers in unirrigated regions.

Inaugural address at the opening ceremony of the Nuclear Research Laboratory of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, November 29, 1971

Development, as indeed any movement forward always creates new problems. We must be vigilant and take prompt corrective action. Our present emphasis on the development of dry farming and assistance to small farmers is an indication of our determination to redress existing imbalances and forestall new ones. It is certainly important to the success of this present venture that those who work here should get down to the field and, as was said, roll up their sleeves to work. It is important that they have personal acquaintance with our farmers, with not only the agricultural problems but with the attitude of mind of the local people because without that understanding it is not always easy to get things moving in the desired manner.

Our achievement of self-sufficiency in food production has given our people a new sense of self-confidence, but we must now consolidate this quantitative self-sufficiency and turn our attention to qualitative improvement.

Individual programmes of higher production and more nutritive diet are parts of a larger strategy to bring a more satisfying life to our rural areas. The reform of the tenure system and the extension of ownership rights to actual tillers is important. Unfortunately, we have not been able to fully implement these land reforms. There is great opposition from certain landed interests. Some people have gone to the extent of alleging that these are moves to suppress democracy. Democracy can be strengthened and can have meaning for the people only when glaring inequalities and injustices are removed from our society. The danger to democracy comes from those who wish to cling stubbornly to an old way of life which in many countries has long since become part of history.

We have regarded planning as the application of scientific methods to our problems. My father's and Dr. Bhabha's conviction that the promotion and utilisation of nuclear science and technology would help to augment our energy resources and also give us powerful instruments to deal with a wide range of development problems has given us direction. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and other units of our atomic energy programme are monuments to their vision. The resources and capabilities which have been built up, especially at the Centre, have already been utilised in a number of areas of national endeavour. However, until recently, their application to agriculture and related activities was not intensive. Today we have had clear indication of the numerous beneficial uses of nuclear techniques in agriculture and animal husbandary. I am glad that this laboratory will launch an important programme to bring competence in such techniques.

But we cannot entirely dismiss the fear of the conservationists and environmentalists as entirely imaginary. Some Indian farmers and

fruit-growers who were themselves enthusiastic users are complaining on the basis of their own experience that because of improper use of certain types of fertilisers and pesticides some varieties of fruits are disappearing. I dislike the word 'exploitation' whether it is used in dealing with men or with nature. We must see how we can help nature to help us, not exploit natural resources rapaciously and denude our earth of its riches for future generations.

To say that developing nations should concentrate on receiving technology transferred from the industrialised countries, rather than spend scarce resources of scientific manpower, money and time on generating their own technology domestically is to take rather a facile and superficial view. In order to progress rapidly we need integrated technological strategy involving a blend of three elements : technology transferred as such, technology on which adaptive research is done before it is applied, and technology generated entirely indigenously. To achieve this, we must have a very strong national base of research, development and extension. This is particularly important in agriculture because numerous problems are unique to every agro-ecological situation. I hope that this laboratory will play an important part in the evolution and implementation of our technological strategy in agriculture.

The United Nations Development Programmes have, I am glad, always been responsive to the needs of developing countries and have spearheaded many innovations in economic and social development. I am glad that it is helping this laboratory, and that it has nominated the International Atomic Energy Agency as the Executive Body for this project.

I greet the distinguished scientists who have come from long distances and some from near to exchange ideas on the use of nuclear tools in agriculture and animal husbandry. At no time in human history have scientists had such opportunity to do good to their fellowmen and to this earth which sustains us all. Could there be a more exciting challenge or more worthwhile task ?

The Chairman spoke of light and darkness. Until the end of time, I think, these two will co-exist. But while they are there, I think, men of goodwill, men and women who are interested in science will try to enlarge the areas of light and try to fight darkness. This is why we are all here at this function and I hope that this laboratory and this new venture will help to spread light amongst the farmers of India—light not only in the new methodology and new practices but light also in their attitudes. We have in India to adopt not only scientific methods but a more rational thinking and by this I do not mean that we should sweep over-board other values which we have but merely that those values should be used to help us to enjoy a better life and to make the most of it.

The Ecological Crisis

As one who has been deeply interested in this subject since long before I had ever heard of the word ecology, I am naturally glad that people have woken up to the dangers which threaten the world as we know it. I know that in this audience I am speaking to the converted and many of the things which I say may be obvious to you but I feel that they have to be said for a larger audience also because there is not sufficient appreciation of this in the country as a whole. I hope this Committee will succeed in interesting and mobilising the entire country, especially our young people in this movement.

Since man first discovered that he could use nature for his own purposes he has been interfering with his environment. Man is a part of nature and only one of the many species who inhabit the earth. But he has treated it as his colony to exploit it. The scale of his intervention has now grown to a point where it has produced vast and disruptive changes which have already modified our existence more profoundly than any earlier human activity. Hence, the ecological problems with which we are now concerned embrace diverse aspects ranging from the economic, social, psychological problems of human settlements to the management and use of natural resources and the conservation of natural habitats. The earlier attitude of scorn has changed but some people still regard conservation and concern for ecology as something of a fad. Why worry if few tigers and rhinos and a few plant species are wiped out? Your agenda paper gives the answer: "An environment in which animals and plants become extinct is not safe for the human being either." Besides, this attitude of mind is the same which regards one species of human beings as superior to another.

Pollution is affected by four factors: the prevailing natural conditions; human population; the levels of production and consumption and the level and use of technology. The environmental problems of the industrialised countries are the result of earlier exploitation as well as of present affluence while those of the developing countries are primarily determined by the manner in which machines are used or abused. In the poorer societies these problems are essentially those of inadequate development and of continuing poverty, unsafe drinking water, malnutrition, poor sanitation, inadequate housing and disease.

As an international group of economists has pointed out, that development is not the cause of most of these problems but the cure. The poorer countries cannot but look upon planned development as an instrument to improve the quality of life. Such planning, however, should entail a reappraisal of the objectives of development to provide

Inaugural address to the National Committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination, New Delhi, April 12, 1972

more explicitly for the social and human needs of health, shelter, clean air, water and the beauty of natural surroundings. We should move away from the single dimension model which equates the growth of G.N.P. with development. Our emphasis should be on the qualitative improvement of life as a whole rather than on the quantitative growth of various sectors of economy. Our attention cannot be diverted from the main question before us which is to bring basic amenities within the reach of our people and to give them better living conditions without alienating them from nature and their environment, without despoiling nature of its beauty and of the freshness and purity so essential to our lives.

As our development progresses perhaps we also shall have environmental problems akin to those in the developed countries. But we can learn from their experience. Through foresight and imaginative physical planning many potential dangers can be avoided or at least minimised. Concern with economic and social development need not be a choice between poverty and pollution. To most people progress has become synonymous with imitation of western models but wherever we have followed models from the industrial society and have been insensitive to our own circumstances the results have not been happy. The time has come for us to think deeply about the kind of progress we want. Should we not recast our priorities and ask ourselves what facilities are worth the price for us or for future generations? For instance, in the rural areas, a corrugated iron roof has become a sign of better living. It is certainly more durable than a thatched hut. At the same time, it is ugly to look at. It kills all artistic initiative and is not even suitable for our climate.

To give another example, for centuries Indian students have received instructions under trees. I myself had the privilege of going to a famous university where there were no class rooms. Yet today the school building seems to have acquired greater importance than what is taught or the quality of the teacher.

Just a few days ago, I came across a poem by a sensitive teenager which points to another aspect of our imitative thinking. She speaks of village boys playing with buffaloes in a muddy village pool and asks whether it would be an improvement to deprive them of this spontaneous joy by having them conform to the restrictions of the so-called better classes who are kept isolated from the sun and the wind in their covered, and sometimes heated swimming pools! I was astounded to hear an otherwise sympathetic foreign visitor refer to people doing hard manual labour as human degradation. The personality of a man is not diminished by honest labour. Technology should certainly lighten his burden, but is it progress for vast numbers to be employed in monotonous mechanical tasks day in and day out blurring individuality and blunting their capacity to think and feel? There are thousands of such instances.

This sort of progress is avoidable but other aspects are far more complex. Individual programmes cannot be viewed in isolation but in terms of their impact on development and on environment. Some decisions will be difficult to take. For instance, fertilisers help enormously in increasing agricultural production. Yet they use up the soil. In countries still infested with mosquitoes, pesticides have been a boon. But we in Delhi can testify that the new strains which have developed are quite immune and resistant to the pesticides being used. Some of these pesticides which we and other countries have been using have killed off birds and other creatures and have harmed human beings. In some places, people are reverting to natural pest control, for example, breeding birds to devour insects.

A basic need for advance of any kind is energy. About half the energy consumed in our country is for domestic use and half this amount is supplied by firewood. This is denuding our forests, eroding the soil, silting rivers and affecting the climate. Hence the importance of providing a cheap fuel substitute for those who use firewood. An integrated strategy is indicated. If we imitate what the industrialised countries did in their earlier phases, we might only add to the pollution without significantly raising per capita consumption level.

As Shri Subramaniam remarked just now, until recently the structure of Government did not provide for any point where environmental considerations could receive the attention they deserved. This gap has now been bridged by the National Committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination with Shri Pant, a former Member of the Planning Commission, as its whole-time Chairman. The Committee will be manned by multi-disciplinary teams. But it can succeed in its complex tasks only in the measure it receives willing co-operation from all Ministries and Departments. It is not intended to take over the executive functions of other agencies. Its work is to plan and coordinate. The responsibility for execution will continue to vest with the various Ministries and agencies of Government.

It is not enough for official agencies to become environment conscious. By its very definition, environment is pervasive. Can there be environmental planning without the involvement of the entire population at all levels—of architects and contractors, of technicians and rural workers, of horticulturists and foresters, in fact of all citizens ? To design and construct private and public buildings and other structures which blend with their surroundings and are appropriate to the climate and customs and yet are durable and inexpensive is the task of our architects and engineers. Because of the vast numbers of people whom we have to serve and the very limited resources we have at our disposal, we must make the maximum use of locally available materials for building and other purposes.

All of us especially those concerned with industry at various levels and with handicrafts must learn to use all waste products. In everyday life the general public can help, without any effort or expenditure, by preventing the waste of food, by conserving water by not letting taps in their houses or along the roadsides run unnecessarily, by conserving power by switching off electric lights, fans and so on when not needed, by seeing that our cities and villages are kept clean and by having a new outlook towards the flora and fauna of the country. One sees so much needless destruction of plants and trees and a great deal of wanton cruelty towards birds and animals. What we need is civic consciousness of a very high order.

Many environmental problems, particularly those involving the contamination of rivers, oceans and atmosphere, are regional if not global in scope and impact. To understand and tackle such problems effectively we shall have to work closely with our neighbours in the Asian region and farther afield. Twenty per cent of the world's population consumes eighty per cent of the natural resources of the globe and produces about ninety per cent of the world's wastes and pollution. How can this situation be regarded as compatible with the concept of an equitable world order which is enshrined in the U.N. Charter? Problems of development and environmental survey call for major changes in the economic relations between the affluent and the developing countries. Unfortunately, in the name of environmental improvement some scientists in the advanced countries recommend economic policies which will further depress the developing countries. One of our immediate goals is to be self-reliant in economic sphere. Is it not as important to be independent in our thinking? We must be able not only to choose our direction but to know where to stop and when to turn. We should be mature enough to resist the temptation of non-essentials which glitter for a while. It is only when man is able to make the right choice at every stage and to distinguish between the essential and the expendable that he can give attention to the more worthwhile aim of improving himself and finding fulfilment.

I should have thought that progress would mean an enriching of the spirit and clarity of mind so that man would become more sensitive and aware and would think more precisely and comprehensively. He should have the capacity to live at peace with himself, with his fellowmen and with nature. Technology must bring us comfort and freedom from drudgery. But we find that in countries which have reached the stage of affluence an ever-increasing number of thinking people are acutely unhappy and attempting various methods of escape. Most of the others believing what is fed to them by the many glossy magazines and oblivious to the emptiness of their lives become engrossed in the race for more possessions as if that were a substitute for a full life. Man's wild spirit

has been creator and destroyer. Now, with the possibility of destruction so starkly real we must concentrate on the arts of preservation.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this Committee. I wish it success in its work. I should like to assure it of Government's full support.

* * *

IT IS INDEED an honour to address this Conference—in itself a fresh expression of the spirit which created the United Nations—concern for the present and future welfare of humanity. It does not aim merely at securing limited agreements but at establishing peace and harmony in life—among all races and with nature. This gathering represents man's earnest endeavour to understand his own condition and to prolong his tenancy of this planet. A vast amount of detailed preparatory work has gone into the convening of this Conference guided by the dynamic personality of Mr. Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of the Conference.

I have the good fortune of growing up with a sense of kinship with nature in all its manifestations. Birds, plants, stones were companions and, sleeping under the star-strewn sky, I became familiar with the names and movements of the constellations. But my deep interest in this our 'only earth' was not for itself but as a fit home for man.

One cannot be truly human and civilized unless one looks upon not only all fellow-men but all creation with the eyes of a friend. Throughout India, edicts carved on rocks and iron pillars are reminders that 22 centuries ago Emperor Ashoka defined a king's duty as not merely to protect citizens and punish wrong-doers but also to preserve animal life and forest trees. Ashoka was the first and perhaps the only monarch until very recently, to forbid the killing of a large number of species of animals for sport or food, foreshadowing some of the concern of this Conference. He went further regretting the carnage of his military conquests and enjoining upon his successors to find "their only pleasure in the peace that comes through righteousness."

Along with the rest of mankind, we in India—in spite of Ashoka—have been guilty of wanton disregard for the sources of our sustenance, We share your concern at the rapid deterioration of flora and fauna. Some of our own wild life has been wiped out, miles of forests with beautiful old trees, mute witnesses of history, have been destroyed. Even though our industrial development is in its infancy, and at its most difficult stage, we are taking various steps to deal with incipient environmental imbalances. More so because of our concern for the human being—a species which is also imperilled. In poverty he is threatened

Address to the plenary session of the U.N. Conference on Human Environment Stockholm, June 14, 1972

by malnutrition and disease, in weakness by war, in richness by the pollution brought about by his own prosperity.

It is sad that in country after country, progress should become synonymous with an assault on nature. We who are a part of nature and dependent on her for every need, speak constantly about "exploiting" nature. When the highest mountains in the world was climbed in 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru objected to the phrase "conquest of Everest" which he thought was arrogant. Is it surprising that this lack of consideration and the constant need to prove one's superiority should be projected onto our treatment of our fellow men? I remember Edward Thompson, a British writer and a good friend of India, once telling Mr. Gandhi that wild life was fast disappearing. Remarked the Mahatma : "It is decreasing in the jungles but it is increasing in the towns"!

We are gathered here under the aegis of the United Nations. We are supposed to belong to the same family sharing common traits and impelled by the same basic desires, yet we inhabit a divided world.

How can it be otherwise? There is still no recognition of the equality of man or respect for him as an individual. In matters of colour and race, religion and custom, society is governed by prejudice. Tensions arise because of man's aggressiveness and notions of superiority. The power of the big stick prevails and it is used not in favour of fair play or beauty, but to chase imaginary windmills—to assume the right to interfere in the affairs of others, and to arrogate authority for action which would not normally be allowed. Many of the advanced countries of today have reached their present affluence by their domination over other races and countries, the exploitation of their own masses and their own natural resources. They got a head start through sheer ruthlessness, undisturbed by feelings of compassion or by abstract theories of freedom, equality or justice. The stirrings of demands for the political rights of citizens, and the economic rights of the toiler came after considerable advance had been made. The riches and the labour of the colonized countries played no small part in the industrialisation and prosperity of the West. Now, as we struggle to create a better life for our people, it is in vastly different circumstances, for obviously in today's eagle-eyed watchfulness, we cannot indulge in such practices even for a worthwhile purpose. We are bound by our own ideals. We owe allegiance to the principles of the rights of workers and the norms enshrined in the charters of international organisations. Above all, we are answerable to the millions of politically awakened citizens in our countries. All these make progress costlier and more complicated.

On the one hand the rich look askance at our continuing poverty—on the other they warn us against their own methods. We do not wish to impoverish the environment any further and yet we cannot for a moment forget the grim poverty of large number of people. Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters? For instance, unless we are in

a position to provide employment and purchasing power for the daily necessities of the tribal people and those who live in or around our jungles, we cannot prevent them from combing the forest for good and livelihood, from poaching and from despoiling the vegetation. When they themselves feel deprived, how can we urge the preservation of animals? How can we speak to those who live in villages and in slums about keeping the oceans, the rivers and the air clean when their own lives are contaminated at the source? The environment cannot be improved in conditions of poverty. Nor can poverty be eradicated without the use of science and technology.

Must there be conflict between technology and a truly better world or between enlightenment of the spirit and a higher standard of living? Foreigners sometimes ask what to us seems a very strange question, whether progress in India would not mean a diminishing of her spirituality or her values. Is spiritual quality so superficial as to be dependent upon the lack of material comfort? As a country we are not more or less spiritual than any other but traditionally our people have respected the spirit of detachment and renunciation. Historically, our great spiritual discoveries were made during periods of comparative affluence. The doctrines of detachment from possessions were developed not as rationalisation of deprivation but to pervent comfort and ease from dulling the senses. Spirituality means the enrichment of the spirit, the strengthening of one's inner resources and the stretching of one's range of experience. It is the ability to be still in the midst of activity and vibrantly alive in moments of calm; to separate the essence from circumstances; to accept joy and sorrow with the same equanimity. Perception and compassion are the marks of true spirituality.

I am reminded of an incident in one of our tribal areas. The vociferous demand of elder tribal chiefs that their customs should be left undisturbed found support from noted anthropologists. In its anxiety that the majority should not submerge the many ethnical, racial and cultural groups in our country, the Government of India largely accepted this advice. I was amongst those who entirely approved. However, a visit to a remote part of our north-east frontier brought me in touch with a different point of view—the protest by the younger elements that while the rest of India was on the way to modernisation they were being preserved as museum pieces. Could we not say the same to the affluent nations?

For the last quarter of a century, we have been engaged in an enterprise unparalleled in human history—the provision of basic needs to one-sixth of mankind within the span of one or two generations. When we launched on that effort our early planners had more than the usual gaps to fill. There were not enough data and no helpful books. No guidance could be sought from the experience of other countries whose

conditions—political, economic, social and technological—were altogether different. Planning in the sense we were innovating, had never been used in the context of a mixed economy. But we could not wait. The need to improve the conditions of our people was pressing. Planning and action, improvement of data leading to better planning and better action, all this was a continuous and overlapping process. Our industrialisation tended to follow the paths which the more advanced countries had traversed earlier. With the advance of the 60's and particularly during the last five years, we have encountered a bewildering collection of problems, some due to our shortcomings but many inherent in the process and in existing attitudes. The feeling is growing that we should re-order our priorities and move away from the single-dimensional model which has viewed growth from certain limited angles, which seems to have given a higher place to things rather than to persons and which has increased our wants rather than our enjoyment. We should have a more comprehensive approach to life, centred on man not as a statistic but individual with many sides to his personality. The solution of these problems cannot be isolated phenomena of marginal importance but must be an integral part of the unfolding of the very process of development.

The extreme forms in which questions of population or environmental pollution are posed, obscure the total view of political, economic and social situations. The Government of India is one of the few which has an officially sponsored programme of family planning and this is making some progress. We believe that planned families will make for a healthier and more conscious population. But we know also that no programme of population control can be effective without education and without a visible rise in the standard of living. Our own programmes have succeeded in the urban or semi-urban areas. To the very poor, every child is an earner and a helper. We are experimenting with new approaches and the family planning programme is being combined with those of maternity and child welfare, nutrition and development in general.

It is an over-simplification to blame all the world's problems on increasing population. Countries with but a small fraction of the world population consume the bulk of the world's production of minerals, fossil fuels and so on. Thus we see that when it comes to the depletion of natural resources and environmental pollution, the increase of one inhabitant in an affluent country, at his level of living, is equivalent to an increase of many Asians, Africans or Latin Americans at their current material levels of living.

The inherent conflict is not between conservation and development, but between environment and the reckless exploitation of man and earth in the name of efficiency. Historians tell us that the modern age began with the will to freedom of the individual. And the individual came to

believe that he had rights with no corresponding obligations. The man who got ahead was the one who commanded admiration. No questions were asked as to the methods employed or the price which others had had to pay. The industrial civilisation has promoted the concept of the efficient man, he whose entire energies are concentrated on producing more in a given unit of time and from a given unit of man-power. Groups or individuals who are less competitive and, according to this test, less efficient are regarded as lesser breeds—for example the older civilizations, the black and brown peoples, women and certain professions. Obsolescence is built into production, and efficiency is based on the creation of goods which are not really needed and which cannot be disposed of, when discarded. What price such efficiency now, and is not reckless a more appropriate term for such behaviour?

All the 'isms' of the modern age—even those which in theory disown the private profit principle—asume that man's cardinal interest is acquisition. The profit motive, individual or collective, seems to overshadow all else. This over-riding concern with self today is the basic cause of the ecological crisis.

Pollution is not a technical problem. The fault lies not in science and technology as such but in the sense of values of the contemporary world which ignores the rights of others and is oblivious of the longer perspective.

There are grave misgivings that the discussion on ecology may be designed to distract attention from the problems of war and poverty. We have to prove to the disinherited majority of the world that ecology and conservation will not work against their interest but will bring an improvement in their lives. To withhold technology from them would deprive them of vast resources of energy and knowledge. This is no longer feasible nor will it be acceptable.

The environmental problems of developing countries are not the side-effects of excessive industrialisation but reflect the inadequacy of development. The rich countries may look upon development as the cause of environmental destruction, but to us it is one of the primary means of improving the environment for living, or providing food, water, sanitation and shelter, of making the deserts green and the mountains habitable. The research and perseverance of dedicated people have given us an insight which is likely to play an important part in the shaping of our future plans. We see that however much man hankers after material goods, they can never give him full satisfaction. Thus the higher standard of living must be achieved without alienating people from their heritage and without despoiling nature of its beauty, freshness and purity so essential to our lives.

The most urgent and basic question is that of peace. Nothing is so pointless as modern warfare. Nothing destroys so instantly, so completely as the diabolic weapons which not only kill but maim and deform

the living and the yet to be born, which poison the land, leaving long trails of ugliness, barrenness and hopeless desolation. What ecological project can survive a war? The Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olof Palme has already drawn the attention of the Conference to this in powerful words.

It is clear that the environmental crisis which is confronting the world, will profoundly alter the future destiny of our planet. No one among us, whatever our status, strength or circumstance, can remain unaffected. The process of change challenges present international policies. Will the growing awareness of "one earth" and "one environment" guide us to the concept of "one humanity"? Will there be more equitable sharing of environment costs and greater international interest in the accelerated progress of the less developed world? Or will it remain confined to a narrow concern, based on exclusive self-sufficiency?

The first essays in narrowing economic and technological disparities have not succeeded because the policies of aid were made to subserve the equations of power. We hope that the renewed emphasis on self-reliance, brought about by the change in the climate for aid, will also promote a search for new criteria of human satisfaction. In the meantime, the ecological crisis should not add to the burdens of the weaker nations by introducing new considerations in the political and trade policies of rich nations. It would be ironic if the fight against pollution were to be converted into another business, out of which a few companies, corporations, or nations would make profits at the cost of the many. Here is a branch of experimentation and discovery in which scientists of all nations should take interest. They should ensure that their findings are available to all nations, restricted by patents. I am glad that the Conference has given thought on this aspect of the problem.

Life is one and the world is one, and all these questions are interlinked. The population explosion, poverty, ignorance and disease, the pollution of our surroundings, the stock-piling of nuclear weapons and biological and chemical agents of destruction are all parts of a vicious circle. Each is important and urgent but dealing with them one by one would be wasted effort.

It serves little purpose to dwell on the past or to apportion blame, for none of us is blameless. If some are able to dominate others, this is at least partially due to the weakness, the lack of unity and the temptation of gaining some advantage on the part of those who submit. If the prosperous have been exploiting the needy, can we honestly claim that in our own societies, people do not take advantage of the weaker sections? We must re-evaluate the fundamentals in which our respective civil societies are based and the ideals by which they are sustained. If there is to be change of heart, a change of direction and methods of functioning, it is not an organisation or a country—no matter how well intentioned—which can achieve it. While each country must deal with

that aspect of the problem which is most relevant to it, it is obvious that all countries must unite in an overall endeavour. There is no alternative to a co-operative approach on a global scale to the entire spectrum of our problems.

I have referred to some problems which seem to me to be the underlying causes of the present crisis in our civilization. This is not in the expectation that this Conference can achieve miracles or solve all the world's difficulties, but in the hope that the opinions of each nation will be kept in focus, that these problems will be viewed in perspective and each project devised as part of the whole.

On a previous occasion I had spoken of the unfinished revolution in our countries. I am now convinced that this can be taken to its culmination when it is accompanied by a revolution in social thinking. In 1968 at the 14th General Conference of UNESCO the Indian delegation, along with others, proposed a new and major programme entitled "a design for living". This is essential to grasp the full implications of technical advance and its impact on different sections and groups. We do not want to put the clock back or resign ourselves to a simplistic natural state. We want new directions in the wiser use of the knowledge and tools with which science has equipped us.

And this cannot be just one upsurge but a continuous search into cause and effect and an enduring effort to match technology with higher levels of thinking. We must concern ourselves not only with the kind of world we want but also with what kind of man should inhabit it. Surely we do not desire a society divided into those who condition and those who are conditioned. We want thinking people, capable of spontaneous self-directed activity, people who are interested and interesting, and who are imbued with compassion and concern for others.

It will not be easy for large societies to change their style of living. They cannot be coerced to do so, nor can governmental action suffice. People can be motivated and urged to participate in better alternatives.

It has been my experience that people who are at cross purposes with nature are cynical about mankind and ill at ease with themselves. Modern man must re-establish an unbroken link with nature and with life. He must again learn to invoke the energy of growing things and to recognise, as did the ancients in India centuries ago, that one can take from the earth and the atmosphere only so much as one puts back into them. In their hymn to Earth, the sages of the *Atharva Veda* chanted : I quote—

"What of thee I dig out, let that quickly grow over,
Let me not hit thy vitals, or thy heart."

So can man himself be vital and of good heart and conscious of his responsibility.

Education and Social Welfare

Welfare of the Blind

It gives me very great pleasure to be here with you this morning because it is always a privilege to be with those who work for the betterment of the society.

You know that ours is a vast country and every problem, therefore, becomes a vast problem. And although much work has begun in many directions, we are very conscious that this is only the beginning and that we have barely touched the fringe of the question. We have so much still to do here for all sections of the people, and blindness is one aspect of that very big problem of helping our people, not only to lead a better life but to be able to contribute their talents and their capabilities for the development of the nation. It is not only a human problem, but it is also a question—as we just heard in President Nixon's message—of harnessing all our human resources which are most valuable of the resources that any country can produce.

Your theme—'Blindness in an Age of Science'—is very appropriate for our times because science has given us so much new knowledge in the field of medicine as well as in other fields and we have to see how it can be best utilised to help our fellowmen. In India, it is not only a question of prevention of blindness or the cure but of creating the right social outlook. Perhaps, all countries have been through this phase. But here the saddest part of all is the attitude towards any handicap—whether it is blindness or some other handicap. And it is only when the society treats the problem not with pity but with deep understanding and sensitivity that we can really be successful in helping our brothers and sisters.

As far as handicaps are concerned, each one of us has some handicap or the other. Some handicaps are more obvious and others are not. But each one of us has to face our own individual, personal handicaps. And life itself is always a challenge. Of course, for those whose handicap is obvious, it is a greater challenge. But we know—and all of you, I am sure, know—that greater the challenge, the more the inner resources a person finds to meet the challenge. And we have seen this in countless cases.

We heard the mention of Hellen Keller a little while ago. She came to India some years ago and she came to a dinner at our house. She arrived just a little bit earlier than we had expected. So I raced down the steps to receive her as she got off the car. Before her companion could introduce her, she had put her hands on my face and

Inaugural speech at the Fourth World Assembly on Welfare of the Blind, New Delhi, October 8, 1969

said : "You don't have to introduce her. I know this is Indira". She knew, she said, because she had read my father's letters to me and had visualised what sort of a person I was. And I was quite amazed to see afterwards when she spoke more on the subject, that she had not said those words just as a thing to say but that she did know a great deal about me—not the details of my life but the sort of person I was. We talked about this and, I think, I can say without hesitation that I have met few people who got to know so well without really knowing me at all, without having met me or even heard of me. And this was a part of her very great understanding of all aspects of the world in which we live. She not only understood people but she had a feeling for animals, for all parts of the nature. Her very life, the manner in which she overcame her difficulties, was nothing short of a miracle. We know now that given the determination and given knowledge and help, all human beings are capable of such miracles. And this is what gives us hope for the future.

Many of us have sight, *i.e.* we have two eyes which can see people, things, colours but I do not know if we have insight or a deep understanding. And perhaps in dealing with this question and other questions of social welfare and human understanding, it is this inner insight which is so necessary.

We live in an age of science but have not always used this science for a deeper understanding. We have far better communications, we rush from country to country but the very pace of movement does not give us the time to wait, to try and see deeply and to understand. And perhaps, that is where we have gone wrong and have not been able to solve many problems which are capable of solution. There is need for a deeper understanding of the problems, the difficulties and the needs of different people. There may be people in our own country who may be handicapped or they may have the handicap of being a minority or of belonging to different religion or of some other type of handicap. Today the most necessary thing for us is to have the capacity to see with the heart and to understand these problems with our heart. This is the only way to deal with these problems on a more long-term basis.

In India we have all the problems which you have but more besides because, apart from the lack of money, the lack of equipment, we have to face tremendous ignorance and superstition in dealing with blindness or, indeed, an illness of any kind. Some years ago when my mother died, Mahatma Gandhi thought that we should open a hospital in her memory because she had been greatly concerned with health, especially the health of women. So we opened a women's hospital on the edge of the city so that it could serve the rural population. This was some years ago. But even then for some months we did not have a single patient. The rural women just did not see why they should come to a

hospital, and it needed much effort on the part of the doctors and the nurses going from village to village, from lane to lane, before they could persuade any patient to come. Of course, that situation has very largely changed and people do flock to hospitals. But, nevertheless, there are large sections of the people even today who look at all these problems not from the scientific point of view, not with the point of view that there is a problem which can be solved with the knowledge already available to mankind but as though it were some kind of fate. Blindness in many cases is preventable and I think we have to do much more work in trying to prevent the disease because much of the blindness does come from smallpox and other such diseases and sometimes also from lack of cleanliness. It is a question of educating men and women in every village, in every slum so that from their earliest childhood people are aware of the dangers and the pitfalls and learn to avoid them. In this way only can this problem be solved on a mass scale.

I know that all of you have great experience in this work and I am sure that your coming here will not only throw light on new aspects of how to deal with this problem and how to get the best from our blind friends, but it will be a tremendous inspiration and help to the different Associations of the blind here and those who are engaged in this very vital and necessary work for the society as a whole.

I would like to welcome you all and say how glad I am that you did choose Delhi for the venue of your Conference. I hope that you will have the opportunity of knowing something about our country, the tremendous difficulties which we face and the manner in which we are solving them. My experience of life has been that as soon as you solve one aspect of a problem, another problem arises in its place. Life is one series of problems and mankind has to face these problems with courage, with determination and with the will to succeed. I know that social workers—certainly in our country and, I am sure, in the countries from which you come—do have this determination and the will to succeed. That is how they have been able to face tremendous problems and yet have progressed step by step in their work.

I should like to take this opportunity of giving my good wishes to those in India who have been working for the blind and those who have come from other countries who are engaged in this very valuable work. May your work progress from success to success and may it help in harnessing the very great talents and capabilities, which do not always come to light but which are possessed by our blind friends, so that they can also contribute to the moulding of the society and taking our lives forward to a better world—not only a world in which there is greater physical comfort but a world in which there is greater understanding of our fellowmen and in which we can all live and work together in peace!

Developing Local Talents

I AM VERY happy to be able to visit these islands and to meet the people here. We are a very big country and we must all know each other, we must know each other's problems, difficulties, achievements and also what talents the people have. The people of these islands, as all people in India, have something to take from other parts and something to give. Each group of people has special talents and capabilities. One of the purposes of our education should be to bring out and to develop local talents. While you should have pride in India, our great country, you should also learn to have pride in your own things and your own talents and your own culture. I think that much can be done to develop these local talents, local designs and so on.

In the modern world, people like to have new things and different things. So I hope that instead of imitating things that happen on the mainland an effort will be made to develop things which can be special to the Laccadives and which will interest people in each city of India. You should collect what is available locally and I hope that it will be possible to send some one here who can tell you how those things can be utilised so that they are attractive and can be useful to women in other parts of India. Women play a very important part in shaping the future. Because it is how they influence their children and their homes, how they inculcate good habits of living that society can change and go forward. Good health is dependent on habits of living and many diseases can be prevented if mothers and children knew about these things.

Similarly, in creating new social outlook the mother and sister play a very important part. I hope the girls here will go to school in good numbers and when they finish school they will have the opportunity of taking training so that they can do useful work for their community here, especially in the fields of education, health and vocational training. I hope the *Mahila Samajam* will give the right direction to the women here and will help them to help each other. Little by little we must take training so that you yourselves can help your other brothers and sisters to go forward and to better the living conditions here. Now that communications in the mainland are better and we hope they will further improve, it will help you to get different types of training and to have better opportunities of work also. On the mainland women are doing all types of work. For many years before we had women teachers, women doctors, women lawyers but

Speech at a women's meeting, Kavarati (Laccadive and Amindivi Islands), October 10, 1969

now they are taking to many other types of work also and they are doing well in all fields. What we are interested in is not that a few women should get employment or high positions. We are interested that every woman should have a better status in society. It is only when the mother is respected in the family and society that she can be a good influence on the family and especially on children. While we need to eradicate poverty and ills of poverty it is equally important that our society should have character, that our children should have character and should grow up to be good and courageous people following the high ideals and principles laid down by our leaders.

I thank you for your reception and give you all my good wishes.

Centres of Excellence

MR. PRESIDENT, I should like to thank you for your perceptive address in which you have summed up Jawaharlal Nehru's qualities—his dedication to freedom and the fight against poverty, his passion for science and the spirit of enquiry, his tolerance and his faith in the universal culture, and above all his vision of a better world. A university should naturally treasure these values of enlightenment, especially so a university named after Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a maker of modern India. Many milestones mark the distance which this nation has traversed with him. I hope that the inauguration of the Jawaharlal Nehru University will also prove to be a milestone in Indian education.

I knew Jawaharlal Nehru as father and as leader and also as a friend. His special characteristic was his great love for India and her people, and for humanity as a whole. Hence, his sense of personal involvement in the process of change and his intense concern for the future.

He was a student of history. The past was alive to him, and in it he saw the roots of the present and the future. But he looked ahead and into the future, towards the possibility of correcting man's ills and history's injustices. But he knew that redress could not come automatically. Changes had to be willed and worked and fought for. All his life he struggled against tremendous odds to give India a vision and the policies to transform that vision into reality. He dreamt and worked to give India an honourable place amongst nations.

Convocation address at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, November 14, 1969

Man's most valuable resource is his mind and it is only through education, in the widest sense of the word, that the mind can be trained to its fullest capacity. Unfortunately, most of our education does not look at each mind as changing and growing and with an individuality of its own. If at all we think of the mind, it is as a receptacle for the storing of facts or attitudes. Education is not merely an accumulation of knowledge, for knowledge can soon be out of date, but a means of stimulating the capacity to think, to learn and to innovate and to apply knowledge in the interest of larger causes. When education was limited to a privileged few, people were mere consumers of thoughts of others. Now when we seek widest involvement of the people in shaping their destiny, the young must be encouraged to do their own thinking.

In India today, in fact in most countries, people live in terms of old formulations, old concepts and cliches, which have lost much of their meaning, although other countries sometimes find new description for them, thus giving them a gloss of novelty. In many countries, Governments and people have realised that the old systems of education are no longer adequate, and force of circumstances or the experience of others have urged them to new experimentation. In India today, we need entirely new attitudes. Dead or dying ideas not only obstruct change but can considerably harm individuals as well as nations.

We have some universities which are a century old, but most of our universities have been established in the last two decades, in response to the growing yearning for education. Yet education is looked upon not from the point of view of having better human beings but merely as a vehicle for security of employment. The problem of educated unemployment is a grave one. Some of it is certainly due to the recession and our other economic difficulties of the last few years. But part of the blame must also go to our system of education which does not provide specific qualifications; which often inculcates an attitude of mind which hankers after office jobs instead of encouraging self-reliance, resourcefulness and a spirit of adventure.

We must bring education to all parts of our country and all sections of our people, especially the weaker sections and those who have so far been underprivileged. But a mere quantitative growth will not prepare our people to overcome the many challenging difficulties of development or enable them to cope with the fierce competition which is as much a part of our national life as of international scene. In a transitional stage, the expansion of higher education helps to overcome the barriers of caste and backwardness and thus promotes equality and mobility. But as other countries have done, we also might have to give up the idea that everyone must go in for higher education. For, the true function of higher education should be to improve the quality of the human being and the quality of his performance at every level.

One way of achieving this is through the establishment of centres

of excellence which can bear comparison with similar centres anywhere in the world. Obviously, entrance to these centres must not be limited to those of particular classes or of financial means but should be open to the best from every strata of our society. In the beginning, such centres would have to function at the post-graduate level. They should aim high, endeavouring, generating and maintaining the feeling of excitement and confidence which is the very foundation of proper development of higher education. They should emphasise inter-disciplinary approaches in teaching and in research. For some years, the major breakthrough in scientific advance has taken place in the borderland areas of different disciplines which have long been generally ignored. This is bound to increase in the future. Thus, in these centres of excellence, every effort should be made to make the study of each discipline more thorough. But simultaneously, special emphasis must be laid on inter-disciplinary teaching and research. High centres of learning must also devote themselves to the improvement of teaching standards and hence of our schools and colleges. They should examine our immediate problems and suggest ways in which the country could realise its objectives. This will help to root the centre of gravity of Indian intellectual life firmly within the country itself and forge an intimate and effective link between higher education and national development.

If, in the next few years, we succeed in establishing at least a few centres of excellence of this type which emphasise research and teaching at the highest level, adopt the powerful tools of inter-disciplinary research and effectively concentrate on the problems of the Indian situation, the foundation of the breakthrough in higher education will have been laid., The excellence produced in these centres would, in due course, help to create other centres of excellence and finally raise the entire field of higher education to standards which are conducive to rapid national progress. This University is already thinking on these lines. I hope it will prove itself to be such a centre of excellence.

Those who have the privilege of such higher study should become torch-bearers of the new awareness; ready to work with humility and sincerity to bring light to the darkest corners of our society. But excellence is incompatible with arrogance, complacence or with idleness. It can remain excellence only through ceaseless striving. To be bigger than himself, a man must constantly stretch his capacity. The more one does, the more one attempts, the more one is capable of doing.

It is not enough for a few at the top to reach outstanding ability. Performance at every level, even the very lowest, must be improved. All of us are part of the huge apparatus of the nation, the efficient working of which is dependent on the smooth functioning of every individual component. Again, excellence does not necessarily mean

doing extraordinary things. It is judged equally by doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.

The second measure which is essential to achieve the much-needed breakthrough in higher education is the important role which the universities can and should play in accelerating the processes of modernisation. It is their responsibility to cultivate science and to promote what has been called the scientific temper in our people. The stranglehold of obscurantism must be loosened. We must dispel material irrational fears and superstitions, fatalism and passive resignation. It is a duty of universities to make the people more deeply conscious of the powerful forces of social change which have begun to operate in the Indian society and the challenges which they create, so that our people are enabled to fight narrow-mindedness of all kinds : casteism, communalism, regionalism, linguism and all such divisive and retrograde forces. We must all join together to promote a new humanism to which the Vice-Chancellor has referred, which would make the intelligentsia conscious of its social responsibilities and identify itself with the well-being and aspirations of the masses.

Finally, universities must also promote a deeper understanding of our international relations and of our role in the world community, because no country can afford to live in isolation in a universe where man has already landed on the moon. I hope that in these larger tasks of nation-building, this University will make special contribution that is expected of it.

The Institute of Russian Studies has established a good reputation by maintaining high standards of instruction. This has been made possible by the assistance given by the Government of the Soviet Union and the dedicated work of the Russian teachers of the Institute. English is fast becoming a world language but to implement our policy of friendship and understanding with other people we need to learn many other languages of the world. My good wishes to the graduates who have taken their Degree in the study of the Russian language and literature.

Purposeful Education

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be here with you this evening and specially to hear some of your remarks which you have made because they reflect many of my own views. I have always placed the greatest

Speech inaugurating the Gorakhpur University Teachers' Association, Gorakhpur, January 13, 1970

importance on what is now called the cross-fertilisation of ideas and for this it is important that people in different fields of activity should exchange views and should take part in policy-making and nation-building. Mr. Chairman, you have said many things about education in India and specifically about university education.

I have often said that one of the major mistakes we made after Independence was not to change the system of education. Once we have proceeded along a particular channel, it is extremely difficult to make any changes. I agree with you that the need is urgent and vital, and if we do not make the necessary changes, the future is dark. But having said this, I simply do not know how we can make the changes, because it means upsetting a whole generation and in a democracy it immediately brings in many other difficulties. Nevertheless, I think, a way will have to be found to change not only university education but all the rest along the line.

Our education is not in tune with life in the present day India. Although now our children are learning more about their country than they did before, they still are not committed to the country; they are not given that intimate knowledge that generates a feeling of involvement in the country; they are not given the kind of social attitudes which modern India needs to go ahead.

Education is extremely important but education is not just the acquiring of knowledge. It is changing yourself into a sort of person who can adapt to changing conditions and who can play a significant role in changing society. Modern society, as you have rightly said, not only in India but all over the world, is changing very fast indeed and, therefore, the frustration among the youth is something which is universal. And everywhere, one after another, countries are finding that something is wrong with their educational processes and students are revolting against those old processes.

You saw what happened in France sometime ago. Many other countries are making the changes before the students' protest grows into a revolt. In fact, two days ago I was talking with Lord Todd, the Nobel Prize winner who said that we in India have not only kept an antiquated system of education but every new institution that is coming up is modelled on the old system which is very dangerous for the future. He said that in England most of the institutions were also out of date but at least the new ones were making an effort to break new ground. And I am sorry to say that he is entirely correct as far as our education is concerned. This is hardly the occasion, nor do we have the time, to go into the details of this, but it is something in which we need the help of teachers and scholars all over India to see not only what has to be done but how it can be done with the least dislocation and conflict. You know that even such a thing as the introduction of Hindi, which was not being forced on anybody, what political problems

it raised, what suspicions it aroused. So one has to find a way in which these changes can be brought about smoothly.

I have always endeavoured to meet intellectuals wherever I go, not only in India but even abroad. Perhaps you will be astonished to hear that this is something that politicians do not often think of. When I went to Australia and asked that I would like to meet some university people, artists, writers and musicians, they were most surprised and everything was done to say that there was just no time and this could not be fitted into the programme. Finally, when I persisted this was arranged and about fifty people were invited—the most distinguished in their field. Almost everyone of them said that that was the first time that their own Government had recognised them in any way. I had the same experience in Japan. There, of course, everybody refused to do anything. Finally I had to invite them where I was staying and a young musician came up to say that when he got the invitation he was very worried. He thought he had done something wrong and that was why he was being summoned. But I feel that in the contemporary world, life is never lived in compartments. But today this is even more true than before.

It is very important that we should know what others are thinking. And there should be a feeling of wholeness in the country and between different sections of the country. Most politicians talk a great deal about the poor, and certainly because of the injustice done to them over centuries they deserve our consideration and our help. But in creating a nation, in building a modern society, we know that the middle classes cannot be neglected either, because they have provided leadership at many levels and in many spheres. While it is necessary to help those who need the help most, it is equally necessary that this quality of leadership should be built up and that the quality of excellence should be encouraged. So, this is the major problem in India. It is not merely the economic problem which in itself is of great magnitude, but there is the problem to find out, at the same time, how to keep up the quality, how to keep up certain standards.

We can only try. While I do not suffer from lack of self-confidence, I am not so immodest as to think that any one individual can really make a difference. This is some thing which has to be a national effort on a tremendous scale. It is only when the people, and especially those who have the great privilege of being educated, feel a sense of commitment to the nation's problems, a sense of involvement, that the nation can really go ahead—when they feel that it is worth sacrificing something for the sake of this involvement and for the sake of the larger interests of the country.

This is what we want from our teachers, our scholars and our intellectuals. I am sure, that we have these qualities amongst us and if we make a joint effort something good can come out of it.

The Universal Man

TO BE IN this city is a privilege in itself. To be here in this institution is an even greater privilege for the Kashi Vidyapith enjoys a special position among our educational centres. It has intimate connections with the freedom movement. Its graduates have served the nation with a devotion all their own and carved out a place for themselves in the people's hearts. I cannot but pay my homage on this occasion to Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. Just two days ago we observed the fourth anniversary of his death. He symbolised the values which Dr. Bhagwan Das and the other founders of the Vidyapith had in mind when they established it.

Here we are in one of the world's oldest cities. It is a city which makes us think of what is history, and what is civilisation. Kashi stands on the river of India, the Ganga. It is regarded as the holiest of the holy cities of the Hindus. But even during Ashoka's time, it had already become a sacred place for the Buddhists.

So the mention of Varanasi brings to mind not only a picture of the Ghats along the Ganga but that of the serene Buddha figure of Sarnath. It brings to mind not only a vision of the dynamic monk Shankaracharya but of Kabir also. He was a weaver by profession, in this home of brocades, and he taught us that the fabric of India has strands of more than one religion and that Ram and Rahim are woven into the prayers of our people.

Varanasi also brings to my mind the fact that the first college of modern education was founded here. I am reminded of Raja Rammohun Roy. He came here to study our ancient scriptures in their purity, but he became convinced that this nation could not live by its traditional knowledge alone. It is this realisation which made him the First of the Moderns.

As I contemplate the history of Varanasi three other faces come before me—those of Mrs. Annie Besant, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mahatma Gandhi. Annie Besant was in a way complementary to Rammohun Roy. She proclaimed that man cannot live by modern knowledge alone, but needed the wisdom that had been discovered and bequeathed by the ancient sages and seers. Malaviyaji tried to blend the two in his university.

By a remarkable historical coincidence the very first gathering of the leading lights of Malaviyaji's university heard some plain speaking from Mahatma Gandhi. He had just come back from South Africa. His spectacular achievements there had been hailed, but few realised then

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Free translation of convocation address in Hindi at Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, January 13, 1970

that he was to play the same role on the much vaster stage of India. He was still an unknown entity in India. And so when he spoke of our social responsibility and especially our duty not to flaunt wealth, it caused much resentment. Annie Besant and Malaviyaji themselves were very uncomfortable.

But within a year or two the country was to find itself dominated by this intruder who challenged us to look around and identify ourselves with the poorest and the most oppressed who told us that if only the people of India listened to the still small voice within them, they could defy the might of empire.

It is out of this heightened awareness of our social responsibility and out of this sense of challenge that this centre of learning was born nearly fifty years ago. Its aim was to mould and fashion a new type of India. It is appropriate that we should take stock of the social responsibilities of our day and also examine to what extent we have succeeded in moulding the new kind of Indian.

I had occasion recently to tell a gathering of scientists that there need be no conflict between the Indian man and the modern man, nor indeed the universal man. On the banks of the Ganga thousands of years ago our sages proclaimed that the world is one family. They taught us that change is the law of life. They evolved the symbol of the ever-turning wheel to tell us of the meaning of Dharma. In our own days a philosopher who lived and worked in this city, Dr. Radhakrishnan, advised and admonished us not to be prisoners of the past but pilgrims of the future. Yet at this same place a few days ago we heard propounded a new theory of the Indian, a theory which denies Indianness to hundreds of thousands of children of India. This doctrine of discrimination and hatred has to be fought with all our might. It is this kind of discrimination which had weakened our society in the past and sapped it of creative strength. Are we to suppose that Hindus alone are Indians and Muslims and Christians are not?

Who then is an Indian? Under the law everyone born in our land and every child of Indian parents is an Indian, irrespective of religion, race or sex. This concept of everybody's absolute equality in law is a magnificent concept, one of which we should be proud. It is only if we work ceaselessly to make sure that members of every minority and tribe feel absolutely sure and confident that they are accepted without question as full members of the Indian family that we can claim to be a *"dharmabhoomi"* and the world's largest democracy. "Dharma" is a comprehensive word; it does not mean religion alone but comprises law, duty, compassion, service and spiritual enlightenment.

My view of Indianness is not confined to the legal interpretation of being born within a geographical area or the constitutional imperative of accepting the equality of all citizens. To me Indianness implies a positive duty to understand and honour other points of view in conson-

ance with the injunction that the ways to Truth are many. As our ancient books proclaim, *Ekam sat, viprah bahudha vadanti.* Kabir and Nanak pointed out this same truth five hundred years ago. Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi have shown it to us in our own times.

Thus freedom from fanaticism and a capacity for acceptance and assimilation have been the genius of the Indian people. The Indian race itself is the complex product of many races. So is Indian culture a composite product of many forces and influences. One has only to hear our music and poetry and see our vast treasures of art and architecture to realise it.

It is this same capacity which, I am sure, will enable us to absorb the teachings of modern science without giving up our own moorings and our identity. They say art is local while science is universal. As technology develops and people all over the world use the same kinds of products of technology, offices and factories, airports and homes tend to look alike. The fashionable young of all countries appear to wear the same kind of clothes and grow the same kind of beards. The sociologist Herbert Marcuse tells us that modern technological culture is non-entitising us. Yet, if we only look closely, we see a desperate struggle for identity on the part of people, a struggle to retain their individual self against the pressures of the big machine and the all-powerful over-organised State, and also their own regional and local identity. In such a small country as Britain, the Scots will insist on wearing tartans, the Welsh will not give up their language. And in our own country, there is a special colour combination in the saris of Kanchipuram, a special flavour of cooking in the food of Punjab, a special rhythm of its own in the dance of Manipur, a distinctive style in the music of Banaras. People will not give them up. Nor need they give them up.

A Western thinker has defined philosophy as the process of describing the Universe. Philosophy and science, in the process of describing the Universe and finding out the truth, help us to understand which is essential and which is peripheral.

It seems to me that much of the thought expounded by the Vedas and the Upanishads is as relevant and contemporary today as the findings of the great modern scientific thinkers. The message of Gautama Buddha was not meant to be restricted to the Magadha of his day. Spiritual truth and scientific truth merge and have to merge. Thought that will not permit the growth and dissemination of knowledge cannot be the basis of knowledge. The aim of man should be constantly to seek eternal knowledge as well as new understanding. It is only through rational endeavour that life can find fulfilment and be redeemed from its ordinariness.

To the Hindus the Ganga is a symbol not only of truth eternal but also of the culture of our land. As Jawaharlal Nehru said in his *Will*: "The Ganga, specially, is the river of India, beloved of her people, round

which are intertwined her racial memories and her hopes and fears, her sense of triumph and her victory and defeat. She has been a symbol of India's age-long culture and philosophy, ever-changing, ever-flowing and yet ever the same Ganga". Jawaharlal Nehru was proud of his Indian heritage but he wanted to be heir not only to the best in India but to the best of all countries of the world.

Much of the confusion in our social and political life is due to the fact that we do not go deep into questions but seek refuge in ready-made solutions, our own as well as foreign. Instead of making a searching analysis of social, political and economic problems, we tend to interpret them in terms of personalities. We live in a complex political situation. It is natural that the changes, development and progress that have occurred over the last 22 years should raise new problems. We need a new outlook and new methods to deal with them. The response of some has been dynamic and radical but others are unable to get out of the rut. And so there is conflict. This conflict between the forces of change and the forces of *status quo* is not confined to India but is found in all countries of the world. Our country is as alluring as it is vast—and the times we live in are filled with marvels as well as excitement. Each day brings events which are a challenge to our imagination, courage and devotion to the country.

My appeal to you as graduates, teachers and students of Kashi Vidyapith, is that you should propagate the concept of universal man, which is wholly compatible with the concept of an Indian as taught by Gandhiji, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Jawaharlal Nehru and Narendra Deva. I hope that the wisdom you have gained in this Vidyapith will help you to face the world's difficult and complex problems. You must have the courage to fight for your beliefs and to test your theories against the touchstone of reality. If the reality does not fit into your own frame of thought, it is not reality that can be given up but your way of thinking that needs to be changed. So long as we do not accept the reality we cannot succeed in solving the country's many problems. There is no problem that does not have a solution. You have to hope, you have to dare and you have to have faith in the country. My good wishes to all of you and to the Vidyapith.

Moulding Intellectual Climate

I AM GLAD that you have called me here. But I do not really have very much to say at this stage because, I think, it is more important if we hear what ideas our young people would like to suggest.

Dr. Rao ended his speech by referring to, I think, my larger loyalty to the country or some such words. I think that fundamentally all of us feel that way. I do not think that it would be fair for any Indian to say that he does not have the welfare of the entire country at heart. What does happen is that for a particular reason or for a particular period one likes to exploit a smaller loyalty. Sometimes, politicians, labour leaders and many others do this. And this is perhaps inevitable. What we have to see is that these smaller loyalties do not come in conflict with the larger loyalties. What we have to see is how to develop this loyalty, which already exists in people, into more of a kind of passionate involvement in the welfare and the future of the country. And that is why unity is so important. That is why we talk of integration—emotional, intellectual and otherwise. I am one of those who believe that underlying all our diversity and our differences, and our quarrels, there is a very fundamental and basic unity, which has kept India together.

There is no doubt that there are trends and forces which would try to introduce ideas that would crack this unity or weaken it and herein lies the importance of young people, and especially people of the Universities, gathering together and trying to see how these forces or this type of ideology can be countered.

We all talk of our rich cultural heritage. But there is a consistent effort to show as if there is only one strain in the cultural heritage. There is a consistent effort to deny all the other strains and influences which have made us what we are and we are no less mixed than perhaps any other people in the world. There has been a great deal of interchange of ideas between North and South India, between Dravidian culture and the North Indian culture. Similarly, in science, in music, in architecture, to name only a few, we have been influenced from Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, from the Arab countries and from Central Asia also. Amongst our own many of the things, which are common today, are things which have been invented or brought to us by people of different religions or different languages in the country. For instance, in U.P., Amir Khusro has perhaps made the greatest influence on the contemporary language which is spoken by the ordinary people. I must say that this has changed somewhat since the great onslaught of high-flown Hindi.

I think that teachers and students can be and should be the moulders

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Inaugural speech at the meeting of the Committee of Educationists and Student Leaders, New Delhi, January 16, 1970

of the intellectual climate of the country because now our quarrel, our fight is with certain ideas which have flowed and ideas can only be fought with other ideas and we hope they are better ideas.

Dr. Rao mentioned a scheme of having maps and studying other areas or other States. I was reminded when many years ago I visited a pioneer palace in the Soviet Union. One of the schemes they had was just like we have—a student from one State going to another State. But there they do not go just on a visit. Before they go, they divide up into groups which would study the mineralogy, the plant life, and the animal life. So, when they came back, between them they had a full picture of the whole area. Also, in doing so they had got involved with the people of that area who were interested in that subject. This always gives greater purpose to what one is doing. It gives a greater meaning if one does it with some purpose.

When we talk of being an Indian, I do not know what each person probably means. But I have been alarmed to see lately that many people confuse being Indian with being Victorian. This is, I remember, what our grandparents were, but the younger people today may not be so. When I was a very small girl, women of our family wore very short sleeves. But there were other people who said this was very un-Indian. But if you go inside Indian villages, you will find that nobody ever heard of long sleeves in their long history. Many of the ideas which came to us from the British, from Queen Victoria, King Edward or whoever it was, were very much mixed up in what people today think is being Indian. So that being Indian is something which is not at all superficial—as to what one wears, or how one does one's hair and what sort of beard one has or something like that. But it is something which is very much deeper. And here we are rather more fortunate, I think, than people in other countries, because the roots of our culture are so broad-based that basically they are quite modern also—not all of it, but much of it. The basic search for truth is timeless and will fit into any period.

Dr. Rao also mentioned textbooks. This is a very very important item because it is through textbooks that one forms the minds of young children. I must confess I saw textbooks two years ago; since then I have not seen any. I am told that, firstly, the standard is not always what it should be. Secondly, a lot of misinformation is given about other peoples, sometimes about other States and by other people—I mean even within our own country. There has also been an effort, right here in Delhi, I think, at re-writing some of our history. These are dangerous tendencies which we must look into. Without wishing to gag anybody, we must see that trends and tendencies which will weaken our unity, which will weaken our growing together, should not be allowed to gain strength.

Of course, unity at no time means regimentation because richness

of India is in its great diversity. And, I think, we should not keep false diversity. But if it is natural, it should be allowed to flower and grow in its own way.

There is another dangerous doctrine being preached that some people need to be Indianised. Actually, I did deal with this in the beginning in rather a general way. But I am just putting forth some ideas which need to be thought out. I must confess that I have no clear idea myself as to how people are going to meet this situation. I think it is only the younger people, who can give a lead out of their experiences in their colleges—how they feel, whether they feel there is integration between them and their colleagues speaking other languages, or from other States or of other religions, and even of the same religion if they belong to different castes. It is horrifying to know that even now in spite of our Constitution and so on, there is still a distinction made between Scheduled Castes and other Hindus. This is as important a part of integration as Hindu-Muslim or Hindu-Christian or Hindu-Sikh unity.

The Quest for Peace and Harmony

To come to Santiniketan is a pilgrimage. It is a place hallowed by the memory of a father and a son who sought to understand the meaning of life. Maharshi Debendranath chose Santiniketan as the haven of his meditation. To Gurudev Rabindranath, it was a symbol of fusion between contemplation and action, of the endeavour to find harmony in the increasing complexity of life and of civilisation returning to its roots—to the lap of rural life, enriching it and at the same time drawing life from the roots.

This familiar mango grove recalls memories of my student days here, perhaps the only relatively calm period in my life. At the approach of *Vasant*, we who were in Shree Bhavan had the delightful task of dyeing clothes for all Ashramites. Probably it is still so. Last month, as I travelled in the Gangetic Plain, I saw people wearing *Vasanti* (yellow) clothes in anticipation of Vasant Panchami. Their dress matched the brightness of the mustard flowers in wheat fields. I am partial to the colour and the day, for it was on that day that my parents were married.

Modern progress encroaches on nature. Tall trees and green fields give way to hideous buildings and man himself loses touch with his

Convocation address at Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, February 7, 1970

world and forgets that he is an intrinsic part of the nature around him. This was the harmony which Gurudev wished to reawaken.

Spring is the time and symbol of Nature's rebirth. Gurudev described it eloquently and often. A refrain recurrent in his writing is that of eternal renewal of Nature through Spring, life through youth, fresh impulses and new ideas. He continually invoked the *'Nuton Yuger Doot'*, the messenger of new age, which in fact he himself was.

Yesterday I had the privilege of visiting the birthplace of Raja Rammohun Roy, the first modern Indian and the progenitor of our renaissance. The path hewn by this pioneer was travelled by Gurudev and Jawaharlal Nehru. There is a spiritual kinship among the three. Sentinels of modernity, they themselves believed in the basic wisdom of the past and were proud of their heritage. This is why they endeavoured to make it an integral part of our daily lives by releasing it from the shroud of misinterpretation in which it had become enveloped. Their great love for and deep knowledge of the real and eternal India made them impatient with all that was superficial, non-essential and outmoded. They laboured actively to purge our society of its evil and injustice. They were rebels against superstition, ritual, caste and hierarchy. Gurudev wrote : "In her caste regulations India recognised differences, but not the mutability which is the law of life. In trying to avoid collisions she set up boundaries of immovable walls, thus giving to her numerous races the negative benefit of peace and order but not the positive opportunity of expansion and movement."

All three were intensely Indian, fervently patriotic. Yet they were universal men. A century and a half ago, Rammohun Roy wrote that all mankind is one great family of which the numerous nations and tribes are only various branches. In so saying he saw far beyond his time. It is only in our own age that a handful of thinkers and statesmen have dared to give shape to this idea. Gurudev constantly called on us to recognise the limitations of nationalism. And at the very moment India became free, Jawaharlal Nehru warned us : "Peace has been said to be indivisible, so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments."

This is the spirit in which we should approach modernity. As Dr. Radhakrishnan says : "The modernist in every creed is anxious to cling to the old that does not age, and so is prepared to give up the old that ages."

Around us we see an explosion of the pent-up desire for 'modernity'. Not only townsmen but villagers, who once lived in the backwaters, are today eager to join the stream. To them modernity holds out the promise of a new order, a release from the drabness of their lives. It

means the goods and comforts that new technology promises, a release from drudgery. Modernisation is more than technological change or industrialisation. It involves the development of our inner resources—of emotion and spirit no less than of material resources, in order to be able to meet the challenges of our fast changing times. Can we withstand the peril represented by nuclear weapons without the help of the methods of self-conquest taught by the great sages and philosophers?

As we talk of modernity, we are still held back by the shackles of old attitudes of mind and methods of work. Time is running out. Each new scientific discovery, each new technological advance widens the distance between the affluent countries and ourselves. Even though we may run with all our strength, it is but a crawl as compared to some others. Yet, in attempting to overtake the advanced countries, we must beware of repeating their avoidable mistakes.

Until very recently, progress was equated with the exploitation of natural resources. This psychology of the conquest of Nature has produced hollow men, blighted landscapes and polluted environment. In countries which are regarded as advanced, industrial fumes have eroded, in two or three generations, sculptures and paintings which had endured for centuries. The natural beauty and calm of many regions have been violated. Birds have disappeared. Fish have died in rivers and in the ocean. Many rivers have become sewers. In many cities the air that we breathe takes not oxygen but poison to the lungs. The West has woken up to this danger and is now trying to remedy the situation.

Change must come but we should ensure that while we progress our buildings are in harmony with their surroundings, that trees, hills and all things of beauty are disturbed as little as possible. We must ensure that every industrial unit is so controlled that it does not endanger the health of any being. Laws and regulations can and should be made, but the best and most effective law is the conscience and the vigilance of the citizen, his sensitivity to his surroundings and his concern for his future.

It is not surprising that the youth of the affluent countries have discovered for themselves the truth which our philosophers had proclaimed thousands of years ago that there can be desolation in the heart of prosperity, and that happiness is not in what one has but in what one is. In many of these countries the young and the sensitive are searching for a call of the spirit. Some of them are looking to the East even as our own young people are turning westward.

If harmony with Nature is essential, how much more so it is to live in harmony with oneself. Of all beings, man alone seems destined to be a generalist, to have an integrated all-round personality. Life is

one and over-flowing, each activity overlaps the other. One does not cease to learn outside of college hours. Games require as much concentration, tension and discipline as any work. One works best when one is relaxed. A part of us is awake in the deepest sleep and perhaps a part is asleep in our working hours. If I would give any advice, it is this : no matter what you do, however small or big the task, do it with joy and interest, seeking not for what you can get out of it but how much of yourself you can give to it.

Gurudev was a champion of the integrated personality. He spoke and wrote against fragmenting the soul. He founded Visva Bharati with the purpose of evolving a new pattern of education in which the mind and the hand and the heart are trained together and the Indian and the Universal are harmonised.

To be alive is an adventure. The moon whose beauties have been sung by poets through the ages has been found to be drab and dead. But our earth, so much maligned as dull and unimaginative has turned out to be the most beautiful of stars.

* * *

ONCE AGAIN WE meet in this famous *Amrakunj* at Santiniketan, established with such love and deep foresight by Gurudev. He meant it to be a Haven of Peace. But, I am sure that by Peace he did not mean that the student or the faculty of Santiniketan should be removed or isolated from the rest of the world. Indeed, the very fact that he called it Visva Bharati shows that he wanted it to be a meeting place of minds from all over the world.

We have just heard a very thought-provoking speech from our Chief Guest. I think that Gurudev did have such an education in mind that the young men and women who came to study and live in Santiniketan should not only acquire knowledge but should learn to know the world around them, should learn to be in harmony with the world. We all know that nothing in the world is static and even this beautiful place—this Haven of Peace—is invaded by outside influences. But change can be controlled and directed and I hope that those who live here, those who have studied or are studying here, will try to look at change not as an enemy or an intruder but as a friend with whom one has to walk along and which one should learn to direct in the right direction.

There is a crisis in education in India and in the world, but it is part of a deeper crisis—a crisis of man himself, of the civilization which man has made for himself. The crisis has come about because

Convocation address at the Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, February 2, 1971

vast ideas have come out of the mind of this small being, man. He has created knowledge. He has explored the world and assumed tremendous powers over Nature around him. But, it has been a one-sided progress, for with it he has not learnt the other qualities which would balance this power and this increasing knowledge; and this is what we expect from our universities and other teaching institutions of today.

The young people should achieve this harmony that they should have not a peace which is lifeless, but a peace which is creative and productive, a peace which gives harmony within oneself, which gives one the energy and courage to deal with the many problems that arise all around us and that must arise as the world goes ahead. There is no time which has been without problems and there will be no time which will be without problems. Sometimes it is the same problem in different guises and shapes, sometimes they are new problems; but while there is life, there will be problems and difficulties. So, our education must prepare our young people to meet these problems, to find new answers and to adjust themselves to changing circumstances.

There has always been change, but, there are times when the change is far more complete, far more drastic than before. There had been times of natural disaster when a whole species was wiped out and the world seemed to have begun anew. Today, change is not due to natural calamity, but due to man's own ingenuity. Therefore, the answer must also be found in the mind of man. This is what we must all seek to do. There is no given answer, there is no universal answer which will meet these points. It is only by seeking together that it can be found. And I believe, as our Chief Guest has said, as our ancient philosophy says and as many of our great men have said that this answer cannot come through violence, because violence is destructive. Violence seeks to change, but in the method, sometimes, we forget the end and the goal. So, we have to see that the world of technology —the world of science—is in harmony with the sort of life which we want for ourselves and for future generations.

Santiniketan was never out of touch with the world, yet it was equally deeply in touch with the Adivasis and the people who lived around it. When I had the great privilege of being here, I did see Santiniketan as Gurudev had made it. But, even then we know that with all the beautiful poetry which he wrote with his concern and love for Nature and beauty, Gurudev himself was a revolutionary. He brought about a revolution in education. He had many revolutionary thoughts and he was deeply concerned with the basic problems of India, of India's freedom, of India's economic progress. So, he showed how there could be harmony with these in the different aspects of a person. This is the harmony which we must try to achieve today.

I am specially glad that my old teacher, Shri Surendra Nath Kar

has been given a posthumous Degree. I am sorry that it was not done in his life-time. But, these are some of the men who have made Santiniketan what it is and in spite of the changes we still see a greater peace here than in many places in the world. So, let us try to keep that peace without giving up the changes which are inevitable. Let us try not to mould the peace but to so mould the changes that they do not disrupt the peace.

I should like to give the *Snatakas* and the students all my good wishes for their future. They are on the threshold of a new life—a life that will not be easy. But I want to tell them that nothing that is worthwhile is ever easy. If you get anything quickly or cheaply you will soon find that something in it is missing. All the worthwhile things of life, whether Freedom or Equality or Fraternity, all these things have been fought for in the world by sweat, by tears and even by blood.

Our way has been the peaceful way. But it does not mean that it is an easier way. It is still a way of service and of sacrifice. I want to say also, as one Chinese philosopher has said, that luck is not something which comes from outside. One has to have the personality and the character to attract luck, and the courage to hold it. So, to each of you I wish not that you be sheltered from danger, as Gurudev said, but to have the courage and the strength to face the dangers and difficulties of life and always to come out triumphant because you stand for what is right and what is good.

Developing a Broader Outlook

THE VERY NAME of Ujjain conjures up images of this great city described in our annals, and the racial memories and legends of our people. Ujjain is one of the seven ancient cities of our great land. It is a cradle of heroes like Vikramaditya. Kalidasa has sung its praise. It has been a city of empires, a fountain of culture and a centre of commerce. Our classical literature celebrates the magnificence of its mansions, the grace of its women, the beauty of its gardens, the resourcefulness of its merchant princes, and the wisdom of its scholars. One recalls the famous viceroy of Ujjain who later became Emperor Asoka.

Time is not static and our ancient glory slipped into oblivion. One of the main reasons for our decline is that our people developed

Free translation of convocation address in Hindi at Vikram University, Ujjain, February 10, 1970

a feeling that they knew all that needed to be known. The famous Arab chronicler, Al Beruni, remarked a thousand years ago that the scholars of India thought that they had nothing more to learn and built walls around themselves. It is this attitude of mind that made our people powerless to resist new invaders. History tells us that a people perish if they shut their eyes to new knowledge and are slow to learn. This is what happened in our country.

While we stood still for centuries, other countries which had less rigid social customs and greater social mobility, made progress because all sections of the population, irrespective of class or caste, made a creative contribution to the nation's well-being. A distinguished scientist has observed that the Industrial Revolution of Britain and other European countries was largely the work of the sons of artisans and craftsmen. The artisans became technological innovators. From them arose scientists and philosophers. But in our country, the rigid social system confined artisans to their own caste and kept education beyond their reach. The custodians of ancient lore were content to repeat old knowledge.

In my childhood when the freedom movement was at its peak, one of the songs that were sung during *prabhat pheris* began with the refrain : "Awake, it is dawn, Gandhi is beckoning us". This is what indeed Gandhiji did. He took the concepts of truth and non-violence, which are found in all religions, and moulded them into weapons for revolution. He himself mobilised the illiterate as well as literate in towns and villages and built up a mass movement out of them. He shook the people out of their apathy and resignation and convinced them that their destiny and the country's freedom depended on themselves. He spoke the language of religion, of truth and moral and spiritual strength. But he fought all his life against dogma and superstition which had led to downfall of our society.

Gandhiji said that after he had gone, Jawaharlal Nehru would speak his language. Nehru too was inspired by the spiritual quest and discoveries of ancient India. Thousands of years ago Gautama Buddha said : "No decision is possible for me on the strength of others' words". He encouraged people to think for themselves and welcomed the spirit of inquiry. Swami Vivakananda also propagated this very message. This is the true spirit of science. Jawaharlal Nehru believed that it was through this attitude and the wide application of science that India could be redeemed from poverty and feudal slavery. Thus alone could India attain spiritual and intellectual freedom. Political independence was but the first step towards this objective.

All around us in the country there are hundreds and thousands of visible signs of the progress that we have made since Independence—new townships, new projects, new plants, which my father called "temples of the new age". There are impressive statistics of the pro-

gress achieved in various sectors of our economy. But the most remarkable of them in my opinion is the new sense of confidence which we find in all segments of our society. Only recently an eminent monk of the Ramakrishna Mission said that although people were disappointed with the country's achievements, if Swami Vivekananda had been alive today he would have felt exhilarated because his main dissatisfaction with the people of India was that they lacked the spark of life. The restlessness which we see around us is but an expression of the new urge in our people and their conviction that change is possible and can be brought about. There is impatience and a feeling that change is not taking place fast enough.

There is tension and conflict all over the world. Basically it is a conflict between the forces of *status quo* and the forces of change. People hesitate to go deep into issues and problems and tend to blame others and find scapegoats for all that goes wrong in our social, political and economic life. Development, progress and change are bound to create ever new problems, and their solution demands new attitudes of mind and new methods of work. Some are able to realise this and move with the times. But others are unable to break away from the past and cling to the old order. This is the main reason for conflicts which have developed in these 22 years after Independence. These situations which have arisen, and many more which will arise, can only be met with creative imagination, a sense of adventure and patriotism.

These forces are found in every political party and each is doing a heart-searching. This may or may not lead to the polarisation of which one hears so much. But there is no doubt that the forces of reaction, whether they are religious or economic, tend to attract one another. it is too early to predict that kind of real alignments might take place within each party. But it is of importance to ensure that standards of political life do not fall and that democratic and constitutional methods of action will always prevail.

The transformation of the countries of Europe from feudal to modern economies took two centuries to complete. In our country this change is being compressed into two generations. Ours is a vast country. Many of our provinces are as large in size as the sovereign countries of Europe. Our population, which is already huge, is steadily growing. The state of our economic progress is such that while on the one side we still see flickering earthen lamps, on the other we have nuclear power houses. The traditional nature of our society and the old and new disparities make our task more complex. Many of our States, including Madhya Pradesh, are composed of regions which until recently were at different stages of political development and did not have the same level of economic infrastructure. Integrating them into a general pattern takes time. Throughout the country, far-reaching economic, social and political changes are taking place all at once.

The most practical politics for us should be development. But for economic progress it is essential to have a forward-looking society in which people are involved in the developmental process and know that their future depends upon their own effort.

As you step out into life as earners and workers, in these difficult days, it is natural that some of your expectations may not materialise. The prosperity of our nation is yet to be built and you are its builders. Consider yourselves agents and instruments of change. National welfare is something to which you should contribute, not something from which you can draw. It is through your faith and your determination that you can secure your own future and that of Malwa, of Madhya Pradesh, and of India.

Those who have the privilege of education have a special responsibility. Universities should not be passive workshops turning out people who are concerned merely with their own well-being, unrelated to that of the country and the world. Often the protests of our students seem to be pointless and they do not show any evidence of deep thinking over problems. All over the world, there is a crisis of civilisation. When man is finding the earth itself too small to contain the power of his mind, he should not allow himself to be imprisoned by small loyalties and narrow perspectives. In Europe and America, young people are making an impact far beyond university circles. Our universities also should be centres of intellectual speculation and creativity and leaders of new ideas. Our young people should give deep thought to fundamental values and the larger issues which we face as Indians and as human beings.

It is Vasant Panchami today. Winter ends and the spring begins. Trees and plants prune themselves of what is old and unwanted and sprout with new life. This is the law of nature. Nations too, if they obey the same law and imbibe new ideas and new thoughts, will always remain youthful and march along the road to progress. I hope you will always keep alive in you the sense of constant renewal and creativity. My good wishes to all of you for a bright future.

Zeal for Social Work

THE ACTIVITIES of social welfare organisations have expanded tremendously. Today, the grants are much larger. With every plan, we are spending more and more money and there are many more whole-time

Inaugural speech at the conference of Chairmen of State Social Welfare Advisory Boards, New Delhi, February 17, 1970

workers in the welfare field today. But I do have a feeling that as outlays increase and programmes expand, the passion and the feeling of personal involvement have gone out of the work.

Madam Chairman did mention about missionary zeal which I also strongly feel missing today. I speak not merely of the Board but of the entire field of social work. And the voluntary effort as such seems to be diminishing somewhat.

It does happen that when ideas become institutionalised, a certain matter-of-factness comes in. This is human nature. But the entire function of social work has been to combat the consequences of insensitiveness and cynicism that is often dismissed as human nature. I know that it is not always possible to continue working for causes with the missionary zeal with which they were begun, but with better organisation, they should give better appreciation, rationalisation and, therefore, a better solution of the existing problems.

In the last few months, we have celebrated the centenaries of some of our greatest social revolutionaries—Mahatma Gandhi, Thakkar Bapa and others. A couple of weeks ago, when a letter came from the Seva Sadan Society of Poona about its golden jubilee, I was also reminded of the pioneering work done by G. K. Deodhar for the education and self-employment of women. We can re-learn much from these pioneers. The most important aspect is that they did not treat the ordinary as ordinary. They did not accept the *status quo* as justified. Their entire lives were spent on changing the settled order.

So we should not be content with grants but think always of the purpose behind this activity which is bringing about social change. The Board is only an instrument of social transformation.

Because of our engrossment with politics and economic activity we are not giving enough thought to well-directed and purposive social change. But change is coming about on its own because of our own development as well as the world events which constantly impinge on our own life and society. Our bright and educated young men and women are tuned to the world, and what happens elsewhere touches us also. But it is not enough for change to come about in this manner, merely as a by-product. We have problems enough of our own which are special to our experience and these cannot be overcome unless we specially apply our minds and our energies to them.

One example, even though it does not directly come under the purview of the Board is the importance of curbing social waste. Extravagance at weddings and feasts, instead of dwindling, is growing. The beneficiaries of development want to impress others with their own success. The protest against the dowry, which used to be such a live topic in earlier days, has receded to the background even though the evil itself is very much alive.

There are laws against untouchability but quiet breath of them

continues in many places. People cannot leave it to the Government to take action. It is they themselves who should take action particularly in the field of social welfare. The Government initiative alone is not enough. The people and the Government must strengthen each other's hands and act in the fullest co-ordination.

Apart from administering programmes, social welfare organisations must also devote their attention to combating superstitions and bringing about a rational attitude. Social service organisations can also do much to popularise scientific thinking in regard to matters of daily life. As a people we need pay far greater attention to health and education. This involves creating a right environment, habits and social outlook so that we can ensure for ourselves and our neighbourhood proper sanitation, better nutrition and health. We have rather lopsided attitude towards cleanliness. We sweep the house but push the dirt just outside the door-step. We may bathe everyday but we do not seem to care if the streets are filthy. In big cities, even in areas where educated and well-to-do people live, there is dirt but nobody seems to be concerned about it. Here is work cut out for women's organisations and social welfare institutions.

It is most essential for social welfare institutions to co-ordinate their efforts to improve the entire localities and areas. Closer co-ordination is equally important for Government Departments and for those who work in the fields of education, health, family planning and so on.

I am glad to hear that you are now giving more rural bias to your work. The standard of living of the country can rise and the various problems which we face today can be solved only to the extent to which we can change the rural life and make it more livable and more attractive for the young villagers.

While 80 per cent of our population is still in rural areas, 68 per cent of doctors are serving the cities. This is a fact which we all know but we need to be reminded of it from time to time. How long this state of affairs can continue ? How long can we expect the people in the villages and other under-privileged sections to be satisfied with this state of affairs ? It is for us to make the India of our dreams *i.e.* an India which is run with the consent of the people. If we want this it is essential that the people themselves should reorient their thinking and give far greater attention to the problems of the rural population.

I believe that this can be done but it can be done only through the sincere, dedicated effort of workers such as you who are concerned with the problems of the people and the various types of handicaps—physical handicaps, mental handicaps, social and economic handicaps—which are faced by so many people.

You have undertaken many laudable programmes. I do not wish to speak about them here because you will discuss them later. You

are fully qualified and experienced to do so and find out what is wrong, what more is to be done, and how the programme can be improved. All I want to say is that each programme must be seen in the larger perspective of this great problem which faces us as a country and our future depends upon the right solution of this problem.

The Social Welfare Board itself is an example of something which has not been attempted in other countries. The Board should, therefore, be more than a mere grant giving and inspecting organisation and should think constantly of new initiatives and new directions which would benefit the country.

I should like to extend my good wishes to the Chairman and Members of the Central and State Welfare Boards and for the work which lies ahead of them.

Removing Social Disabilities

I AM GLAD that this debate has taken place and also that we were able to extend the time for it so that many more of our friends could express their views. It is a subject of very special concern to us all, because we know that so much still has to be done to remove the social disabilities from which our brothers and sisters of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes are suffering.

There are many reasons for this, but the most patent reason is our traditional attitudes which have been ingrained over many centuries, and which we must now all endeavour to change. There is much that the Government can do and which it is trying to do, but we must understand that this change simply cannot happen merely by governmental order. What we need is a major social upheaval. We believe that all such changes and upheavals must be through the consent of the people and through peaceful means. That is why I welcome this debate because to have the co-operation of the different parties in creating the right atmosphere in our villages and cities is a very important part taken up as a programme which is of national importance to all political parties, to all non-political people and to all individuals. But we all know that social changes especially of such nature of habits which have become a part of many people's daily lives will be slow to achieve and also painful to achieve.

The legislative framework and political institutions we have provided can only influence the pace and direction of change, but by themselves

Intervening in debate in Lok Sabha on Report of the Committee on Untouchability, Economic and Educational Development of the Scheduled Castes, September 4, 1970

they cannot consummate. That is something for us to take up outside this House. We must bend all our energies to accelerate the progress and suggest every possible kind of improvement in our existing approach and take all necessary steps. At the same time we must not allow this legitimate anxiety to cloud the significant progress which has already been made. The progress is significant in relation to what the situation was when we began. It is not significant if you consider what the situation should be. I am using the word 'significant' in that context.

The advance in education has been considerable. We know it is not enough. I fully appreciate the remarks made by the Hon. Member who spoke before me, that there are still many difficulties which boys from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes find in getting jobs, and even in getting the right kind of education. I think that apart from ensuring that they get education, we must also ensure that those who are the most talented should have special opportunities, whether of tuition or of special training or whatever will help them to attain the standard, because I believe that if any of them are below standard, it is not because of any inherent weakness, but because their talents and capabilities have not been given the opportunity to blossom. That opportunity we must do our best to provide.

I spoke of advance in education. As the House perhaps knows, over 91 lakh pre-matric and about 12 lakh post-matric scholarships have been given to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes members.

This year 1.88 lakh more post-matric scholarships will be given. There has been criticism in this debate of the rate of post-matric scholarships and that this has not been increased and also that the upper limit of the means test for Scheduled Castes has not been raised. Hon. Members know that there is no means test for the Scheduled Tribes. The value of scholarships for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes compares favourably with the rate of the Education Ministry's national merit scholarship scheme. Thus those students who receive the scholarships are equated with meritorious students from the general population. It is only because financial resources are so limited that it seems preferable to give scholarships to as many students as possible rather than to restrict the number of scholarships because of an increase in their value.

There has been a matter of great shame to us all. I refer to the atrocities that take place from time to time. I do not know whether they were taking place before and it is only that more of them come to notice now; I do not know whether even now all of them come to notice. But whatever it is, the situation is a shameful one. It is one in which the Government should take every precaution to see that such things do not happen, and if they do, to take the strictest measures to see that those who are guilty receive strict and severe punishment.

Perhaps Hon. Members will remember that when we took up the question of communal harmony in the National Integration Council, we included the question of the Harijans and the Scheduled Tribes along with it; that is, that all the measures that were to be taken for communal harmony should extend to this section also with regard to discrimination against any member of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, not only with regard to jobs and so on but also with regard to security of life and belongings.

A suggestion has been made about the imposing of fines. This question has been discussed with regard to the communal situation. Opinion is very much divided. Certainly the question can be considered and the suggestion should be considered.

We know that the bulk of the landless are from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and that is why it is important that we should expedite all our measures for land reform. But I would like to say only one thing to my Hon. friends that sometimes in their desire to have land, they cast an eye on our forests, and, much as I should like the landless to have land, it is very important for the country also to have a certain amount of forest land, and we must keep this in view. In the distribution of land, this aspect should be kept in view that a minimum amount of forest which is necessary should be left for trees and wild life otherwise our rainfall and climate will be affected and ultimately the population will also be affected.

This problem is not merely one that concerns the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It is a prob'em which concerns the entire nation and all communities.

Housing is extremely important. We have taken up this also, and I hope something can be done in this matter. We are trying, we are looking into the matter of house sites. I do not know whether everybody can be provided, but certainly a beginning can be and should be made in this respect.

It is not fair to make allegations against any particular person. I feel that this is a matter not only of concern and of deep regret, but I have no hesitation in saying that such attacks (on Harijans) are deplorable and shameful, and it is the duty of the State Governments, the Central Government and also all political parties and the residents of each of the areas where such things take place, to be vigilant to see that such feelings do not grow, and where they find some such feelings, whether due to caste or other reasons, they must immediately draw the attention of the authorities, and we on our part, should see that the police and also the people are ever vigilant, and that they also feel involved and care about these matters. I do not want to make a general remark or to blame anybody, but it is true that when caste feelings exist in society, they also infiltrate in some of the people who are in charge. It should be our endeavour and our duty, to see that such

feelings are wiped out from the minds of Indian citizens. Only then can we enable all the Indian people to enjoy the rights and privileges which freedom has given them.

I am only making a brief intervention to express my concern in this matter. The Minister will deal with all the specific points which are being raised. I should only like to take this opportunity to pledge once again my unceasing attention and effort for this important cause to see that we achieve our ideal of equality in our country.

Integrated Approach to Problems

I AM GLAD to have this opportunity to be with you and to know something of the activities which are taking place in the sphere of social welfare in all our States. Perhaps, it is understandable that this occasion should be used to ask for more money. I am fully conscious of the fact that the funds provided for social welfare are inadequate and, in fact, I would say that the funds provided for the entire Ministry of Education are hopelessly inadequate for the job we have to undertake.

We know the deficiencies and it hardly needs a conference to know this all over again, if I can put it that way. We all have to accept the fact that our total resources are extremely limited and the demands on them are very great, especially at this moment when we face a special problem on our borders and a very heavy burden of expenditure of about 32 lakhs of people has to be borne by us. So, no matter how we spread out the resources we have, what ingenuity we use, these are not going to increase until our national wealth as such increases by several hundred per cent.

We have to look at the problem of social welfare in this context. In a sense, the entire population of India is under-privileged when you compare it—except for a very few people—with the population of many other countries. Nevertheless, even then we have to have certain priorities and we have to see that those who have been the most oppressed, who have suffered from injustice, should be helped to come up to the level of the rest of the population. It is necessary, of course, to have organisations. In the short time that I have been here, I have heard mention of some child welfare institutions, widow homes, homes for women and so on. But this is a very small part of social welfare.

Speech at conference of State Ministers of Backward Classes and Social Welfare, New Delhi, May 21, 1971

Social welfare has to be seen in the wider context of how we help our people to achieve a better life. Within that, of course, there are the categories of the destitutes; there is the problem of beggars; there is the problem of handicapped people and of children—both normal and physically or mentally handicapped. Government has to deal with these problems and we must try to encourage voluntary effort also. But we must not do these things merely to be able to say that we have so many institutions, or there are so many children or women or elderly people in each institution. What we should do is to find out the results of the work done there and how these works have improved the life of a certain number of people.

There was also mention of Remand Homes. I can say from personal experience that many of the Remand Homes, instead of curing our children, inculcate habits in them which give rise to tendencies which are far from healthy. We really need to give a very deep and new look to the whole question of social welfare.

So far as child welfare is concerned, thinking in the whole world has changed entirely in the last ten years but our organisations are still based on the British institutions which existed over a hundred years ago. You will not find such institutions today in any progressive country of the world, but we are continuing the same pattern. The money spent on this is not only wasted but, I think, is producing actively harmful results on some children. So, I would have hoped that in a conference like this, the discussions would have been on basic matters. Only when we decide about the direction we want to proceed, we can measure whether we are going fast enough for dealing with the question sufficiently in depth.

I am one of those who believe that no problem can be dealt with in isolation. Each problem, each part of life is linked up with the other parts. Each part acts and reacts on the other so that when we look at social welfare we have to look again at the country as a whole and the difficulties facing the country. These difficulties are shared by the vast majority of the population. It is not a small minority which is in need of help; it is the vast majority. It is true that you are not concerned with that major problem. You are concerned with the weaker sections of the society, whether they are Scheduled Castes and Tribes, whether they are certain children or certain other categories in need of help. That is why even though our resources are limited, we are devoting a part of them for social welfare programmes.

I spoke just now of deciding on directions. If you consider the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, certainly education is very important for them but one of the major problems with which they are concerned is land. Land reform is not your business but you cannot really solve their problem unless you consider what has to be done about the land problem. We have a certain programme but we

do find that there is considerable resistance whenever the question of land reform comes up. We must see that a more positive attitude is taken in this direction and we must persuade all the States to go ahead with land reform programmes because otherwise we cannot convince these people that we are earnest about their welfare or their problems.

Then there are other ways of helping, For instance, there are Harijan or tribal skills. I do not know if there are any programmes to encourage these skills and to introduce new designs in those in order to make them more saleable in today's contemporary market or whether we are making an effort in each area to see how the earnings of the local people belonging to those sections can be augmented. I am convinced that there is no part of India where some livelihood cannot be found locally without large investment. In one or two cases, where I have gone into this matter personally, especially during the drought in Bihar, we were able to find things not only for local sales but also for export. For instance, the *Madhubani* paintings practised by the women of the area on the walls of their mud-huts. This has become one of our good exports. Some women without any extra tuition and without any great investment have now produced these paintings on paper, on canvas and on wood instead of on the walls. This has a good market abroad. Similarly, with a little imagination and research, different types of grasses and plants which grow in the countryside, can be a source of livelihood for the inhabitants of the area and can open the windows of the world to these isolated communities. I would like to suggest to all those who are concerned with social welfare to give some thought to this matter.

Similarly, I think it is necessary to have certain inter-disciplinary groups, perhaps drawn from local universities or from the Central and State Governments, which could study the difficulties encountered by these different groups and help us to have a better appreciation. Sometimes the administration does not have the resilience which an outside group might have in dealing with the same problem.

I am personally very much against the segregation of the Scheduled Tribes or the Scheduled Castes from the rest of our people and, I think, the sooner we end this question of having separate hostels for them, the better it would be. The way we have been proceeding is wrong; it tends to create complexes rather than solve any questions.

Another matter for concern is the danger of making backwardness a vested interest. We have hoped that gradually this word would go out of our vocabulary, because the whole purpose of social welfare, the whole purpose of having these special programmes was that those who have not had the opportunity for education or employment or good training, would get some opportunities and move out of this group of backwardness. But we find that today more and more people

are wanting to be listed as backward. Many times it is jocularly said that soon everybody will be backward, so there will be no question of any special programmes. It is, if I may say so, a backward-looking approach and we must see that we help people to get out of this mentality so that each group is enabled to stand on its own feet. Of course, that help is not, as I said, merely because they feel that by being called backward they can get the sort of facilities that would not otherwise be available. This happens because of limited resources; otherwise we would say that all those who need help should be helped and there would be no question of caste or any other such division. I am only mentioning that instead of getting out of this situation, we seem to be getting more and more involved in it.

A suggestion that was made—I do not know how practical it is—is that in the tribal belt, we should encourage tribal labour co-operatives for forest-based or other industries and cut out the middle-men, because much of what the tribal people earn is taken away by these middlemen.

I spoke of preferential job opportunities for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Certain provisions exist in our Constitution and in our rules but we do not often help these people to enable them to use these opportunities. We have often heard of cases when a person of Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, who has done well in his written examination, goes for interview and does not do so well and, therefore, he is not taken. Instead of letting the matter rest, I think this should be pursued. Why is he not taken? Something is wanting. Maybe, it is a certain polish; it may be a matter of presentation. If this is the case, it is not something that is difficult to learn or to acquire. But provision has to be made. I think that money spent on this is well worth it because it would really enable the person to compete as an equal with others, because otherwise there is a kind of constant tug-of-war. I personally feel that merit will not be sacrified if we give a little extra thoughtful and imaginative approach to this question, and if we could provide—depending on the job that is wanted—the sort of opportunity which people who are able to go to better schools or who come from a better economic part of the society have. Things which they know automatically can be taught just as in Europe. At one time there was such a thing as finishing schools for girls. You finish your education and then you acquire certain things which, they feel, it is necessary to know in order to get on in the society. I am not saying that we should have that sort of finishing schools but there may be something else to cope with this aspect. I think this aspect needs to be discussed and given some thought.

The Minister tells me that it is one of the new schools to give private tuition. I do not know whether you need private tuition or whether it cannot be built-in in the schools. For instance, many years

ago, before the Second World War, I went to the main Bata Factory in Czechoslovakia. This was a town that produced everything that the workers needed. In fact, it was almost like a very big prison because workers had to buy there and they could not even go out of this area. It was a very big area but there in the schools the authorities followed each child's progress and if they felt that a particular child would be a good salesman abroad then he was started on with foreign languages straightway. Of course our number is very great but, I think, a little bit of personal attention in the schools to these children and a little bit of help from outside voluntary bodies would go a long way in facilitating matters. For the two to be combined, I do not think the problem is too big to be tackled.

I have seen from some papers after coming here that hardly any State has reached its quota so far as the reservation of posts is concerned. I am sure that a little more effort on our part would help us do better.

The other point I was making was about the funds. I am told that 14 or 15 States have not been able to spend the amount allotted to them, or made much headway in the nutrition programme, either in the urban or the tribal areas. This is a very sad state of affairs because nutrition is the most important, even more important than education, because if you do not have the proper nutrition, you cannot make proper use of education. So, if we are going to fail on this basic programme then it does not make much difference even if we make up in others. That is why the Government is giving such importance to this.

We have to view this problem in the context of the fate of millions of our people all over the country and to give them a feeling that each one is involved with all these problems. I was addressing the trade union leaders yesterday. Now here is a very organised group, who fought for their own rights. I am a believer in trade union rights and I think it is legitimate that they should fight for their rights. But we have to view this problem as they are already employed, well employed. We have a vast number of people who are unemployed or underemployed. We have a vast number of people in rural areas who are not organised and who cannot voice their difficulties and their grievances. So we must see these problems as part of the whole and create that sort of atmosphere, whether it is amongst one group or another. For instance, there is a feeling that only perhaps a member of the Scheduled Castes will look after the interests of the Scheduled Castes. Now this is a very wrong feeling. It is up to us to prove that all of us are equally concerned with that problem as well as all the other important problems which the country faces.

Similarly, each State thinks in terms of what the State needs, without caring to find how it fits into the needs of the country as a

whole. And that is the importance of a conference of this type. When we exchange views, experiences and difficulties, we get the whole picture of the country and we should be able to find whether our separate work is leading to a raising of standards in the country as a whole—not merely in one State, and that it should be a far more united, concerted and determined effort.

Some mention was made of the Social Welfare Board. Unfortunately, I have not been able to be in close touch with it as I was in earlier days, but the whole purpose of the Board when it first came into being was to help the voluntary bodies who had been in the field of social welfare work to start such programmes where they did not exist, and especially to encourage the village community to be interested in such programmes. I do not know if this programme is being pursued. It would be a pity if it is allowed to weaken or to lapse because ultimately this responsibility must be taken by local communities. The Government can help and must help but it should help as far as possible through local communities.

The Minister has a hard task in front of him and he will need all the help he can get from all of you in this process of rethinking, trying to modernise our programmes and bring them up-to-date with the new knowledge of psychology and so on which exists in the world today. Otherwise we will be spending money but not getting the return which we should and, more important, which the people of this country should.

I have said earlier that I am very much against the type of Remand Homes which we have today. There may be some which are good, but on the whole a child needs a very delicate handling, a great deal of love and understanding. We should see him as if he was our own child. Somebody said, quite long ago, that there was no problem child. There are only problem parents or problem society. It is because of the attitude of the society or the parents that a particular child goes wrong. In India it may be due to extreme poverty, which is not the fault of the parents or of the child. I was horrified to learn that in Calcutta, some years ago, a child who had stolen a bicycle was given one year's rigorous imprisonment by the court when just the week before in the same city somebody who, I think did commit a big crime was given only three months' imprisonment because he was a big person. The two news items appeared side by side in a newspaper. Well, I decided to follow it up. I wrote to the brother of the boy and found that the boy had stolen the cycle because his mother had TB and they could not get the medicine and he had said that he would return it provided he could get some money. So, we must somehow create an atmosphere, so that, whether they are judges or lawyers or anybody else, the whole problem is viewed with far greater understanding. Here you are treating human beings and your attitude is much more important

than the money you spend or anything else you may do. Although, unfortunately, the Social Welfare Department is not being considered at par with some of the bigger ones, I think it is one of the most important and vital to the country because it is concerned with creating the right type of citizens. If you can do this basic thing then only can you succeed in any other social or economic programme which you want to undertake.

I hope that, apart from considering the question of money and homes and the buildings and all that, you will give time and thought to some of these basic matters so that we can use what little money we have to far greater advantage, reach more people and do greater service to them.

The Minister wants me to say something about nutrition programme which is now being given a very high priority. For the present Rs. 10 crores have been allotted and we now propose to cover children in the zero to six years age-group as opposed to zero to three in the last year. Expectant and nursing mothers will also be included in this programme. *This again is one of those basic programmes because it is only when* you have good health that you can have an alert mind and can take advantage of the various things that happen.

I talked earlier of imagination and would like to give an instance from personal experience on this. Some of our programmes are made regardless of the needs of a particular place. When the Central Social Welfare Board was first formed—I was one of the founder-members—a rule was made that each area would be given a jeep for the workers to go round. I was asked to give a report on some of the Northern States. When I arrived in Himachal Pradesh—of course, this was many years ago when there were few roads and most of my trips had to be done on foot—the Gram Sevika asked me whether she could be allotted a mule to carry her bedding, etc. This request was sent to the Centre and from here reply was sent to her that she could have a jeep in spite of my pleading that the mule would cost very much less than a jeep. She had even said that if she could not be given a mule, the payment for a coolie was sufficient provided somebody could carry the bedding. But she was told that she could either have a jeep or nothing and in actual effect nothing was given and the work was greatly hampered because it was exceedingly difficult for the woman to carry the load on a hilly terrain. The first trip of mine involved 12 miles a day and certainly I could not carry beddings, etc. This is one of the extreme examples but many such examples come to notice every now and then. I think you must have enough flexibility to see whether the rules you make are serving the purpose for which they are made. Sometimes rules may be very good for Delhi or Calcutta but may not help us in the hilly areas or tribal areas.

I have mentioned these things that have come to my mind. There are thousands which your workers could tell you about. I think, their

difficulties should be considered and some way found because otherwise the workers get disheartened, and if the workers are disheartened, then whether you have the money or the right programme, it does not give the right results.

I want to give you my good wishes. I hope as a result of this meeting you will all go back with renewed energy, determination and try to tackle this problem with a new spirit.

At Oxford University

I AM DEEPLY moved by this solemn ceremony. Oxford is one of the most famous centres of learning. I thank you for this great honour.

Returning to the quiet and beauty of Oxford and hearing your stately Latin words, one cannot help thinking back. Mine was a highly idealistic generation—or did it seem so because of the people with whom I moved? It was the time when Japan attacked China. There was Civil War in Spain. Fascism and Nazism were on the rise. In countries of Asia and Africa, people were struggling for freedom. And we, my friends and I, argued the issues back and forth, far into the night. How passionately concerned we felt, poised for the ultimate sacrifice, innocent in our belief that the good was awaiting our call and our effort, and that democratic freedom, could it but be won, was the gateway to an enriched life for all peoples. We considered progress to be integral to a dynamic society. Our dissent was clearly defined and focussed around the forces of colonialism and totalitarian oppression. For all the uncertainty of the times, we were confident in our capacity and in our direction.

The war is over long ago. Freedom has been won by many countries. Science has achieved marvels beyond imagination and has paved the way for new resources of energy. Technology has brought unthought of comfort, speed, increased and more varied production. No one need fear hunger or want. No country need fight for limited goods. Yet, over vast areas of the world, poverty persists, Societies which are affluent are shaken by restlessness. Today, there is far greater stability and more opportunity, yet never have the young felt more insecure.

Young voices continue to be raised in dissent, but their dissent is no longer rooted in a forward-looking confidence. It seems to arise out of anguish and despair.

Address at Oxford University on conferment on her of the Degree of Doctor of Civil Laws, *Honoris Causa*, November 2, 1971

Not unnaturally, we in India were fascinated by the achievements of the West and adopted their techniques as a means of achieving more equitable balance in our society. Technology has indeed helped us to double our agricultural, and treble our industrial production. At the same time, it has created new problems and has exerted pressures which have further complicated existing problems. Jobs and opportunities have increased but have not been able to keep pace with the growing number of the educated, and the villagers who can no longer be satisfied with the rural ambience.

Last year I visited one of our rural universities. Eighty-five per cent of the students were those whose parents had not been to school. When a centuries-old tradition is fractured, and elements of choice are introduced, there is bound to be dislocation of the human personality. This is one of the reasons for the feeling of inadequacy among our young people and it has led to imitative tendencies and a sense of alienation.

In the last three decades, the young mind all over the world has been freed from centuries of oppression and authoritarian attitudes, from conventional morality and traditions. Paradoxically, the very forces unleashed by freedom and by technological progress have generated problems of enormous complexity. Man's relationships—to man, to Nature and to the Universe—are under tremendous pressure. The structures of the new technology and the energies unleashed are threatening the survival of man and our Earth as we know them and which we have so long taken for granted. Unless far greater care is taken and preventive and corrective action is forthcoming, there will be growing danger to man's physical and mental health and to his integrity and freedom.

The urge for more and better goods has led to the dehumanisation of the processes of production. Man is no longer regarded as an individual but as part of the machine, a producer and a consumer. Legal institutions are guardians of the *status quo*. Despite advances in education, the student is educated and moulded for society as it is. There is no looking forward to or preparing for the ideal society, one with justice, brotherhood and generosity. Little by little, the machine has liberated man from physical constraints but it has enslaved him in abstract ones. Everyone realises that change is inevitable and that the pace of change is accelerating. Obviously, today's institutions need flexibility to meet this constant challenge of change, but those who are in a position to ease the transformation are afraid to question the old order and its structures. Even new institutions lose no time in putting down roots and create vested interests which are difficult to dislodge. In a world of expanding potentialities and aspirations, any institution or organisation which has become static is bound to lose contact with the human dimension.

Concepts do not remain the same. Through the years, the words freedom and democracy, for instance, have expanded in meaning. They encompass not a small number of privileged but all the people. Increasingly, in a democracy people are not content to be voters. They want also to be participants. And they expect more, for freedom and democracy are no longer ends, they are the means. People are asking where they are leading. Because they have received no satisfactory answer, young people have lost their enthusiasm for liberalism and are disillusioned with existing institutions which they interpret as symbols of the establishment, rigid and unjust, geared to thwart them in their groping for new directions.

In almost every country, a section of youth employs the violent gesture to repudiate these static structures and what they stand for. It is tragic that the act of violence seems to have become the symbol of the Hero.

Traditionally, the remedy against disorder has been punitive action—counter-violence and war which, in turn, lead to further disorder. But order is a basic need, integral to nature and to man. From the cell and the atom, to the human brain and the most complex technological invention such as the computer, order is vital. So is freedom. In fact, it is the impulse for freedom to realise one's true quality which is activating several movements of protest. This then is a challenge to the people no less than the Government, to students no less than the teachers, to ensure that order is compatible with a free society.

The enormously complex, but relatively short-term problems created by poverty continuing in the midst of plenty, by the population explosion and the pollution of the environment are so urgent that we are forced to accept superficial palliatives which later overwhelm us by their backlash. They blur man's view of the problems of the world as a whole and the assessment of local problems in perspective to that whole. Have we the long vision to establish new priorities? With the world's unhappy experience, are we prepared, even in principle, to subordinate the power of technology to the interest of the human being and to reject proposals which are profit-making, productive or otherwise attractive, if there is any likelihood of side-effect on man's psychology as well as on his environment? And man himself, will he ever again be regarded as an individual rather than a statistic? It must be possible to assess the tremendous potentials which are now available to us—of knowledge, of energy, and of resources, and to find solutions for what the short vision considers insoluble—and that, not for the one or the few, but for all mankind.

The pattern of life of a country is traced by the evolution of its philosophy, by the influence of historical experience, climate and other circumstances. Each country has a national personality, which it holds dear. This is what keeps it together. We in India are determined

to bring well-being to our millions, but not at the cost of making them poor imitations of other civilisations or of diminishing the spirit which has kept their culture alive for thirty centuries. Nor shall we accept any limitation of our freedom.

When I was a student here, I thought I had all the answers. Today, after thirty-four crowded years, I have only questions. Oxford University, with its long and brilliant tradition of enquiry, is the place for asking questions. May I end with a quotation from the *Upanishads*—written ages ago, yet so apt today :

"Men may (through their skill) roll up the sky like a piece of leather; still there will be no end of sorrow for them, without realizing the Luminous One within."

Once again I thank you.

Mass Media and the Arts

Role of the Intelligentsia

INTELLECTUALS HAVE ALWAYS led revolutions and independence movements. When there has been a close contact between political life and intellectual life both have been enriched, and when the two have been drawn apart both have been impoverished, as has happened in the country. I do not think that we alone are to be blamed or you alone are to be blamed. We are together to be blamed.

Frankly speaking, there is something missing in the intellectual life of India—the effort to wage a relentless fight against the evils which exist here, whether it is casteism, whether it is communalism or whether it is the barbaric customs. We do not see a burning zeal to fight these evils. We talk of socialism, and I think you all here are committed to socialism, but what kind of socialism could it be if it remained confined to industrial or agricultural or even the removal of economic disparities? Socialism can have no meaning if the sort of thinking persists in our country which holds to theories of race, and theories of one man being superior to another, which are completely out of date and irrelevant to contemporary life, and which we have opposed in other countries under Fascism and Nazism. These are the things which have to be fought with all the force at our command and these can be fought not just with laws; they have to be fought with tongue and with pen.

Lawyers have played a special part in the independence struggle all over the world and especially so in India. I was telling my colleagues the other day that the very first poem I learnt as a very small girl was a couplet which said that we know not whether law be right or law be wrong; all that we know who are in jail is that the wall is strong. We have to give another look at our laws, to bring a better life, to create better conditions. Once there was the law of the jungle; if you wanted something you hit somebody on the head and you took what you wanted. When we grew greater in number and started living in towns we had to regulate that life and this is how law came into being. But if we find that laws are not helping to create the right action, to bring about changes which are necessary for improving life for our people, or to reduce the tensions which exist in our society, then something must be done about it. I think it is the business of lawyers to give thought to this matter and not to think of laws as a narrow God-given sort of thing which cannot be changed.

The whole world, not just India, is today on the threshold of

Speech at a meeting of intellectuals, Bombay, December 12, 1969

tremendous changes brought about by science and technology. These things have changed the life of people but only superficially. We have better and bigger buildings. We have some more modern methods of agriculture. But what we need today is a new kind of man, a man who can face the situation of expanding knowledge, who can use this knowledge for a really good life. I think this is what Gandhiji tried to do; to create a better man. I do not know if it is possible in our world, with human nature being what it is, but it is worth trying and it is only the intellectuals who can give this try and guide others.

The world is too small for us to live in compartments; we must be much more united to achieve our objectives. We believe in democracy; democracy in the sense of our parliamentary system of government; democracy in the way we function in our party and elsewhere. But the fresh waters of our democracy are confined sometimes into the stagnant pools of casteism, communalism, barbaric social customs and so on. It matters little if you have democracy or if you have the vote or if you can freely speak out your mind, unless by this process you release fresh currents of change throughout our social life which go right down to all levels of our people. The task is how we unite to achieve this tremendous task. It is easy enough to pass resolutions; it is not easy to implement them.

We know that some people have vested interest in position, some in other things, but one of the biggest vested interests is fear, the fear of changing what is familiar. Even though we know that a thing is bad we are afraid of change. But, today we cannot really survive without major changes of this kind. How do we bring them about? How do we convince the people that changes are necessary and urgent? That is the task of the intelligentsia.

In the past years all political parties have somehow gone away from the people. Today we and you both need to put down our roots again and get our inspirations from the people. We need to walk in step with their aspirations, their demands, and their needs. It is a tremendous task because of the very size of our country. But nothing is beyond the human being who makes up his mind to do a thing. In some countries they have to search out the highest mountain to climb so that the challenge to their minds and bodies is met. Others try to cross oceans on small boats. All these are tremendous efforts. But we have challenges right on our doorsteps. We do not have to go to the mountains or across high seas. We have poverty in our villages and we have the caste system in every house. These are the mountains which we have to climb, the oceans which we have to cross. I know that we have the energy. I know that we have the capability. It is just a question of doing it and I hope that this convention will be a small step which will take us in that direction. Somebody said after stepping on the moon that it was a small step for him but a giant step

for mankind. So I think you may say that this will be a small step for you but if you succeed it will be a giant step for India.

I hope you will keep this in view and will be able to infuse others with enthusiasm, because one of the biggest obstacles in achieving anything has been the cynicism of some of our intelligentsia, of our Press and so on. This is the barrier which has to be broken. We have to renew our enthusiasm and that will generate the courage, the endurance and the determination which is so necessary for achieving all the many things which we must achieve.

Communion of Minds

I AM DELIGHTED that the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding has been conferred upon Yehudi Menuhin. There was sympathy and friendship between my father and Mr. Menuhin and I too am privileged to know him for many years. But of course this is not the reason. In an era dominated by the politics of division, this Award is a recognition that art brings people and countries together. Mr. Menuhin himself is an example of a personality transcending the bounds of nationality, reaching out to universal brotherhood and world citizenship.

We in India owe Yehudi Menuhin a special debt. More than any other person, he has awakened the appreciation of our music and interest in our musicians, which is now apparent in many countries. All these years, some eminent European scholars and poets have drawn the attention of the West to our philosophy, our literature and ancient sculpture. However, our music does not seem to have attracted the same notice.

It may be that the Indian creative spirit found deeper expression in music than in other art forms. Poetry and drama, painting and architecture, have broken with tradition and yielded to the influence of European forms, but our music and dance even now find scope for self-expression within the traditional idiom.

Perhaps Mr. Menuhin was attracted by the continuing vitality of our music. It is no coincidence that, while studying Indian music, he has also delved into our philosophy, and has become a keen student of Yoga. This is an integrated response with deep significance.

Enthusiasm for Yoga is one of the bonds which Mr. Menuhin had with my father. I remember the first time the Menuhins came to

Speech at the presentation ceremony of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, New Delhi, November 4, 1970

dinner in Teen Murti House, the conversation, not unexpectedly extended to a discussion on the virtues of Yoga exercises. And, in spite of the protestations of some, my father and Mr. Menuhin each decided to show the other what he could do. Breaking the rule of Yoga not to exercise immediately after a meal, Mr. Menuhin did the 'shirshasan'—i.e. stood on his head. Needless to say this did not interrupt the conversation, and added to the enjoyment of all present. It was about that time that Mr. Menuhin found a *guru* to help him in a more thorough study of the subject.

As we all know, Yoga is not merely a physical fitness course. It is training to attain control over body and mind, so that one can know oneself. Without self-restraint and self-discipline, there can be no real freedom. The practice of Yoga brings about harmony between mind and body, between oneself and Nature. The study of music is also a Yoga, for it requires great concentration and discipline. Perhaps everything worthwhile does. Only such control over oneself gives freedom of thought, of expression, of action to keep within tradition or to use it as a base to soar in new directions. It seems to me that this is the urgent need of our times, for such harmony is the first step towards the larger freedom for the human spirit for which man yearns and which alone will enable us to meet the great and unknown challenges which await mankind.

Mr. Menuhin is a seeker after truth and beauty. It has been said that a work of art is not completed on the canvas, it is completed in the mind of the man who looks at it. To produce music, which, with every rendering, is a new creation, is an extraordinary achievement, revealing a fuller unfolding of human power. But when, through music, the musician can communicate something of his own experience, a new dimension is added to human understanding and to the communion of minds. Mr. Menuhin's evocative music sharpens perception and heightens sensitivity.

He has enjoyed the adulation of music lovers the world over. Yet he retains his innate simplicity and naturalness. He uses the world of music to touch the heart of man.

We are happy to have Yehudi Menuhin with us to receive the Award, which he so richly deserves. We welcome his charming wife, who has been such a close comrade, companion and helper to him. We are glad that his gifted sister Hephzibah Menuhin has also been able to come. She is a brilliant musician in her own right and a close collaborator with her brother.

Mr. Menuhin is one of the foremost among the artistes and thinkers of our time who are weaving together a fraternity of the sensitive in all lands, whose concern is to preserve and enlarge the content of civilisation. In honouring him we honour the spirit of man.

Writers as Crusaders

IT IS ALWAYS a privilege to meet writers, and you are all welcome to our capital city. Writers are gifted with insight and more intense feeling than their fellowmen. The written word has powerfully influenced the mind of man and has enhanced its awareness and sensitivity. Writers and poets give voice to the innermost urges of the people. They affirm a nation's basic beliefs and ideals.

Writers have often been pioneers of protest. They have raised their voice against foreign rule and domestic social injustice. In India, many leaders of our freedom movement, as also of social reform, have themselves been outstanding writers. Others have had close relationship with writers and thinkers. This is but natural, for there can be no political or social transformation without a corresponding intellectual effort. Thought and action must arise out of a searching analysis of social forces. It is this search which produced in France the leaders of Revolution. In Russia, it produced Lenin and Gorky; in India, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru.

At the most significant and creative phases of history, the man of action and the man of ideas do not live in isolation. They work together and take the people with them. They lead revolutions. Or if their effort is allied to sensibility, as poets and writers, they become powerful instruments of change. If writers choose to be unmoved by the situation around them, they become irrelevant and might even be impediments to progress.

The writers' purpose is to communicate to the people their search for truth and beauty. In the colonial age, everything was politics, because every person of integrity could have only one objective, that is, freedom. Love of freedom acted as the focus of all creative effort. Most nations of Africa and Asia have now achieved freedom. We have overcome the humiliation of being regarded as interlopers in our own land. But in our two continents, there still are people who are struggling for independence and equality. Our sympathy and salutations naturally go out to all those valiant soldiers of freedom who fight for national honour.

Even though we are politically independent and sovereign, the battle of freedom is not completely over. Social transformation is still to be completed. Forces are at work within our country to limit true freedom. Some are interested in keeping the newly free nations weak and divided. Unfortunately, some writers sometimes allow themselves to be exploited by these forces.

In India, our political system gives the fullest freedom

Speech at the fourth Afro-Asian Writers' Conference, New Delhi, November 17, 1970

to every person to express his point of view. We are confident that the people have the wisdom to weigh and to decide the validity of contending theories, and that they will reject false doctrines and choose the right one. If writers propound narrow and harmful theories, the people will ultimately disown them.

One of the great struggles which we in the newly free countries have to wage is against the forces of superstition. Seeds of dissension, whether in the name of religion, caste or language, threaten national integrity and freedom. Our experience during our struggle for Independence has taught us that it is our inner division which makes us vulnerable, that whenever we have been united, our strength has been enormous, and that this does count, regardless of military force. In our country, despite the great figures of history—Buddha, Ashoka and Akbar, despite Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, religious fanaticism and feelings of caste superiority do persist. In fact, after my father's death they seem to be on the increase. Thus writers have a very great role to play in our society. Their writings should propagate the larger freedom which is based on social equality, secularism and rational thinking.

Every now and then the question is asked: Must writers be in politics? It is for them to choose, not for politicians to decree. Whether or not writers enter politics, they cannot ignore life's challenge and adventure. They cannot ignore the joys and the sorrows of the people. Else, what literature would they create? Should they not add to the human content of life through their poetry and essays, their plays and their novels?

The technology of printing and broadcasting has not always been used for human welfare or for the good of the people. Countless books and journals advocate prejudice, hatred and violence. In nations where literacy is not yet universal, the printed word is apt to command more veneration than it does in advanced societies. Exaggerated claims or baseless accusations are given credence. Hence, what might be described as eccentricity elsewhere, could create misunderstanding and tension here.

Although all nations have become politically independent, we continue, to some extent, to view the rest of the world from the angle of our erstwhile rulers. In some Afro-Asian countries, books, especially of advanced study, are largely those of British and American authors. In others, there may predominantly be books by French authors. Certainly there are liberal and open-minded scholars both in English and in French. But can national bias be kept out? It is urgent that we should establish direct nation-to-nation relationship amongst ourselves. We should encourage more scholars and authors to study one another's language and write authoritative books on one another's culture and society. Two months ago, I found in Zambia that messages

from Lusaka could come to Delhi only through London. Mechanical help is understandable, but sometimes we have allowed third-country filtration of our ideas and attitudes. Translation almost invariably travels through a European language. This conference might initiate a major programme of direct literary exchange and translation.

In India, writers are not accountable to Government. They are *answerable to their own conscience and to the judgment of the people.* Their responsibility is to society as a whole. They must advocate all that makes life more free, more just, more humane and more beautiful. Their guiding principle should be that of the early seers of our country : Lead me from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

Immortality, in spite of all the new medical miracles, does not mean physical immortality, but the survival and continuity of great ideas, ideas which liberate man from aggressiveness and narrowness of mind, from hatred and from fear.

Literature does not lay down moral precepts. It creates an atmosphere where values are cherished. It strengthens moral fibre and judgment, and fashions attitudes.

A conference such as this can help to enlarge awareness amongst writers of their own role and responsibility not only within their national but in the international community also. So fast is the development of technology and communications that formal institutions of governance, of education and of social organisation will become obsolete everywhere if they are not reformed to meet the needs of the contemporary and the future world.

The most significant development in the last two decades has been the explosion of human consciousness, the consciousness that we are becoming one human family, one world. National frontiers are bound to remain, but these are no longer impenetrable to the flow of ideas and thoughts. The newly free countries of Asia and Africa naturally find greater kinship with one another. I hope this conference will strengthen mutual understanding and friendship.

I should like to congratulate those of our friends who have received awards. We know that they and many who are not present with us have been deeply involved in what is happening around them or deeply concerned with the problems of poverty, of social injustice and inequality. We know that peace and justice can only come if these problems are solved. We must solve them in partnership with one another. Conferences like yours, and this conference I hope, will be a step forward in this direction of creating understanding leading to friendship and peace.

Understanding Dynamics of Change

IT IS ALWAYS a pleasure to be amidst literary people. We are gathered here today to honour Firaq Gorakhpuri for his poetry. I admire his work for its intellectual thrust and the beauty of its expression.

The Jnanpith Award has come to occupy an important place in the literary life of our country. It has helped our authors and our reading public of different regions to understand and appreciate the literary achievements of other regions.

Literature is a vehicle of tradition, a voice of protest and an instrument of change. In the life of an individual, as of a nation, tradition, protest and change are in constant interaction. Every moment is a meeting point of the past, the present and the future. Historians tell us that nations which have placed their golden age in the past have declined. This is why our eyes must be focussed on the future.

Good literature gives us an insight into the myriad mysteries of the individual and the social forces which mould him. Those literary works have become classics and have found place in the hearts of the people, which, while portraying a particular time or place, also reveal the universal and the timeless. When great historic changes are taking place and our values are being transformed, it is for our authors to probe the realities of the Indian situation. Should they not see beyond the immediate and be concerned with the tremendous staying power, vitality and diversity of this great and amazing civilisation of ours?

The mighty perennial river which is our civilisation replenishes itself from many streams. The secret of its survival has been its capacity to accept all these streams and to assimilate them. The makers of Indian culture have been those sages who stayed in the midst of life, savoured each new experience, enlarged the entire range of knowledge and perfected the art of living. This is our tradition, this is the distinctive quality of Indianness.

Whenever a society is poised for change, conservatives raise their voice—in the name of religion, in the name of tradition. Strange slogans gain currency. This is happening today. Some people are defining Indian culture in a way which does not correspond to Indian history and culture, or even to the fundamentals of Hinduism. Are they incapable of perceiving the rich variety of our civilisation and the quintessence of our philosophy? Such narrow definitions can only harm our culture and stifle our nationhood.

Every doctrine finds its proponents. In our country, too, we find many defenders of intolerant and exclusive dogmas. The community

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Free translation of speech in Hindi at the presentation ceremony of the Jnanpith Award to Shri Raghupati Sahai 'Firaq', New Delhi, November 27, 1970

of authors should wield their pens in protest against prejudice and help their readers to be large-hearted, broad of vision and in tune with change.

In earlier centuries, India maintained relations with other civilisations—those of Egypt and Babylon, Iran and Greece, Rome, China and Arabia. We influenced them and were not afraid of being ourselves influenced by them. We gave and we took. But a time came when we withdrew into ourselves. Fearing changes, we became absorbed in the past. We discarded inquisitiveness and felt safer in the familiar rut of old thought. So India became stagnant.

Scientific knowledge can be acquired and technology can be bought. But if they are taken as layers super-imposed over old thought, we shall merely reflect other countries. The mixture of science and society cannot be physical. It must be an organic compound. Essentially this means that we must root out superstitious beliefs, clear once again the springs of growth which have been clogged, and bring about change in a creative manner.

History shows that those civilisations, races and species which have resisted transformation have become extinct. Those who have understood the dynamics of change and responded to them, not only survived but were able to control and give direction to them. Man has advanced by facing material and spiritual challenge and by solving the problems of his time.

We have emerged from the stage of romantic nationalism, when we rediscovered our identity and delighted in our Indianness, when we challenged alien authority and held aloft the banner of freedom. We knew that the bird could be imprisoned, but not its song.

Today we are free. Our ancient land must reach up to its high destiny through unity and strength. The nation looks to our writers, poets and artists to guide us through intellectual perplexity and the frustrations of building a society which will live up to our dreams of progress and equality. The conflict between old and new is aggravated by our inability to distinguish between the essential and the fortuitous. Modernity does not consist in using the products of technology, but in the cultivation of a new attitude of mind which believes that man can, by rational use of his abilities and resources, change his environment for good. Thus, modernity means not repetitiveness but constant evolution. Each person derives his mental and physical predispositions from different ancestors. Yet none is a replica of any; each person is a distinctive individual. Similarly, each generation must evolve its own personality and quality.

With the advance in communications and the increased international awareness, the flow of ideas across the world is wider and faster. A writer cannot think of himself merely as a Hindi, Bengali or Tamil

writer; above all, he must be an Indian and he must try to belong to a common humanity.

Firaq is being honoured today. Those who live in Allahabad are specially conscious of living at a confluence. Firaq himself represents a confluence—of our great classical tradition and of the literary tradition which came from Persian, Arab and other civilisations. He represents the co-mingling of Eastern and Western thought. He is *Firaq*, he is Raghupati Sahai, he is an Indian. He is of all religions and he is of no religion. He belongs to Hindi and to Urdu. Those who know Hindi-Urdu literature are familiar with his conceptual boldness, the power of his ideas and the daring of his composition. His scepticism itself is his faith.

I hope that Firaq's poetry will continue to gladden and inspire us for many more years. My good wishes to him and to all those present here.

Reflections on Indian Press

I AM GLAD to be here to wish you a happy tenth anniversary and to give you my good wishes for your future work.

You have done a great service, especially to the smaller newspapers, and I welcome such innovations as your Agricultural Service. I think that just as the politician is subject to criticism from the Press, the Press should also expect a certain amount of criticism from the politician. At this phase in our national life, it is appropriate perhaps to reflect not only on the news agencies but on the Press as a whole.

Indian journalism has come a long way since Hicky's *Gazette* first appeared in 1780 in Calcutta. As you all know, the Indian Press played a very notable and distinguished part before Independence and was a potent instrument of progress. It quickened the growth of national consciousness, spread ideas of justice and equality between man and man and between caste and caste, stimulated public spirit and set high standards of public duty. It was then a committed Press and no one thought that commitment was an ugly word. What has happened in these last two decades? Has the Press slipped from its earlier importance and relevance? Why did the recent elections so completely confound and disprove most journalists? I ask these questions because I believe that the Press has a vital role to play in a democracy and I

Speech at the tenth anniversary celebrations of the United News of India, New Delhi, May 4, 1971

would like to see it play this role fully and well. For obvious reasons, its responsibilities and challenges are far greater in an emerging nation-state, a pluralistic society and a developing economy than in the affluent countries of the West.

The real issue which Indian journalism faces today is not freedom of the Press to which, let me assure you, we are unequivocally committed but the type of Press the country needs. Freedom of the Press becomes a somewhat arid concept when we find the Press is out of touch with people and events. Newspapers everywhere have cast themselves in a dual role—as 'the High Priest' and as 'the Great Informer'. In India, if I may say so, the Press has allowed the first role to completely subordinate the second one. It has become the self-styled inheritor of the Brahminical tradition and its esoteric jargon.

Despite freedom, the legitimate pre-Independence concern with politics has become somewhat of an obsession. It continues unabated, and politicians, political news, gossips and intrigues remain the monotonous staple of journalistic diet. About three or four years ago, addressing a similar function, I had said that a survey had shown that only about five per cent of news space was given to development news. This sentence was produced before me again yesterday and I said, "Surely you are referring to the statement I made much earlier." And they said, "No. This is according to a survey made recently." This shows that in all these years, there has not been any change at all in the percentage of news space given to development news.

Despite the far-reaching changes in society during the last twenty years, our Press is still overwhelmingly urban-oriented, reflecting largely city interests and values. Despite India's crucial position in Asia, foreign news continues to be excessively slanted towards the West. Some years ago, a survey revealed that non-Asian news formed as much as 80 per cent of the total foreign file. Here again, political news constitutes the bulk, to the exclusion of socio-economic news-stories.

In a country with such widespread illiteracy the vocabulary of the Press makes its message inaccessible to many people. Instead of relying on the power of their pen, a careful assembly of facts, detailed research and skilful interpretative analysis we come across something different and sometimes one gets the impression that factual reportage is fast disappearing.

Just before we came here I had a meeting with some of the officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. They had done a survey of the influence of broadcasting and of newspapers on various rural societies, and the question of language was very much to the fore. They said that the language used in broadcasts and newspapers was not the one which the people in the rural areas spoke or understood. They relied more on their own news-source, the village worker, than on any of these media.

Ours is a vast country. It is not confined to the towns, the clubs, the secretariats and the coffee houses. It is much more than its politicians, their deeds or perhaps misdeeds. A whole wonderful world waits to be explored, to be illuminated and interpreted by serious journalistic endeavour.

This is a world of Indian life in the raw—the whole complex and interlocking web of economic activity; the catalytic forces unleashed by technology and industrialisation; the tides and under-currents of social change; the momentum of urbanisation and its impact on politics, society and religion; in short the countless facts of the total Indian reality.

Compared to this potential feast, most of the news today purveys mere crumbs. Politics itself will lose some of its reality when it is insulated from its true setting and from the forces which motivate and give it meaning. Can our Press meet this challenge? I have no doubt that it can if it wants to and if it improves its professional competence.

Our newspapers remind us daily of Government's professional lapses, its lack of expertise. We are trying to remedy these. But we feel that newspapers and news agencies also should make efforts to give wider training to journalists, to equip them with the wide-ranging theoretical knowledge which is so necessary for interpretative reporting, and to help them specialise in some branch of journalism.

However, even the best-equipped journalist can perform these tasks only if there is a sound editorial policy. Ever since journalism's rise, or perhaps fall, to the status of a great industry, social consciousness has weakened. The Press is indubitably an instrument of power. Assured of complete freedom of comment, to what end should this power be used?

India has known great editors who, instead of being content to wade in the stagnant pools of national life, have placed newspapers in its mainstream. This requires intellectual boldness, moral courage, unswerving loyalty to certain well-defined ideals and values, a change of focus and new methods which will make newspapers not merely commentators on a narrow spectrum of events, but active participants in the whole process of nation-building and social change. Only so can newspapers become true interpreters between the Government and the people, informing, educating and influencing both. Only so can they acquire relevance and fruitful power in our contemporary situation. Only so can the potentialities of a free and alert Press be fully realised. Hence, for the well-being of our democracy I sincerely hope that this will happen and that the existing mental block will be removed.

An influential section of the Press has tried to make 'commitment' a dirty word. I tried hard to understand the cause of this concern and perturbation. 'Commitment' has been distorted to mean various things like regimentation, opening windows into men's souls, loyalty to the ideology of a political party, even a subtle device to curb the freedom

of the Press. If I may say so, such an attitude shows a certain disorientation and even ruthlessness. Commitment as an idea is as old as human history. The progress of mankind could itself be written in terms of an ever-widening circle of commitment to new and wider ideal —from the family to the nation-state, from theocracy to secularism, from superstition to science, from tyranny to the rule of law, from *laissez-faire* to the Welfare State. Commitment and freedom of the mind are far from being incompatible. The true antithesis of commitment is not detachment or neutrality but egocentricism.

During nearly twenty-five years of Independence, much has been achieved, but very much more remains to be accomplished. One lesson stands out. While we have set for ourselves the goal of creating a modern nation-state, eliminating poverty and reordering unjust social relations, our mental approach to these tasks has been characterised by a peculiar dichotomy.

We have approached the future fettered by our past. Outdated values, still fondly cherished, intrude on our thinking. Narrow loyalties still claim our primary allegiance. The legacy of Victorian Britain weighs particularly hard on our Government and on our institutions, including the Press.

It is in this context that I put to you that the idea of commitment should be seen as an enlargement of our mental horizon, a clearer appreciation of our role in society, a redefinition of our goal, a single-minded determination to work for fulfilment and a corresponding refinement of our methods.

In ancient India the idea of commitment was summed up by the word '*dharma*'. Each individual, each group, had his own *dharma* for overall good. Before ossification and decline set in, *dharma* was not a static but an expanding concept, a dynamic concept. Whether it is the politician, the civil servant, the industrialist or the journalist, it is now more than ever necessary for each power group in our system to help evolve the *dharma* of its own profession in a manner which ensures the progress and well-being of the society and the nation as a whole. All we ask of the Press is that it should find its own unique *dharma* in Indian conditions and be true to it and not try to be a pale copy of its Western progenitor.

Just now, I was told of the hard time the Board and the people concerned with this Agency had in building it up and how at last you are breaking even. It is hard to build anything, even the smallest thing, but it is extremely difficult afterwards to maintain the standard and to keep abreast of changing trends and needs.

I congratulate you on your achievement and hope that you will be able to keep pace with the changes that are taking place in our country and the world, and in doing so serve the Indian people and help them to know themselves, their country and the world better and to be able

to build a better life for themselves. I once again offer my good wishes to your Agency.

Function of Journalism

THE HISTORY OF the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* takes us back to the days of our struggle for freedom. In every region of India, new newspapers came into being to carry the message of Satyagraha and freedom.

I remember the newspaper founded by my grandfather in the then United Provinces. The purpose of the *Independent* as of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*—and other newspapers—was to keep up the spirit of the people by emphasizing that they had "nothing to fear but fear itself." Fearlessness is of course the first of all virtues. As you know, my father once wrote to me : "Be brave and all the rest follows." The nationalist newspapers of those times were intensely involved in the issues of the day and most of all in the struggle for freedom. Because the cause was so great, all minor or individual differences paled into insignificance.

The press was divided into two clear camps then—the British-owned newspapers on the one side and the nationalist ones on the other. The Anglo-Indian press, as the first was called, enjoyed the patronage of the Raj, from the Viceroy to the district collector, as also of the commercial *nawabs*. They had all the advantages.

The plight of the nationalist papers was very different. They lived under constant threat. Their presses were liable to be sealed without notice and securities were demanded from them and forfeited. Each newspaper became an open school of sedition, which is the moral law of any colonial people. The editors and managers of the nationalist papers were, like the rest of us, in and out of prison. However, even being out of jail did not imply that they were free from economic difficulty, which constantly bogged their footsteps. They and their families had to undergo all kinds of hardship, but in the process, the profession of journalism came to be held in high regard by the people.

A generation earlier Tilak had written that the goal of his paper was to make people realise the value of freedom and to challenge the might of the foreign rulers.

This became the motto of all nationalist newspapers. In pursuing this ideal, the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* faced punitive action by the then Government on 19 occasions in the 25 years between 1922 and 1947.

Speech on the occasion of Golden Jubilee function of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, May 20, 1972

But by its firm adherence to the national cause, the journal earned for itself the trust and support of the people of Bengal and attracted some of the foremost leaders and writers of Bengal.

The second 25 years of the journal's life have coincided with the first quarter-century of India's independence. In this period the old distinction between Anglo-Indian and nationalist papers disappeared. New opportunities opened out before all newspapers. National papers which had lived a precarious existence have become economically sound, if not prosperous. Circulation figures, revenue, wages, printing techniques and coverage have improved. Yet I sometimes feel that there has been a fall in one important aspect, that is, in the capacity of the press to mirror the inmost urges of the people or to highlight the achievements of the people and to help strengthen their resolve.

The press and radio are referred to as "media". Surely a medium is just a means by which something is transmitted. It makes no contribution of its own in terms of content and idea. A telephone is a medium, a radio valve is a medium, but the newspaper is more than a medium, more than a mere vessel. It has an attitude, a point of view, a system of judgment and values. An uncritical use of the word "medium", borrowed from advertising vocabulary, amounts to confessing that the press is mindless.

In fact it is the quality of mind—the quest for knowledge, the ability to analyse and to evaluate and the need to reflect—which is the source of the power of the press. A better newspaper is not one which sells more, but one which enables a person to deepen his understanding, to have a broader outlook and to feel more involved in the problems of the nation and of all mankind.

At its best a newspaper is an educational institution which informs and inculcates values. It brings scholars and novices together in an enterprise of understanding the world. At its worst it is a habit—like smoking. It also performs a number of useful services such as keeping us informed about the available entertainment, employment opportunities and so on.

I hope you will pardon me but it does seem as if our editors and journalists have by and large convinced themselves that they have reached the top, hence there is no longer the reformist zeal of the best journalists of olden days. Increasing prosperity has taken them further away from the people. Today they are more anxious to be heard and to give advice to the legislature and the government rather than to find out and report the trends in different fields of activity. Even from the professional yardstick, it is unfortunate that our newspapers should be content to devote only 5 to 6 per cent of their space to social change—a fact to which I drew attention seven years ago.

Some say or rather complain that there is too much politics in the country. Whether this is desirable or not depends on what one means

by politics. How can one have democracy without political consciousness? I welcome the fact that more people, not only in India but all over the world, are becoming politically conscious and concerned. They are no longer content to let self-appointed or other spokesmen speak for them. It is the increasing political alertness of the people, exerting itself forcefully, that has led to one assault after another on injustice and vested interest, on the basis of race, religion or caste or that against minorities or women, and the concentration of economic power. If by politics you mean concern for social forces, principles and values, then that is all to the good. But if politics is taken to mean jockeying for position, then it has little to commend it. For some reason our press is unduly interested in this narrower politics. My officials tell me that in the last few weeks, ten times more questions were put to them on the so-called impending cabinet reshuffle than about economic policy. I leave it to the journalistic profession to remedy this state of affairs.

To come now to one of the big questions of the day: What are Government's intentions towards the press?

The Government has no intention of limiting or abridging the freedom of the press. But the Government is determined to correct the present situation of concentration and monopoly in the newspaper industry, as in other industries. Newspapers should not be house magazines for big business. We want the press to be an independent industry which is not subservient to other industries. We want the press to serve the people and be the voice of the people.

In our economy as a whole and in every industry, it has been our policy to mitigate the concentration of economic power and to ensure growth with social justice. We are committed to do this as regards the press also. The measures we propose to adopt are still under discussion. Our method has always been one of reaching decisions through wide discussion and consultation. And after decisions are taken, they will be placed before Parliament. But there is no doubt about the direction which we want to follow to check monopoly and ensure conditions in which the small can withstand the pressures of the big.

I do not think that every desirable result need necessarily be achieved through legislation or that everything should be put into a uniform straitjacket. If publishing houses can come up with workable solutions to basic problems, we shall certainly view them with sympathy.

The best newspapers all over the world are not run with the profit motive but as a public service. Certainly they have to be efficient and economically viable if they are to survive. But the justification for a good newspaper is not profit but the esteem and influence that it commands from a large number of people. The climate in the newspaper industry should be such that public-spirited editors and correspondents are able to fight injustice, inhumanity, superstition and misinterpretation. The difference between an ordinary and a good

newspaper, between a good newspaper and a great one is in the extent to which it identifies itself with the larger purposes of society.

In its fifty-year history, the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* has fought for many noble causes. It is one of the leading institutions of this city and of this State and of the rich and beautiful Bengali language. I hope that its future will be equally illustrious.

Events on the Sub-continent

Warning to Pakistan

THE GOVERNMENT AND the people of India are justifiably indignant as the abetment, incitement and encouragement given by the authorities in West Pakistan in helping the hijacking of Indian Airlines Fokker Friendship aircraft to Lahore on January 30. The delay in the return of the passengers and crew was inhuman and without justification. The refusal to return the aircraft with its baggage, cargo and mail is against all canons of international law and the U. N. General Assembly resolution passed at the 25th Session to which Pakistan is a party.

The blowing up of the plane at Lahore airport under the very nose of the Pakistan authorities by the two criminals who hijacked it to Lahore airport deserves to be condemned by all civilised governments and people. We regret to say we have heard no word of condemnation from Pakistan so far. The authorities in West Pakistan do not perhaps realise the serious repercussions of their negligence and indirect encouragement to those two criminals who were allowed the freedom at Lahore airport to make trunk telephone calls to their accomplices in Pakistan without hindrance. It is amazing that the Government of Pakistan could not control these two individuals for three whole days and allowed them to blow up an Indian plane.

We hold the Pakistan Government wholly responsible for allowing this dastardly crime. At the same time, we are glad that the people of Pakistan showed friendliness towards the stranded passengers and crew and waved greetings to them during their road journey from Lahore to Hussainiwala.

We want to strengthen friendship with the people of Pakistan but we will not tolerate any case of vandalism, abetment, incitement or encouragement of subversive elements from Pakistan who may venture to disturb law and order in our country. We should like to tell the Government of Pakistan that encouragement of such activities will lead to serious consequences for which they will be wholly responsible.

Statement on the hijacking of Indian Airlines aircraft to Lahore, February 3, 1971

Tragedy in East Bengal

THE PRIME MINISTER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all, if I may say so, you have the House, some news we have received...

MR. SPEAKER : I thought the office had sent it to me to announce it. I do not know.

THE PRIME MINISTER : The point is that this news has come through Radio Pakistan and, therefore, I cannot say whether it is true or not. We should not automatically take it as true because it could be just propaganda.

Sir, strength does not lie in words. If my colleague, Sardar Swaran Singh, has not spoken with passion, it is not due to lack of feeling either on his part or on the part of the Government but because of the fact that we are deeply conscious of the historic importance of this movement and the seriousness of the situation.

Something new had happened in East Bengal—a democratic action where an entire people had spoken with almost one voice. We had welcomed this, not because we wanted to interfere in another country's affairs, but because those were the values, as one of my Hon. friends pointed out, for which we have always stood and for which we have always spoken out. And we had hoped that this action would lead to a new situation in our neighbouring country which would help us to get closer, which could help us to serve our own people better and create an entirely new situation in this sub-continent. As our statement has said, this did not happen and a wonderful opportunity for even the strengthening of Pakistan has been lost and has been lost in a manner which is tragic, which is agonising and about which we cannot find strong enough words to speak. This again is a new situation but in a different way. It is not merely the suppression of a movement, but it is meeting an unarmed people with tanks. We are in close touch, as close touch with the events as is possible in such a situation.

I am sure Hon. Members will understand that it is not possible for the Government to say very much more on this occasion. I would like to assure the Hon. Member who asked whether decisions would be taken on time, that obviously that is the most important thing to do. There is no point in taking a decision when the time for it is over. We are fully alive to the situation and we shall keep constantly in touch with what is happening and what we need to do. I agree with him also that we must not take merely a theoretical view. At the same time we have to follow proper international norms. Various other suggestions

Statement in Lok Sabha on developments in East Bengal, March 27, 1971

have been made about genocide and so on, about which we are fully conscious and which we have also discussed with the leaders of the Opposition. At this moment I can only say that we do fully share the agony, the emotions of the House and their deep concern over these developments. We have always believed that freedom is indivisible. We have always raised our voice for those who have suffered, but in a serious situation like this, the less we, as a Government, say I think the better it is. I can assure the House that we shall keep in close touch with the situation and also we shall keep in close touch with the leaders of the Opposition so that they can continue to give us their suggestions and we can also give them whatever knowledge we are able to.

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WE HAVE WATCHED the happenings in Pakistan earlier, that is the elections, in East Bengal, with great admiration and hope, hope that it was the beginning of a new future for the whole country, a future which would make them more united and strong. But, as may colleague, Sardar Swaran Singh, has said, far from leading into this brightness they have turned along a dark path, a tragic path, bringing suffering—in fact, perhaps, suffering is too small a word—to an entire people. I am sure Hon. Members will appreciate that however heavy our hearts may be, however deeply we may be sharing the agony of the people there, it is not possible for the Government to speak in the same words as non-members can do. In fact, it is because we are so deeply conscious of the historic importance of this moment that we are, at the same time, aware of the seriousness of the situation when a wrong step, a wrong word, can have an effect entirely different from the one which we all just intend.

The House is aware that we have to act within international norms. It is good to see that the parties here have expressed certain views. For instance, the Swatantra Party has expressed admiration for the socialist programme of Shri Mujibur Rahman. The Jan Sangh has supported his secular policy and have also said that the people of East Bengal are their brothers. I hope they will extend the same sympathy to all the people of our own country too.

As I said earlier, we are not unaware of what is taking place in East Pakistan and of what it means not only to the people there but the danger that it holds for us, not for any one part of our country but for the entire country. So we are interested in this matter for many reasons, firstly as one Member has said, that Shri Mujibur Rahman has stood for the values which we ourselves cherish, the values of democracy, the values of secularism, and the values of socialism. We are also concerned

Intervening in debate in Rajya Sabha, March 27, 1971

with the truly wonderful and unique way in which the people there had stood behind him and behind these values. We are no less full of sorrow and grave concern and even agony at what is happening there but I can only appeal to the Hon. Members that this is not a moment when the Government can say anything more and whatever the Government may or may not be able to do it would not be wise if this becomes a matter for public debate. I do not think that Hon. Members expect us to give replies to the various questions that were asked. I think the purpose of this discussion was more that we should know their mind and hear their suggestions. As Hon. Members know, I held a meeting this morning with the Leaders of the Opposition which I hope to continue. We are as closely in touch with the happenings in East Bengal as is possible in this situation and I hope to keep closely in touch with the Leaders of the Opposition as well as other Members who would like to come and meet us so that we can know their minds. We cannot always, I must admit, give our mind but we will certainly tell them as much as is possible in this situation.

Resolution in Parliament

THIS HOUSE EXPRESSES its deep anguish and grave concern at the recent developments in East Bengal. A massive attack by armed forces, despatched from West Pakistan, has been unleashed against the entire people of East Bengal with a view to suppressing their urges and aspirations.

Instead of respecting the will of the people so unmistakably expressed through the election in Pakistan in December 1970, the Government of Pakistan has chosen to flout the mandate of the people.

The Government of Pakistan has not only refused to transfer power to legally elected representatives but has arbitrarily prevented the National Assembly from assuming its rightful and sovereign role. The people of East Bengal are being sought to be suppressed by the naked use of force, by bayonets, machine guns, tanks, artillery and aircraft.

The Government and people of India have always desired and worked for peaceful, normal and fraternal relations with Pakistan. However, situated as India is and bound as the peoples of the sub-continent are by centuries-old ties of history, culture and tradition, this House cannot remain indifferent to the macabre tragedy being enacted so close to our border. Throughout the length and breadth of our land, our people

Resolution moved in Parliament, March 31, 1971

have condemned, in unmistakable terms, the atrocities now being perpetrated on an unprecedented scale upon an unarmed and innocent people.

This House expresses its profound sympathy for and solidarity with the people of East Bengal in their struggle for a democratic way of life.

Bearing in mind the permanent interests which India has in peace, and committed as we are to uphold and defend human rights, this House demands immediate cessation of the use of force and the massacre of defenceless people. This House calls upon all peoples and Governments of the world to take urgent and constructive steps to prevail upon the Government of Pakistan to put an end immediately to the systematic decimation of people which amounts to genocide.

This House records its profound conviction that the historic upsurge of the 75 million of people of East Bengal will triumph. The House wishes to assure them that their struggle and sacrifices will receive the wholehearted sympathy and support of the people of India.

A Gigantic Problem

In the seven weeks since Parliament recessed, the attention of the entire country has been focussed on the continuing tragedy in Bangladesh. Hon. Members will recall the atmosphere of hope in which we met in March. We all felt that our country was poised for rapid economic advance and a more determined attack on the age-old poverty of our people. Even as we were settling down to these new tasks, we have been engulfed by a new and gigantic problem, not of our making.

On the 15th and 16th May, I visited Assam, Tripura and West Bengal, to share the suffering of the refugees from Bangladesh, to convey to them the sympathy and support of this House and the people of India and to see for myself the arrangements which are being made for their care. I am sorry it was not possible to visit other camps this time. Every available building, including schools and training institutions have been requisitioned. Thousands of tents have been pitched and temporary shelters are being constructed as quickly as possible in the 335 camps which have been established so far. In spite of our best efforts we have not been able to provide shelter to all those who have come across, and many are still in the open. The district authorities are under severe strain. Before they can cope with those who are already here, 60,000 more are coming across every day.

Statement in Lok Sabha, May 24, 1971

So massive a migration, in so short a time, is unprecedented in recorded history. About three and a half million people have come into India from Bangladesh during the last eight weeks. They belong to every religious persuasion—Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Christian. They come from every social class and age-group. They are not refugees in the sense we have understood this word since Partition. They are victims of war who have sought refuge from the military terror across our frontier.

Many refugees are wounded and need urgent medical attention. I saw some of them in the hospitals I visited in Tripura and West Bengal. Medical facilities in all our border States have been stretched to breaking point. Equipment for 1,100 new hospital beds has been rushed to these States, including a 400-bed mobile hospital, generously donated by the Government of Rajasthan. Special teams of surgeons, physicians, nurses and public health experts have been deputed to the major camps. Special water supply schemes are being executed on the highest priority, and preventive health measures are being undertaken on a large scale.

In our sensitive border States, which are facing the brunt, the attention of the local administration has been diverted from normal and development work to problems of camp administration, civil supplies and security. But our people have put the hardships of the refugees above their own, and have stood firm against the attempts of Pakistani agent-provocateurs to cause communal strife. I am sure this fine spirit will be maintained.

On present estimates, the cost to the Central Exchequer on relief alone may exceed Rs. 180 crores for a period of six months. All this, as Hon. Members will appreciate, has imposed an unexpected burden on us.

I was heartened by the fortitude with which these people of Bangladesh have borne tribulation, and by the hope which they have for their future. It is mischievous to suggest that India has had anything to do with what happened in Bangladesh. This is an insult to the aspirations and spontaneous sacrifices of the people of Bangladesh, and a calculated attempt by the rulers of Pakistan to make India a scapegoat for their own misdeeds. It is also a crude attempt to deceive the world community. The world press has seen through Pakistan's deception. The majority of these so-called Indian infiltrators are women, children and the aged.

This House has considered many national and international issues of vital importance to our country. But none of them has touched us so deeply as the events in Bangladesh. When faced with a situation of such gravity, it is specially important to weigh every word in acquainting this House, and our entire people with the issues involved and the responsibilities which now devolve on us all.

These twenty-three years and more, we have never tried to interfere with the internal affairs of Pakistan, even though they have not exercised similar restraint. And even now we do not seek to interfere in any way. But what has actually happened? What was claimed to be an internal problem of Pakistan, has also become an internal problem for India. We are, therefore, entitled to ask Pakistan to desist immediately from all activities which it is taking in the name of domestic jurisdiction, and which vitally affect the peace and well-being of millions of our own citizens. Pakistan cannot be allowed to seek a solution of its political or other problems at the expense of India and on Indian soil.

Has Pakistan the right to compel at bayonet-point not hundreds, not hundreds of thousands, but millions of its citizens to flee their home? For us it is an intolerable situation. The fact that we are compelled to give refuge and succour to these unfortunate millions cannot be used as an excuse to push more and more people across our border.

We are proud of our tradition of tolerance. We have always felt contrite and ashamed of our moments of intolerance. Our nation, our people are dedicated to peace and are not given to talking in terms of war or threat of war. But I should like to caution our people that we may be called upon to bear still heavier burdens.

The problems which confront us are not confined to Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and West Bengal. They are national problems. Indeed the basic problem is an international one.

We have sought to awaken the conscience of the world through our representatives abroad and the representatives of foreign governments in India. We have appealed to the United Nations, and, at long last, the true dimensions of the problem seem to be making themselves felt in some of the sensitive chanceries of the world. However, I must confess with the House our disappointment at the unconscionably long time which the world is taking to react to this stark tragedy.

Not only India but every country has to consider its interest. I think I am expressing the sentiments of this august House and of our people when I raise my voice against the wanton destruction of peace, good neighbourliness and elementary principles of humanity by the insensate action of the military rulers of Pakistan. They are threatening the peace and stability of the vast segment of humanity represented by India.

We welcome Secretary General U Thant's public appeal. We are glad that a number of States have either responded or are in the process of doing so. But time is the essence of the matter. Also the question of giving relief to these millions of people is only part of the problem. Relief cannot be perpetual or permanent; and we do not wish it to be so. Conditions must be created to stop any further influx of refugees and to ensure their early return under creditable guarantees for their future safety and well-being. I say with all sense of responsibility that

unless this happens, there can be no lasting stability or peace on this sub-continent. We have pleaded with other Powers to recognise this. If the world does not take heed, we shall be constrained to take all measures as may be necessary to ensure our own security and the preservation and development of the structure of our social and economic life.

We are convinced that there can be no military solution to the problem of East Bengal. A political solution must be brought about by those who have the power to do so. World opinion is a great force. It can influence even the most powerful. The great powers have a special responsibility. If they exercise their powers rightly and expeditiously then only we can look forward to durable peace on our sub-continent. But if they fail—and I sincerely hope that they will not —then this suppression of human rights, the uprooting of people, and the continued homelessness of vast numbers of human beings will threaten peace.

This situation cannot be tackled in a partisan spirit or in terms of party politics. The issues involved concern every citizen. I hope that this Parliament, our country and the people will be ready to accept the necessary hardships so that we can discharge our responsibilities to our own people as well as to the millions, who have fled from a reign of terror to take temporary refuge here.

All this imposes on us heavy obligations and the need for stern national discipline. We shall have to make many sacrifices. Our factories and farms must produce more. Our railways and our entire transport and communication system must work uninterruptedly. This is no time for any interplay of regional or sectional interests. Everything must be subordinated to sustain our economic, social and political fabric and to reinforce national solidarity. I appeal to every citizen, every man, woman and child to be imbued with the spirit of service and sacrifice of which, I know, this nation is capable.

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MAY I EXPRESS my deep appreciation of the sentiments voiced on all sides of the House in regard to the struggle of Bangladesh? I fully realise that even though some Hon. Members have used harsh words, they have done so out of deep emotion and feelings of concern. They have reflected the anguish which we and the entire country feel at the tragic and heart-rending happenings in Bangladesh. My Government and I share that anguish with deep concern.

It is only natural that with our own tradition of love, of freedom, our

Summing up the discussion in Lok Sabha on the influx of refugees from East Bengal, May, 26, 1971

involvement with the values of democracy and human rights, we should feel deeply concerned when these values are crushed.

We have heard much talk of democracy. The allies claimed that the Second World War was fought to save democracy. But when democracy is so flagrantly and so brutally being destroyed, we do not hear much comment, nor do we see the sort of spontaneous strong responses which the situation warrants. Could there be a greater or a clearer expression of democracy than the one we witnessed in the elections in Pakistan? Let me remind the House that although the elections were held under the rules formulated by the military regime, immediately afterwards military repression was used mercilessly to halt the process leading to the formation of a democratically elected government in Pakistan.

We are told by some countries that while they may disapprove of what is being done by the military rulers, they cannot be a party to the disintegration of Pakistan? Have we not, as many Members have pointed out, at every step tried not only for propriety in our relationship but also for friendship?

If there is a struggle between the two parts of Pakistan, it is certainly not of our making but of the rulers of Pakistan. Is it anybody's contention that the methods being used today can achieve any integration or stability, worth the name, now or in the future?

The question of secession is also raised, if I may say so. This is a distortion of facts. It is conveniently forgotten that the majority of Pakistan's people live in the eastern region. In a democratic system the majority does have certain rights. They cannot be accused of secession if they assert those rights. However, if today there is such strong feeling amongst our people, it is not merely because the democratic rights and liberties of 75 million people are being crushed but because of the damaging effect which this cruel tragedy is having on our entire country, economically, politically and socially.

This is the reality of the situation. It is not propaganda or the figment of anyone's imagination. Our experience of the influx of refugees and the preposterous propaganda by Pakistan has reinforced the fact that what is happening in Bangladesh does have many-sided repercussions on our internal affairs. That is why I have said that this cannot be considered merely as an internal problem of Pakistan. It is an Indian problem. More, it is a world-wide problem. The international community must appreciate the very critical character of the situation that has now developed.

Any failure to do so may well lead to disastrous consequences. For what is happening in Bangladesh is not just a political or an economic problem. It is a problem of the very survival of the people of that whole area, the people of Bangladesh.

It is a problem created by calculated genocide that is resulting not only in the murder of tens of thousands of men, women and children but also forcing many more to seek refuge and shelter in India. It is a problem that threatens the peace and security of India and indeed, of South-East Asia. The world must intervene to see that peace and security is re-established and maintained.

As Hon. Members know, yesterday there was a similar debate in the other House. I had to sit there also for a part of the time and, so, I could not listen to all the speeches which were made here. I was sorry, however, to hear some Hon. Members take even this opportunity to cast aspersions on our Foreign Office. I must deplore this tendency to try and find an easy way out by blaming the services. I do not say that we have not made mistakes or that all our representatives are always up to the mark. When there is a mistake we should certainly find fault. But constant criticism is disheartening and demoralising. We should not blunt the instruments with which we have to function. Our work here and abroad has to continue. We do realise that any help given to the rulers of Pakistan will be used against the innocent people of Bangladesh.

On this occasion our representatives abroad have worked hard and have done excellent work. They have been as effective as they could possibly be in the prevailing circumstances. Some Governments have set views, and even if their sympathies are roused, they are not often willing to take a stand on a matter such as this. I would like to say that all our services engaged in dealing with the present situation have shown fortitude and a sense of dedication.

If it gives some solace to Hon. Members to abuse the Government and blame them for lack of courage, for lack of direction and even of understanding, I certainly do not want to deprive them of this comfort. To some Members guts are equated with voice-power and the use of passionate words. I wish life were so simple.

Now, this Government may have many faults; but it does not lack courage nor is it afraid of taking a risk if it is a necessary risk. As I have said many times over, we are not merely concerned with the legal aspect of the situation or, indeed, of any situation. We are concerned with one thing and one thing only—our own national interest and security, and naturally that of the heroic people of Bangladesh. That is why it is important to act calmly. The situation is far too grave for anything else.

The word 'recognition' has echoed from every side, as if recognition by itself could solve the many difficulties which confront the people of Bangladesh or the many difficulties which our country faces, especially our States on the border, that is, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya. We have given deep and anxious thought to all aspects of this question. It is, as my colleague has said, constantly under review.

We are not waiting to see that what other countries will do in the matter. Whatever decision we take in this, or other issues is guided by our own independent assessment of the situation and how our interests in the broadest sense are served.

Yesterday I spoke in very deliberately measured words of our present difficulties and of the likely dangers and burdens, not because I am or ever have been afraid of burdens or of danger, but because I want Hon. Members to think deeply about all these matters.

Danger can be faced only when one is prepared for it. This, as I said previously and I should like to repeat, is no time for party rivalry. We must stand together; we must help one another in the economic and other tasks which confront us. Communal tendencies must be curbed. All parties, I think, must help to ensure that the question of Bangladesh and of the refugees is not reduced to a communal level but is kept on its true level, which is a national and an international one.

I shall continue to keep in touch with the Leaders of the Opposition and with other Members of this House on these questions and developments. I hope that Members will feel free to come to see me to express their views or whatever knowledge they have on the subject. In the meantime, there is not much else that I can say.

I would say only, let us not lose heart. Let us have faith in ourselves and in our people. Let us have faith in the courageous people of Bangladesh and in their determination to fight for their rights. No great task is achieved without sacrifice. There is an old saying:

"Is experience gained with a song?
No, it takes all that a man has."

Sacrifice and hardship there must be for all who fight for freedom or for justice or for a great cause. But I have no doubt that the spirit of man and the spirit of freedom cannot be vanquished. We must face this entire problem with confidence, and as I said, do what we have to do with calm and deep thought and with unity amongst ourselves.

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I HAD NOT expected to intervene in this discussion because we have made our policy very clear. I was rather astonished to hear from one of the Hon. Members that our policy is not clear. I think our policy is quite clear. I am astonished at the lack of confidence in our people, in our country, which our Hon. Members are constantly displaying. Are we citizens of a great country or not? Are we citizens who have confidence in ourselves or not? Listening to this debate, it seems to me that this is a far more important question than the question of what is

From reply to the discussion in Rajya Sabha on the influx of refugees from Bangladesh, June 15, 1971

happening to the refugees from Bangladesh. Because if we have no confidence in ourselves, it does not matter what we say, we will not be able to implement it.

I speak here with tremendous confidence in my people and in my Government. I have no doubt at all that we can face the problem which has come upon us. What does this mean? Does it mean that no refugee will suffer? It cannot possibly mean that. When any country has to face a large influx—not an influx over a long period, but a sudden influx within a few weeks, of nearly six million people—it is not a joke; it is not a small thing. I would like to know from Hon. Members: Do they know of any country in the world which has faced even one-tenth of this situation before? It is very easy to sit in this House and just criticise and criticise instead of trying to assess the realities of the situation. If even ten thousand refugees arrive in any European country, the whole continent of Europe will be afire with all the newspapers, the Governments and everybody aroused. We are trying to deal with nearly six million human beings who have fled from a reign of terror, who have come wounded, with disease, with illness, hunger and exhaustion. And they have come to our country, which is one of the poorest in the world. We certainly have the fullest sympathy with these war evacuees or refugees, or whatever you would like to call them.

We are going to do our very best to look after them. Even if we have to sacrifice, even if we have to go hungry. I hope the Hon. Members will be the first to initiate a movement of missing a meal. But at the same time we have to see that our own poor people do not suffer, do not die. We have a double responsibility; a responsibility to our people and a responsibility to our friends from across the border.

One Hon. Member spoke of our taking a begging bowl to other countries. Sir, I am not in the habit of begging. I have never begged. I am not begging now. And I have no intention of begging. If our emissaries go from the country to other countries, they are not speaking with a voice of weakness, they are not begging. We are sending them because this is an international responsibility. And we are not going to let the international community get away with it. They cannot avoid their responsibility. They may give help, or they may not give help. But they will certainly suffer from the consequences of whatever happens in this part of the world.

We must put this problem to them in its proper perspective. We certainly want help, and the more help we get, the better we shall be able to look after the refugees. But so far this help has been pitiable in proportion to what is needed. It is about one-tenth of what is actually needed so far as we have been able to assess. I hope that this help will increase. It is very important from the point of view of saving lives, or giving better nourishment to children and of giving better

treatment to those who are suffering from cholera and other diseases. But the point is not the quantity of help. But our appeal is even more important from the point of view of putting this problem in perspective. What are we concerned about? We are concerned about the lives and the comforts of the refugees, but we are even more concerned about the problem of democracy, the problem of human rights, the problem of human dignity, which has now been brought into focus before us and the whole world in such a poignant and heart-rending manner. And if our representatives have gone, whether they are Members of the Council of Ministers, whether they are non-official people or other people, it is with this end in view, namely, that all the countries should be told about the reality of the situation, and I think that our efforts have succeeded in this in some measure. Today the world press is reacting more sharply and is devoting more space to this question. I think that we have had something to do with this change of attitude. So, we should not sneer at all the efforts that are being made. As I said on a previous occasion, I can understand the emotionalism and the sense of sorrow and of helplessness which Hon. Members and many people outside feel. It is understandable and I sympathise with it. But it should lead us to something more. It should not lead us to a dead end, a feeling that nothing is being done, that nothing can be done and that we are going to be engulfed. We are bearing a tremendous burden and as I said—I do not know whether the word is parliamentary or not; if it is not please strike it out, Sir—as I said in my meetings with the people even in the camps where I had gone, we will have to go through hell to meet this situation. But I have no doubt that we can emerge, and we will. It will hurt us in many ways, economically and in other ways, but we will get through if we have the courage, the determination and the endurance. I personally believe that our people do have these qualities and therefore we will be able to handle this situation. But it cannot be done cheaply either as regards the financial effort or the physical effort. The effort may hurt all sections of the people, all along the line. It may even effect some of our essential programmes. But this is something which we cannot avoid because, as I have said on an earlier occasion, what happens in Bangladesh will have an impact on India. We are concerned with the general principle of democracy but we are more concerned here because Bangladesh is so close to our border that its impact will be very much greater than if such a thing had happened at a distant place.

My colleague just now mentioned the much publicised reception centres opened by the West Pakistan Government in Bangladesh. I do not know what these reception centres are going to do. So far nobody has returned from any of our refugee camps except a small number—about two thousand—who are reported to have gone back

from a part of northern India for various reasons which had nothing to do with the opening of the reception centres in East Bengal.

When we talked of a political settlement, we meant that a political settlement must be arrived at with those people who are today being suppressed. If international pressure through whatever means available to the big powers and to other countries were to be exerted, I think, that a political settlement would have been possible at an earlier stage. Now, of course, with each passing day this possibility has become more remote.

We are looking after the refugees on a temporary basis. We have no intention of allowing them to settle here nor can we allow them to go back merely to be butchered.

There is some confusion in the minds of Hon. Members whether refugees are being removed or whether they are to be kept where they are. It is not easy to be clear on this matter because of the magnitude of the problem. Even if we want to remove the refugees, it is physically not possible to do so. Each train carries about 1,200; or it may be little more. But with the best will in the world, we can only move a small portion of them. We are trying to move them specially to land which belongs to the Central Government in different States but it is not an easy matter to do and however we may try to move them there still will be a tremendous burden on the States where they are today.

We have used trucks; we are using planes; we are using railway trains; we are using goods trains. But with all that—they are six million people—you cannot remove them easily or quickly.

In this country we have a shortage of practically everything which they need. We have a shortage of tarpaulins; we have a shortage of corrugated iron sheets; we have a shortage of every possible thing you can think of. We have tried to round these items from every part of the country; we are rushing them to the camps. But no matter what we do—I am sorry to say—we cannot keep the refugees on anything remotely resembling comfort because of the nature of the problem. And I am glad to say that wherever I have been the spirit in these camps has really been magnificent. They are living under extremely difficult conditions but they understand and anticipate our difficulties. So we should continue to try and do our best but we should always keep in view the long-term aspect of the problem and specially the aspect that it will mean tremendous hardship for all of us and for our people. We must all, as leaders or members of political parties, as citizens of this country prepare our people for this period of hardship because without it we can neither help the refugees nor deal with the larger problem.

I am grateful to the House for the understanding it has shown and for the co-operation which it gives.

Meeting the Crisis

PARLIAMENT BEGAN ITS session on March 19 and some events, which happened on March 25 and 26 beyond our frontiers in Bangladesh, shocked the world. The people of Bangladesh are fighting for the same objective for which you and I carried on a long struggle in our country.

The events in Bangladesh have created a crisis. Over 73 lakhs of people have taken shelter in India to escape massacre by the Pakistan Army. We had not invited them. How could we do that? We have shortage of many things in our own land. So, how could we invite them to come and increase the want and sufferings of our own people. It was no fault of ours that they came. They left their land to escape from the calamity that had befallen them. Even those who had nothing to do with politics were being massacred. Their houses were set on fire and all sorts of atrocities were committed on them.

If anyone among you goes to the camps where they have been lodged and sees their plight, he would never say that the Government or the people of India do not want them to go back. No human being can stand in mud and water all day and night with a child in his lap, because there is no dry place to sit, if he can go back to his homeland and find a resting place there. The refugees are prepared to suffer all this here because in their own land they were victims of barbarous atrocities. We are trying our best to give succour to these suffering millions. We told them and we told the world as well that we can keep them only for a short period. No country can afford to absorb or keep such a large mass of people from another country. It is not possible for us also to do so and we shall never agree to it. We have clearly told the world community about it.

You are well aware that we do what we say. But there are some who believe that to raise slogans is enough. Those who always ridiculed Satyagraha have come forward to offer Satyagraha on the Bangladesh issue. Their present Satyagraha has no meaning because those offering themselves for it know that they would be released in a couple of hours. The true Satyagraha was during the freedom struggle when the Satyagrahis did not know if they would have to remain in prison for seven years or even ten years. That was the occasion for Satyagraha. But those now offering Satyagraha made a mockery of it then. The object of Satyagraha is to secure recognition for Bangladesh. We have never said that we shall not recognise Bangladesh. But Government would take steps only after carefully studying all aspects of the question. It has to be assessed if such a step would help solve the Bangladesh

Free translation of speech in Hindi at a public meeting at India Gate, New Delhi, August 9, 1971

crisis and strengthen our own nation. This would be the test of our decision. Recognition by itself would not be an act of great bravery. We know that such a decision would be greeted by our people. But we have to think how it will affect the people living in want and misery not only in our land but in Bangladesh as well. I can assure you that Government will carry out the promises made. Government will always take such steps as will benefit crores of our own people and those of Bangladesh.

An objection may be made why I talk of the good of the people of another country. But you must be aware how greatly the events there have affected us and will affect us in future as well.

Even the biggest and the richest country in the world today will not welcome such a huge influx of refugees and will not be prepared to give them succour. We, who are among the poorest nations of the world, have taken up this burden, fully realising its implications. We have done this because the only way to stop the influx of refugees was to shoot them when they entered our borders or to tell them that this would be done. There was no other way of stopping the influx of people in such large numbers. There is another aspect to this problem. Shall we stop people from coming to us knowing fully well that they would be massacred in their homeland ? This has not been our tradition. India has always kept its doors open for people in distress whatever the difficulties we might have to face. We gave them whatever help we could. Even today, our people are prepared to make sacrifices to save the lives of those who have sought shelter with us. But just now, we are not able to do much for them.

We certainly want help from outside and we have been receiving some. But we must all understand an important issue which I have stressed wherever I have addressed people in this country. It is that we must stand on our own legs and not rely on others. Whatever the hardships, we must bear them ourselves even if no one comes to our help. The question is not if we have friends or whether anybody will help us. Of course, we shall be grateful to those who offer us help, but we cannot rely on others.

I am conscious of the great burden on us. As I said earlier, even the biggest and the richest country would totter under such a heavy burden. We also tottered, but we are standing firm and have held our head high because we are conscious that what we are doing is in accordance with our tradition, self-respect and the ideal of good neighbourliness.

The path ahead is hard and difficult. It has been so for years and our difficulties might increase further. But I know that the greater the difficulties, the greater will be our courage and strength. We shall show the world that no power on earth can cow down this country despite its poverty, economic backwardness and illiteracy. Many have threatened us. Many have brandished their swords. But that is not

our way. We do not want to glorify these people by talking about them. But we know that there is no real strength in those who give out such threats. They will try to find an excuse to save themselves. This has been our experience with some nations and some people even in our own land. While the people of Bangladesh are undergoing terrible sufferings, there are some in this country who are attempting to make political gains on the Bangladesh issue. This is something very painful. The leader of an opposition party said today that if I did not consider it proper to give recognition to Bangladesh today, this did not mean that there was unity of opinion on the issue. I never said that there could not be two opinions. I only said that at this juncture all those who wanted Government to take strong steps must do their best to strengthen the Government. This is not the time for the different political parties to weaken the Government because this results in the world getting a strange picture of this country. One of the objects of our meeting today is to show the world that India does not care for these small political groups, whatever noise they might make. India is united and strong and the Government has the solid backing of the people who are prepared for all sacrifices and hardships. They know that if they stand united, with courage, this would impress not only our neighbours but the world as well. By our strength alone we can inspire courage among the people of Bangladesh. The greatest help we can render them is to let them know that their neighbouring country and its Government are strong and they cannot be forced to change their attitude under any pressure or threat. Our object is to help the people of Bangladesh. At the same time, we cannot ignore our own people who need help. We have to strengthen the whole country and are therefore going ahead with our programmes.

A Serious Situation

QUESTION : PRIME MINISTER, it has always been India's point of view in this present crisis over the refugees, that other countries should put pressure on Pakistan to ameliorate the situation in East Pakistan so that the refugees can go back. What sort of pressure do you envisage that other countries could put on Pakistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, Pakistan has been getting help, military and economic, from other countries and I think that had this been made clear at the beginning that they would not get support in this adventure

Interview on B.B.C. by Mark Tully, November 1, 1971

or misadventure that they are indulging in Bangladesh, this matter would never have gone so far.

QUESTION : But do you think there is anything now that other countries can do ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Quite frankly, I don't really see anything very specific myself, but I am one of those people who are born optimists and therefore I feel that the most insoluble problem has some solution if people are only willing to find it.

QUESTION : It is perhaps a little unfair to ask you this before you have been to the United States, but are you particularly worried about the attitude of the American Government in this matter ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I wouldn't isolate the American Government because I think that many Governments are hesitating to take a positive stand on this issue and because of the large number of refugees and the very real economic and other burdens on us, people's attention is divided to the refugees. We are full of sympathy for them and we do want help for them, but it would be very unfortunate if all the attention is on looking after the refugees rather than solving, removing the cause of why this exodus is taking place. Because as long as you don't deal with the cause you simply can't do anything except provide a little bit more comfort to the refugees.

QUESTION : What is the remedy for this cause ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously to solve the problems of East Bengal.

QUESTION : But could you be more specific, how would you see them solved ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, first I think it is for the people themselves and their elected leaders to decide what they want or what settlement they want. But so far as I am able to gather, I doubt very much if they will now settle for anything except their full rights.

QUESTION : By their full rights you mean autonomy within Pakistan or Independence.

THE PRIME MINISTER : At this moment there is lot of bitterness and hatred on both sides, but more on the side of the East Bengalis because they are the people who have been killed. They cannot forget what happened on the night of 25th March when there was this entirely unprovoked attack on the university where students and faculty members were killed in large numbers. And even now, although everybody is being killed, the concentration is on the intellectuals, on the young people and on the minorities.

QUESTION : I think there has been universal admiration for the way that India has coped with the problem of looking after the refugees. But I think some people are confused as to why India will not accept a large United Nations presence in the refugee camps as Pakistan has suggested. Why won't India accept this ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : If I may deal with the admiration part first. It is a little bit of an irritant because, it is nice to be admired, but if people think you say a few flattering words and that is enough, well it is not because we are getting the verbal admiration and it seems to us the others are getting the more material help. So far as the U.N. observers are concerned we already have ten people. Ours is an open society, no censorship on newspapers, no limitation or restriction on who will visit the camps and everybody does, not only from other countries, but even people from our own country, whom we would rather wish they did not go, but anyway they go there and to the border and so on. What would be the purpose of more U.N. observers ? There are ten of them now. It is only a device, I think, of Pakistan to show that India and Pakistan are on the same level. This is what we resent. It does not matter if a hundred U.N. people come. But quite frankly they will be able to do nothing. Apart from that, what we resent is the two countries being put on par.

QUESTION : The guerillas in East Pakistan are clearly one of the reasons why there is unrest there still and yet India is widely reported to shelter them and give them some assistance. Don't you feel that if you were to withdraw this shelter and assistance then the situation might calm down a little bit in East Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Certainly not. On the contrary I think it would be very much worse. So far as giving shelter and help is concerned, you know our border is such that we cannot stop people coming or going. Even British teams have gone back and forth without our knowing where they left India and where they came back. And so far as help is concerned, you know there are vast numbers of East Bengalis living in England, in the U.S. and various other countries, who are supporting this movement. Furthermore the guerillas are functioning all over East Bengal, not near the Indian border necessarily. And also the bases of them are the para-military forces which existed before —the East Pakistan Rifles, the East Bengal Rifles—and they already had quite a fair amount of weapons.

QUESTION : You were elected Prime Minister, on a platform to, as you describe it, "Garibi Hatao"—to eradicate poverty. Now clearly the burden of the refugees must have set the Indian economy back. What exactly is the state of the Indian economy now ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The economy is not as healthy as it should be. All the problems are more acute, but if anybody thinks we are going under with this they are mistaken, because the Indian people have learnt, or just through sheer experience, they have the endurance of bearing enormous burdens. I think the capacity of man to suffer is limitless, and when there is a cause, such as the integrity and stability of the country, this quality, this endurance comes to the fore.

QUESTION : Could we just look briefly at India's foreign policy? The Soviet-India Peace Treaty, I think, worried some people in this country, because India, of course, has always been known as a non-aligned country and some people have felt that non-alignment and a peace treaty with Russia are not compatible.

THE PRIME MINISTER : But only those people have felt so who anyhow were against non-alignment and who did not approve of it. This Treaty has not affected non-alignment in any possible way. We retain our freedom to make our own decisions and take our own action.

QUESTION : India has said that she wants to improve her relationship with China. Now surely signing a Peace Treaty with Russia is not going to help you to improve your relations with China.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Why not? Perhaps you have seen what Mr. Chou-En-lai said. He said it would make no difference.

QUESTION : And you are not worried about the Pakistani situation—your relationship with China either.

THE PRIME MINISTER : No.

QUESTION : What about the United Nations? India has always supported China's entry into the United Nations. Do you feel that now that China is there, the United Nations is going to function more efficiently or less efficiently?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that is hardly a fair question. I really do not know how it is going to function. Only the future can tell. There is no reason why it should be less efficient. You can say it may take another direction.

QUESTION : Now could we turn finally to aid and trade. President Nixon announced a package decision to protect the dollar, and only at the weekend we hear the Senate's decision on the Aid Bill. Are you concerned about these general signs of American isolationism and the possible effect of this on trade and a trade war building up?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Naturally it will affect our economy, but these are matters for the Americans to decide and we just have to adjust to whatever they do. But there is one fact, which is, that in the last year

the whole nature of these loans has been such that, whatever we get, almost seven-eighths of it is used in repayments, so that we don't get very much anyhow.

QUESTION : I know that India has taken a particularly strong line on the fact that the recent discussions on the international monetary system have appeared to ignore the interests of the under-developed countries. Do you think there is any way of bringing the under-developed countries more into these discussions ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We would only like our interests to be guarded by these countries because if the division between the rich and the poor countries becomes sharper then I think it can only add to general tension in the world, which, in the long run will not be good for the richer countries either. And I don't think these floating currencies are very helpful. We would like to have a more stable situation.

QUESTION : Prime Minister, lastly could I return just to the situation in India and Pakistan and ask you how seriously you view the tensions between your country and your neighbour, Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that the more serious problem is not the confrontation on the border—I have come to this view only in the last few minutes I might add—but this constant effort of people in other countries to divert attention from what is the basic question, because that never solves anything. You can divert, you can find a temporary solution, but if there is an illness and you are not treating the cause of the illness, well, it recurs—and it can recur in a more violent form.

QUESTION : But how long do you feel then that this illness can go on without the situation sliding into something far more serious, even a war ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it is sliding into something more serious right now.

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QUESTION : PRIME MINISTER, the mass migration of Pakistanis into India has received an enormous amount of world attention. What do you feel the choices facing India now are ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The choices are extremely limited. The situation keeps on deteriorating, which will have very serious consequences on the Indian economy, on the stability, the security and even integrity of the country.

Interview on B.B.C.-TV by Michael Charlton, November 1, 1971

QUESTION : But as a result of your visit to Western Europe, do you feel that there is a possibility that the concern which nearly all countries have expressed for India, will be translated into action of some kind ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Although people here are concerned, but Europe has always looked at the world from European eyes, whereas all the other countries of Asia and Africa, because of their own compulsion, their own problems, have to deal with them from the point of view of their own interest. Many European countries—not only European, other countries as well—have been trying to maintain what they call 'a balance of power' on the sub-continent. I think this is a question not for me to answer, but for them to answer whether they think that an India which is weak, or not so stable, can serve any useful purpose for peace in Asia.

QUESTION : Would you say then that you are disappointed with the result of your visits and your talks with the Prime Minister, that you don't feel that they understand the problems sufficiently ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, I am not disappointed. Firstly, because I never expect anything and I think they do have an understanding. Now the question is to feel the question or the difficulty sharply enough or deeply enough to want to do something about it.

QUESTION : Given the long history of intractable disputes, like Kashmir, on the sub-continent, do you get the feeling that people somehow believe that it might be easier to subsidise this calamity, to pay for it rather than to solve it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Which people ? As you see now, other things may have remained the same, but India has not. We are not dependent upon what other countries think, or want us to do. We know what we want for ourselves and we are going to do it, whatever it costs. We welcome help from any country, but if it does not come, well, it is all right by us.

QUESTION : But can you tell us what is the military situation on the frontiers with Pakistan today—because it does appear confused. President Yahya Khan of Pakistan last week called for the withdrawal of armoured forces and troops to peace-time positions which suggests that you are in a state of war.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are not in a state of war. So far as the troops themselves are concerned, they are on the borders on both sides. But President Yahya Khan should have thought of this before he moved his troops, because they did move long before our troops moved. Our troops moved only when we felt there was a very serious threat to our security. I have no doubt that had we not been prepared, he would

have walked in, and I would like to remind you that we have been attacked by Pakistan twice before. So for us it is not a theoretical problem at all.

QUESTION : But last week there were reports of battalion-sized actions and aircraft being involved and casualties up in the region of something like five hundred. Is that what is happening on the border?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I doubt it very much. We have had the experience also of other statements made by leaders across the border, which they themselves have retracted afterwards in world forums. So this is not the first time that we hear all these things.

QUESTION : But there have been artillery duels across this border for some time now, have not there—in the East?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, there has been some shelling.

QUESTION : Are they continuing?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think so.

QUESTION : Broadly then, how would you describe the tension on the borders? Is it...?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it is very tense, as I said, it is extremely serious.

QUESTION : And is the momentum towards war, do you feel, still gathering speed, or is it being slowed down?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Let us put this in perspective. War is an evil thing. India has always stood out against war, no matter where it took place. But there are things which are more important, and today we feel that not only for the sake of the Indian people but for the peace in Asia and world peace, stability, integrity and the security of India, is of first importance. I don't think anything should divert the world's attention from this point. This is the major point.

QUESTION : Yes, I was really putting to you that there seems an inevitability about the way things are going—a slide towards war, which —as you say—you are deeply concerned to avoid at all costs if you can, but is the situation—is it that—is there a momentum towards war, which you feel that you cannot yet arrest?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have arrested it. If I had not been calm and restrained, the fighting would have been bad. What word have I uttered, or anybody from my Government for that matter, which could be construed as a threat or as a push towards war? But if you look

at some statements on the other side, there is no doubt whatsoever, absolutely public.

QUESTION : Is there a risk that you will be attacked by Pakistan, in your view now, at this moment ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : One just can't say, and it also depends on what you consider an aggression. In 1965, thousands of infiltrators were sent and they said they didn't commit aggression but after all it was an aggression when they were obviously there to occupy the place and make way for the army.

QUESTION : Do you believe that conditions are favourable to secure the return of the refugees by tougher action, either diplomatic or in the last resort, military ? Are the conditions now favourable for that ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't know where conditions are ever favourable to this. Sometimes things just have to be done. We in India are determined that we are not going to be saddled with Pakistan's problems. They had a problem—very large number of persons who voted against the present regime, in a free election held under the supervision of the present Government of West Pakistan, who voted democratically, have been either killed or pushed across the border. Now, why should we receive another country's problem like this ? Would this make sense to anybody ?

QUESTION : But how great is your determination to do this and do you have some time in mind within which you must do it to make it credible?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am not interested in making anything credible. I am interested in the future and the present for that matter, of my country and my people. Now they have faith in me and I cannot betray that faith.

QUESTION : Now you have spoken of the first steps which are necessary to do something about this inundation of refugees and you have said that first of all the continuing exodus must be stopped, but what first steps can be taken to stop that ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, surely that the massacre there stops, the rape stops, the burning of villages stops.

QUESTION : You have spoken of first steps needed to improve the situation, the first step being to stop the exodus of refugees. Now can it not be fairly put to you that you are contributing in a way to the exodus of the refugees by your support for the Pakistan guerillas who are operating in East Pakistan—Pakistan army takes reprisals against them, against villages which harbour the guerilla fighters and that causes the exodus, or is at least in part responsible for it. Now must not you,

in effect, face the question of having to reduce your support for the guerilla armies operating in East Pakistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Does that mean we allow a massacre to continue? What happened first? How many people were killed according to your correspondents of British newspapers, of American newspapers, of French newspapers, Canadian newspapers, Arabian newspapers? The massacre began long before there was a single guerilla.

QUESTION : But as a contribution to quietening the situation as I say....

THE PRIME MINISTER : Now, what does quietening mean? Does it mean that we allow... We support the genocide, and do you think it can be stopped? Do you think people are going to sit aside and watch their women raped in front of them? And say that 'No, we are going to quieten the situation'. That is not quietness. That is the worst possible type of war, it is the worst possible type of violence.

QUESTION : But how then, without something done to control the guerrilla activity in return for greater discipline by the Pakistan army, can you secure these first steps?

THE PRIME MINISTER : When Hitler was on the rampage, why didn't you say 'Let's keep quiet and let's have peace in Germany and let the Jews die, or let Belgium die, let France die'? Would you say that was quiet?

QUESTION : But how do you propose to bring about these first steps to control the exodus...?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not for us to... this would never have happened if the world community had woken up to the fact when we first drew their attention to it. They knew this was happening, the newspaper people were sending reports. We got most of our news from the British, the American and other foreign papers.

QUESTION : So what do you believe are the broad outlines for a settlement?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We cannot decide on a settlement for the people of Bangladesh. That is a decision which only they themselves can take. But I can only say that to have a re-election of all seats which are already occupied, to which people have been elected in a democratic and free election, is farcical, to say the least.

QUESTION : But do you believe that in order to achieve a settlement and secure the return of the refugees, that the people of Bangladesh, of what was East Pakistan, are going to have to settle for something rather

less than full independence? Autonomy perhaps within a union but less than full independence?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Well, it depends entirely on them. This was not our show. It is their show; it is their lives we are talking about. We are not talking about some game where you make a particular move or another move. We are talking about the lives of millions of people.

QUESTION: In one of your recent speeches you have said that you are sitting on a volcano, may I also suggest to you that you appear to be sitting on the fence, that you are standing aloof from this problem. You say it is a question to be settled between the two wings of Pakistan, between east and west, but how are they to be brought together?

THE PRIME MINISTER: We do not know how they are coming together. It is our concern insofar as it affects us. While the matter is basically between the military regime of West Pakistan and the people and their elected representatives of East Bengal, Pakistani troops are massed on our western borders also. So, therefore, we are in no way sitting on the fence and saying we are not concerned. We are concerned. But we cannot decide what the people of East Bengal will do. Only they can take that decision.

QUESTION: But when you stand aside like that, can you really afford to, when India is giving sanctuary and support to those who wish to liberate East Pakistan. You are involved and you have also refused an offer of talks with the President of Pakistan. Is there not a contradiction in your position?

THE PRIME MINISTER: None at all. Do you want us to murder the people who come to India. The only way we could have stopped them was to kill them off. There was no other way out at all and nobody has been able to suggest that there was a way out.

QUESTION: No, of course, I don't suggest that and I don't really see that that follows, but ...

THE PRIME MINISTER: It does follow.

QUESTION: ... But I wonder why you do refuse the offer of talks. Isn't it important to talk sooner rather than later?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Talk with whom—and about what? Up to now, President Yahya Khan is telling everybody and he may be telling it now for all I know, that the situation in Bangladesh is absolutely normal. Now, either he does not know what is happening, or he is telling a deliberate untruth. Either way, where is the foundation for a talk?

QUESTION : More broadly, do you feel therefore, in the light of what you have just said, that the whole idea of two nations on the sub-continent of India, set up as a result of partition, has failed ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We said so very clearly before this took place, and most of the Indian people, I would say, were against the whole thing. But our leaders, and I think perhaps, rightly, thought that this would bring peace. It would give the opportunity for India to go forward, and build a better life for its poor people. They wholly accepted this and we are in no way against Pakistan, or the people of Pakistan, for whom I have the friendliest of feelings. But I do feel that the governments of the world today are not helping either Pakistan as a country, or the people of Pakistan. They are bolstering up a military regime, which is not interested in the welfare of its people.

QUESTION : Does not the whole separative tendency, as shown in East Bengal, pose great dangers to you in India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : None whatsoever.

QUESTION : Won't it excite separatist tendencies within India... ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, No. Because we deal with our people and we see that their legitimate grievances are diminished and the problems solved.

QUESTION : You don't see an increasing tendency for power to be devolved from the Centre throughout the sub-continent and the lingual division of states and so on, as something which will be harder for you to control ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it is difficult for you people to understand. We don't have any divisive tendencies, we have sixteen languages, we may have twenty languages, but we are one people, Indian, with a strong basis of unity which is always there. But in times of crisis whether it is a crisis of this nature, which is across our borders, or the kind of crisis which we had three years ago which was drought, the people are one and nobody is going to be able to weaken them or disrupt that unity.

QUESTION : Well, you can make a tremendous case for what you have just said. A week or so before the deluge of refugees descended on you, you received a massive new mandate from the people of India which many saw as the revitalization of Indian democracy. You won on a programme promising radical change and reform in India. Now all that is in jeopardy because of the refugee problem. What are the consequences of your inability to fulfil your election pledges likely to be ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Indian people, strange as it may sound to people of the West, are quite mature in their judgment. They all have grievances, they all have demands. But if it is a time of difficulty I think we would stand together. We have tremendous capacity to suffer and to endure and if we have to do it, we will do it.

QUESTION : I was wondering whether the consequences might not be rather greater than that, I mean, would you feel that democracy itself is jeopardised unless you can fulfil your . . . ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Not in India. Democracy can go anywhere in the world but it will not be jeopardised in India. It is only foreign people who thought the democracy was in danger. I have never believed that for a single second.

QUESTION : But you, yourself, how do you personally feel having been elected on radical platform of change in India, to see it all jeopardised now, rather than see it sacrificed, rather than see it continue to be jeopardised, what would you ask the Indian people to do as a last resort to solve this problem for you ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it is very important that we lessen our poverty, that we fight against the various social and economic injustices and inequalities, but something is more important and that is the freedom of the country, and I have no doubt, not a shadow of doubt, that every political party, right, left or centre, will be solidly with us in anything which they consider is threatening our freedom and our security.

QUESTION : Very briefly, Prime Minister, finally, you've spoken of a need to reassess the relationship with this country. After all, our destinies have been intertwined for something like two or three hundred years now. How would you wish to see it reassessed ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Firstly to forget the past. I think that there is too much harping on what the relationship was. That relationship snapped with independence and I think it was because in the earlier years we tried to hang on to it, that we had a period when there was not such friendship but I think we can now make a friendship on a new basis with a far more rational approach to the different problems of both the countries, and what each of us gains by such a friendship and I think that there is considerable ground for such mutual benefit.

Bangladesh Crisis

I AM DELIGHTED to be here once again with you all. I have met several of you in the meantime in India or in other parts of the globe. You have been given some description of my day. But perhaps all of you who are acquainted with the life of anybody who is in politics know that actually no two days are ever the same. And as much as one would like to meditate and do various other such necessary and agreeable things, more often than not this remains in the realm of desire rather than practice.

I find my relaxation and recreation when I am with people, and especially when I am with interesting people, such as in this hall today.

Our time is limited, so I am not going to make a long speech. I am just going to mention a few points which may help you to formulate your questions. And, of course, anything that you are interested in will crop up in the questions you ask.

I was here just five years ago and I spoke to you then of what we have been trying to do in India. Much has happened in that time, not only in India but in all parts of the world. But naturally, just now I am more concerned with my own country.

Doubts were expressed then in 1966, in my own country and by the world Press, including the Press in the United States, about our unity, our democracy and even our ability to survive. Well, all I can say is there I am again. But we have gone through a period of darkness and difficulty, which even for a people accustomed to hardship has been exceptionally severe. We are now self-sufficient in wheat and rice and other cereals, which are the staple diet of our people. With increasing expansion in irrigation facilities and fertiliser output, major breakthroughs are expected in other farm products as well. Our family planning programmes have had some impact. The census held this last March showed that our population was fourteen million less than had been estimated.

Political changes in our party have taken place peacefully, giving greater coherence and sense of direction to our national life. Our confidence in our people was justified in our general election. On an average, sixty per cent of the people voted, not only in the cities but in the remote areas of the interior and in the mountains. The people gave me and my party a good majority. But what was special about the elections was the enthusiasm with which the people, and especially the young people, made it their own campaign.

The elections aroused new hope in our people and generated new energy and purpose in us. But today your thoughts and mine are

Press meet at National Press Club, Washington, November 5, 1971

preoccupied with the crisis of Bangladesh, that is, East Bengal. There, too, elections were held. The fact that even under a military regime the people of East Bengal so overwhelmingly voted for the Awami League showed their deep desire for democratic rights. The military rulers used the period of negotiations to amass troops. And on the very day when the Awami League thought that settlement was to be reached, a reign of terror such as history has rarely witnessed was unleashed.

I have not hesitated sometimes to criticise the Press, of course, in self-defence. But on this occasion, I should like to express appreciation of the manner in which the Press correspondents of many countries have tried to arouse the conscience of the world. They have shown courage and perseverance in lifting the veil around East Bengal and revealing the truth of the grim tragedy being enacted there. Their words have been honest and direct, but the photographs have outdone them in conveying the very essence of sorrow and misery.

What is taking place there is not a civil war, in the ordinary sense of the word; it is a genocidal punishment of civilians for having voted democratically. It is a strange and cynical way of getting rid of one's opponents and of deliberately using helpless millions as a weapon against a neighbour nation. The number of the refugees is equal to the population of some of the countries of Europe, such as Austria and Belgium, where I was only recently.

We feel that this is a new kind of aggression. It certainly casts an unconscionable economic burden on us and has created political and social tensions endangering our security. This is not a purely internal matter of one country, because the overflow of the political, economic and security consequences are affecting another country, that is, India. This is not an international dispute, certainly not an Indo-Pakistan dispute, for the traditional international instruments to be invoked.

We are told that the confrontation of troops is a threat to peace. Is there no threat to peace when a whole people are massacred ? Will the world be concerned only if people die because of war between two countries and not if hundreds of thousands are butchered and expelled by a military regime waging war against the people ?

We cannot draw upon precedents to deal with this unprecedented variety of aggression. We have to devise new patterns of response. It is in order to impress on world leaders the nature of the crisis and the means of resolving it that I wrote to heads of governments several months ago and sent some of my colleagues to meet them. We informed them that the only way out of the mess which the military rulers of Pakistan have made for themselves is to have a political settlement with the elected representatives of East Bengal, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, if he is alive, and his colleagues who embody the will of the people.

Had the world realised it then, much of this mounting misery and the migration of many more millions could have been avoided. The chances of such a settlement have grown more slender with each new day of neglect. But there might still be time if world leaders appreciated the reality of the situation.

In the various capitals I have visited on this tour I have been asked what solution India would like. The question is not what we would like, or what one or other of the big powers would like, but what the people of East Bengal will accept and what solution would be a lasting one.

I should like to plead with the world not to press me for a solution which leaves out the people of East Bengal. It is an illusion to think that the fate of a country can be decided without reference to its people. Once again, we see the old habit of underestimating the power of nationalism in Asia and of the demand of the people of Asia to make their own choice. Those who subscribe to the belief that democratically reached decisions are the most viable should recognise that the process of democracy admits no geographical disqualification. If democracy is good for you, it is good for us in India, and it is good for the people of East Bengal.

The suppression of democracy is the original cause of all the trouble in Pakistan. The nations of the world should make up their minds who is more important to them, one man and his machine or a whole nation.

I am asked what initiatives India will take. We have taken the biggest possible initiative in remaining so self-restrained and in keeping in check the anger within our country. We have endeavoured strenuously to see that this does not become an Indo-Pakistan issue. Any direct talks between the two countries would immediately be converted into such a dispute and make the solution more difficultt. Pakistan has been trying to create conditions in which the world would think that Pakistan is threatened by a more powerful neighbour. As I have said, the threat to Pakistan has come from its own rulers, not from us. When the regime there found out that its calculations did not succeed, it moved its troops to our western frontier, knowing full well that we would be forced to follow suit.

Pakistan's pleas for observers from the United Nations, for bilateral talks with India, and for mutual withdrawal of troops seemed very plausible at first sight. But these are only methods to divert the attention of the world from the root of the problem to what are merely byproducts. We cannot be sidetracked. We cannot have a dialogue with Pakistan on the future of East Bengal, because we have no right to speak for the people of East Bengal. Only Sheikh Mujib or the elected and accepted representatives of East Bengal have that right.

I have merely touched on certain points and on what I thought would interest you the most. I should like to leave the time now for questions. But I want to add only one thing, because the President of your club said that I had come here to ask for aid. I have not asked for any aid, neither in this country nor in any of the other countries which I have visited. I believe that it is not the task of any one country to say to another what they should do even if it is a question of helping. It is my duty to put the situation in my country and its neighbourhood, to give my assessment of the situation to the leaders of the countries I visit. It is for them, then, with their own assessment and what they hear from me, to make up their mind what they think about this and what they should do about it.

My intention in coming here was, of course, primarily in response to President Nixon's invitation, which was extended to me about a year ago, long before these events took place, but also because I believe that in our fast changing world it is important for heads of government to keep in touch with leaders of other nations to find out their thinking and to be better educated about this changing world.

QUESTION : Madame Gandhi, could you give us some description of the subjects covered in your talks with President Nixon ? And what do you think the talks accomplished, if anything ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is the sort of question that I thought I would only make on the fifteenth of November when our Parliament meets and which one has to circle around a bit. Because you could not have useful talks with heads of nations if you were immediately to divulge exactly what was talked about.

I think the talks have been useful. They have been very wide-ranging, practically all over the world : Europe, Asia, bilateral matters, international matters. And what they have achieved is what I said in my remarks : I think the President knows now what we are thinking in India, and I have a better appreciation of what the American Government thinks about all these matters. I don't think I can go into greater details on this occasion.

QUESTION : Maybe you won't answer this, but let me ask. Initial reports suggested there was firm disagreement between you and President Nixon over the ways of reaching a political solution with Pakistan. Are these reports correct ? And would you elaborate ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, this report is not correct. As I said, it is for the U.S. Government and the President to see what they can do in the matter. I was certainly impressed by the President's sincere desire to try and help in this very difficult situation. I think this report was largely based on the fact that we met for longer than was

expected or scheduled. But that is only because we had so much to talk about. And that is why the talks overflowed to this morning also.

However close any two countries are, each country must have its own point of view, because that point of view is influenced by the geopolitical situation of the country, by the historic background, and many other experiences which can never be duplicated in two countries. So although I would say that we have a similarity of approach with the United States, we could never have an absolutely identical approach neither with the United States or, for that matter, with any other country.

And in this, of course, we would only put to the President and his colleagues our assessment of the situation on our borders, its likely impact on India. And we do think that peace in India, stability in India is of utmost importance, not to us only, but to Asia and, I think, the world.

QUESTION : Did you expect President Nixon to speak up, to stand up and be counted when democracy was suppressed in East Bengal? As a result of your talks here, do you expect a change in American policy?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I don't think it would be fair for me to tell President Nixon what he should do. This is for him to judge, keeping very many aspects in view.

Now, you see, to say whether there would be a change in American policy—as I said, I think that the President is trying to find a way. But the whole thing has got so entangled that it is not easy for anybody to find a way.

QUESTION : Madame Gandhi, why does India not agree to the proposal of Yahya Khan for the withdrawal of both Indian and Pakistani troops from the frontier?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have just touched on this point in my earlier remarks. When the refugees first started coming into India, we drew the attention of the United Nations to this fact. And at that time we were told that this was an internal problem and nothing could be done, even though we had said that the repercussions would be far-reaching. After that it was Pakistan who brought its troops right up on our western border. It was not India who moved then. Then attention of the United Nations observers there was drawn to it, and they questioned this. And they were told by the Pakistanis that they were merely—what is the word?—training or doing exercises, military exercises.

Obviously, this was not a very convincing reply. But, presumably, it was accepted as the truth. But we couldn't accept it as the truth. And we waited a week or so until we were convinced that our security might be in danger. You may all of you remember that we have had three

aggressions on our soil, one from China and two from Pakistan. And also our lines of communication with all these border areas are not too good. It was my duty as head of the government to see that we should not be found once again unprepared. And that is why we moved our troops up also.

By speaking about withdrawal of troops, it is again a question of diverting the world focus from the problem of East Bengal, which is the main problem. Even if troops are withdrawn—we don't really trust this—the question is of how far they are withdrawn. There is also the question of the irregular troops. In 1965 conflict, we had the experience of thousands of infiltrators being led into Kashmir in an effort to weaken the country from inside, hoping that this would give support to the later aggression by the Pakistani Army. That didn't happen, because although the infiltrators came in, our people—we didn't have any army there—the ordinary people, the farmers, the nomadic tribes who look after their goats and their cattle, these people stood up to the infiltrators and helped us to control the situation.

So there isn't only one type of confrontation. And in this particular situation, the major question is what is happening in East Bengal. And I don't think you can separate what is happening on the west from this basic question.

QUESTION : A pair of questions, Madame Gandhi. Is India willing to accept the good offices of the U.N. Secretary General for defusing the dangerous India-Pakistan tension ? Also, even though India is not to blame, why can't you allow U.N. observers in your area if it would bring peace to South Asia ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : To take the second question first. I would say that we do have United Nations observers. There are some on the western front for many years, and there are ten representatives of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees in the East. So it's not as if there are no observers or no foreigners.

Also, ours is a very free and open society. And ambassadors and other members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the Press, radio, television from many countries, parliamentary delegations from Canada, the United Kingdom, countries of Europe, Scandinavia, Latin America, Japan, New Zealand : all these people have been and are going to the border, as well as to the camps.

So there is no question of our hiding anything or preventing anybody from going. But the question is, as this person has said, if it would bring peace to South Asia. Now, we don't see how can it bring peace to South Asia. Something is happening in East Bengal. People are still being killed. Refugees numbering thousands are still coming in every single day. Now if you want the refugees who are already in these very uncomfortable, overcrowded camps to go back,

the first question that they will ask is, is it safe? And if it is safe, why are more people coming? So this is a question that you have to be able to answer.

But if the Secretary General, or whoever is taking an interest, is able to ensure that this stream which is still pouring in can be stopped, then as the next step, he could say, "Now we will consolidate that position and create conditions in which the rest can go back."

QUESTION : In bringing the world's attention to the present crisis, why did you not schedule a visit to the United Nations?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I didn't think it would serve much useful purpose.

QUESTION : Some observers say that the new Indo-Soviet treaty definitely takes India out of the camp of the neutrals. Would you comment?

THE PRIME MINISTER : India has never been in the Camp of the neutrals, because while in America you have used the word "neutralism," in India we have never used that word. Non-alignment does not mean being neutral or unconcerned, or ignoring what is happening in the world. It merely means that we do not belong to a military bloc and that we reserve the right to judge each international issue on its own merits, not because the U.S. is supporting it or the U.S.S.R. or, anybody else. We like to see these things from our own point of view and in the light of our own national interests and also, of course, of world peace.

So far as the Indo-Soviet treaty is concerned, it does not affect our position of being a non-aligned country. So we are not allowing military bases to any country. And while under the treaty we shall consult with the Soviet Union should any dangerous situation arise, it is entirely a matter for India to decide by herself what decision we take, what steps we take.

QUESTION : In assisting elements in East Pakistan to achieve independence, are not the Indians playing into the hands of the Soviet Union, which has sought to obtain an outlet on the Indian Ocean?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't really see how the Soviet Union gets an outlet in the Indian Ocean by anything happening in East Bengal. I don't think this makes any difference.

The question is now whether India is assisting elements or not. I think all that India is doing is to make a very realistic assessment of an existing situation. What can be a lasting solution? What solution or what agreement will the people of East Bengal settle for? That is the question. Our assessment is that the bitterness and the hatred have grown so much in the last months that it will be very difficult to have any solution which comes short of their aspirations.

Now this is the reality of the situation. It is not whether we like it or we want it, as I said in my earlier remarks.

QUESTION : Madame Gandhi, do you foresee any beneficial effects from Red China's admission to the United Nations ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As you know, we have always stood for China's admission. And we did not change our policy even when China was against us and fought us and took some of our territory, because we believe that it is not good for any large nation to be isolated or cornered. Again, it was a question of facing the reality of the situation. The question was not do we like China or not, will China be friendly to India or not. The fact was that China was there. And how can you just say it isn't there ? Your thinking is not going to change the situation. And if it is there, I think it's better for it to be in a position where it can act with people or listening to other people's viewpoints, rather than from a remote corner which is cut off from the rest of the world.

QUESTION : Did you have any occasion to offer advice to President Nixon on his forthcoming trip to Peking ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I wouldn't presume to offer advice.

QUESTION : Do you plan visits to the People's Republic of China and to the U.S.S.R. in the near future ? If yes, approximately how soon after the visits of President Nixon ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There's no such proposal at the moment. I did go to Moscow for just one day last September.

QUESTION : Do you have any comments to offer on Dr. Kissinger ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, he's a very nice man. (*Laughter*).

QUESTION : What effect would reopening of the Suez Canal have on the economy of your part of the world ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It would certainly help us, because now all our cargo has to come all the way around, which naturally puts up the cost of the freight.

QUESTION : Does the fact that you see no useful purpose in visiting the U.N. reflect an assessment of the significance and strength of the United Nations ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, the United Nations has its weaknesses. But we have always supported it, because we feel it is essential to have such a forum. When there was the League of Nations everybody felt that it was not doing what it should do, and so it was done away with. But you had to then have something else and it came up under the name of

the United Nations. If we now get rid of the United Nations, I am sure we shall have another body which will be practically identical under a new name.

So it is important to have some such body. But we all know that it does suffer from certain weaknesses. It is not always able to assert itself. And quite often national policies play a part within the United Nations instead of being able to lift it above to higher plane.

QUESTION : When Australian Prime Minister McMahon was in the Press Club the other day he said there must be no war between Pakistan and India. He said he would tell you this. Did he talk to you, and what was said ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I did meet the Australian Prime Minister, but I don't remember his using these words. Naturally he is concerned, just as President Nixon is concerned and the Russian leaders and all of us are concerned, that war is not a good thing, and that war creates many new problems and entails a lot of suffering for all the people. As President Nixon has said, and others have said, in today's world there is no such thing as complete victory.

So we fully appreciate this. I myself am fully in agreement with this. But it is a question of the freedom, the security and the stability of our country. Those must be saved at all costs.

We are trying everything possible for this problem to be solved in a way other than war. We will not stop trying to look for some solution. Had notice been taken of this developing situation earlier, I am sure it could have been solved. But now many other elements have come in. First, I would like to take this opportunity to say that India has no quarrel either with Pakistan or the people of Pakistan. But we feel that because of one person's mistakes Pakistan is suffering. And if we try just to bail that one person out, it will not be at the cost of India; it will be at the cost of Pakistan itself.

QUESTION : Madame Gandhi, do you think that you, Golda Meir and the Prime Minister of Ceylon should form a new bloc of influential lady heads of state ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Perhaps the Women's Lib here should, you know, bring a campaign for this kind of getting together of lady Prime Ministers. (*Laughter*).

QUESTION : If Pakistan were to succeed in ousting its remaining Hindus, what would happen to the sixty million Muslims in India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I trust and hope that they will be perfectly safe. Although we do have people who have some very wrong ideas, and we have had riots, which we feel a cause for great shame, the Government

has been very firm on this matter. And I think that today all Indians, even those parties who do not normally support us in this, are supporting us in ensuring that peace is maintained in India and our minorities feel that they enjoy the rights and privileges which are theirs under our Constitution.

I said something about our not being against Pakistan. The Foreign Secretary has very rightly drawn my attention that I should make it clear that India has no designs on any territory of Pakistan. And I will add : or on any part of East Bengal. We certainly don't want to provoke a war with Pakistan.

QUESTION : What is your reaction to the defeat of the U.S. foreign aid bill ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think this is an internal matter which affects many countries. (*Laughter*). I can't prophesy the future. So I don't really know what is going to happen to this. So far as India is concerned, we have welcomed help, and the help which we have received from this country has enabled us to do many things which we could not otherwise have done. But little by little, we are becoming self-reliant and able to stand on our own feet.

And the real burden of development has been increasingly and overwhelmingly our own, built on the endeavour and the sacrifice of the people of India. Also, today, the foreign aid we get largely goes to repay what we got before. So it does not really help us to do very much more.

QUESTION : What impact will the improvement of United States' relations with China have on India and on other Asian countries ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It should have a good impact. Any relationship, if it is not against anybody else, increases the area of peace. And that is why we have welcomed this move. And we sincerely hope that one by one the various areas of tension in the world will be reduced.

QUESTION : Someone wants to know about your cat, Zobra. Was it named after Zobra the Greek ? And if not, after whom or what ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, Zobra is a he and a Siamese. And I think he was named after the film because actually it was my daughter-in-law who named it. She was determined that it should have a name beginning with a "Z". And we went through the 'Z' list, and everybody thought this was the nicest name. No reflection on the Greek, I hope. (*Laughter*).

CHAIRMAN : Madame Gandhi, someone wants you to discuss the role of the Indian Ocean and world peace.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We would like the Indian Ocean to be an area of peace and co-operation.

QUESTION : What is the future of the English Language in India ? Will it be supplanted by Hindi ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do speak English in India. But even at the height of the British rule, the number of people who spoke it was less than two per cent. In fact, I think around one point something per cent. I think the number remains the same now. Our education is now in the mother tongue, not only in Hindi, but in the various other languages. We have sixteen languages. Each of our states has its own language, not a dialect; but a full language with its own script, ancient literature, and so on. It is just as if the countries of Europe joined together, France speaking French and Germany speaking German, and so on.

We are trying to make Hindi a kind of national link. That is, you learn your mother tongue, and then you learn Hindi, which enables you to communicate with other Indians, and then you learn English, which enables you to communicate with other countries. But I must say that our English is our own. It doesn't always have great similarity to the English spoken either in England or in the U.S.A. (*Laughter*).

QUESTION : Is your recent treaty with the Soviet Union completely compatible with the policy of non-alignment, such as was promoted by your father, Prime Minister Nehru ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We think it is. And a few people who have commented on it—President Tito when he was in India, Just before he came here—he also told us that he fully realised that it did not impinge on our non-alignment. And I believe that our friend Chou En-lai has also said in an interview to some foreign correspondent that it did not prevent us—that he thought it was not a change in our position.

QUESTION : Should East Pakistan be made an independent and sovereign nation ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I said, I think that this question should be put to the people of East Bengal.

QUESTION : A follow-up question on the Indian Ocean. Both America and the Soviet Union are sending increasing naval forces into the area. How do you feel about this ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We can only hope that this will not increase the tensions there.

QUESTION : Why doesn't India encourage more United States private investments to expedite economic development particularly in areas of

resource development and in more effective distribution of food and other consumer industries ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think we discourage U.S. private investment. But we do have a policy of trying to encourage Indian know-how and Indian capacity. We think that is the only way in which we can stand on our feet. So we encourage foreign investment only in those areas where we feel that India is not capable of doing that thing herself.

I think we have a fair amount of U.S. private investment, and also from West Germany and other countries of the West. But it is true that some of our policies are a little irritating to the private industrialists, because we are concerned not only with what comes out of the country, but also where an industry is located. In the last years our sole objective was to increase the industrialisation. And we found that production was trebled. But it was located only in certain areas, and this increased the already existing disparities.

Now we are trying to give a broader base to our industry and to diversify it so that more and more people can come in and economic power is not left in the hands of only a few families. I am sure you can all appreciate how important it is in a poor country that economic development should be accompanied by what the people consider to be social justice.

QUESTION : What advice, Madame Gandhi, would you give to American women who aspire to careers in politics or government ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that American women are quite smart enough to figure this out for themselves. (*Laughter and applause*).

QUESTION : If a solution cannot be imposed on the people of East Bengal by the big powers, what reason is there to believe that the big powers can impose a Mid-East solution on Egypt and Israel ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : At this moment I think that the situation in Egypt and Israel and the Middle East is not very hopeful. But we know from experience that sometimes the tightest and most complicated of knots can be cut through. This is the only hope that some way can be found.

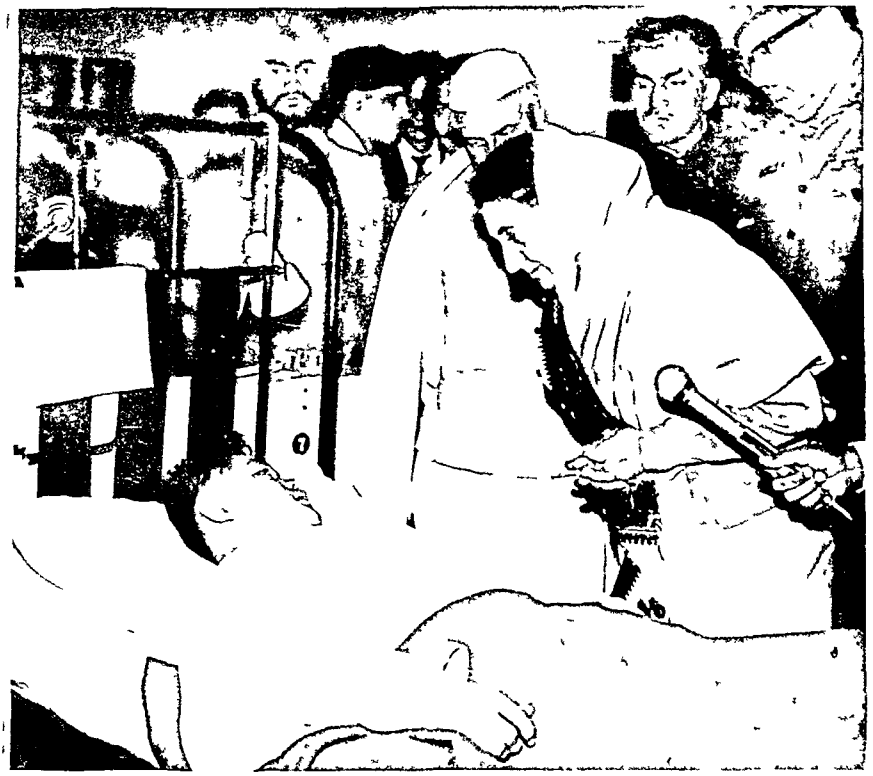
Earlier on, there was a question on the Soviet treaty. Perhaps you know that one of the articles—I think it's Article IV—was especially put in which the Soviet Union has expressed its own appreciation and respect for India's policy of non-alignment. As regards the question of refugees going back and whether the presence of somebody from the U.N. would help this, perhaps the whole problem would come more alive for you if I give you a comparison. For instance, we had the problem of the Jews in Hitler's Germany. Suppose you had said, "Let us send some observers there." How would it have helped the situation for the Jews there ? Would it have helped the Jews who were forced



With Senator Edward Kennedy of U S A , New Delhi, August 16, 1971

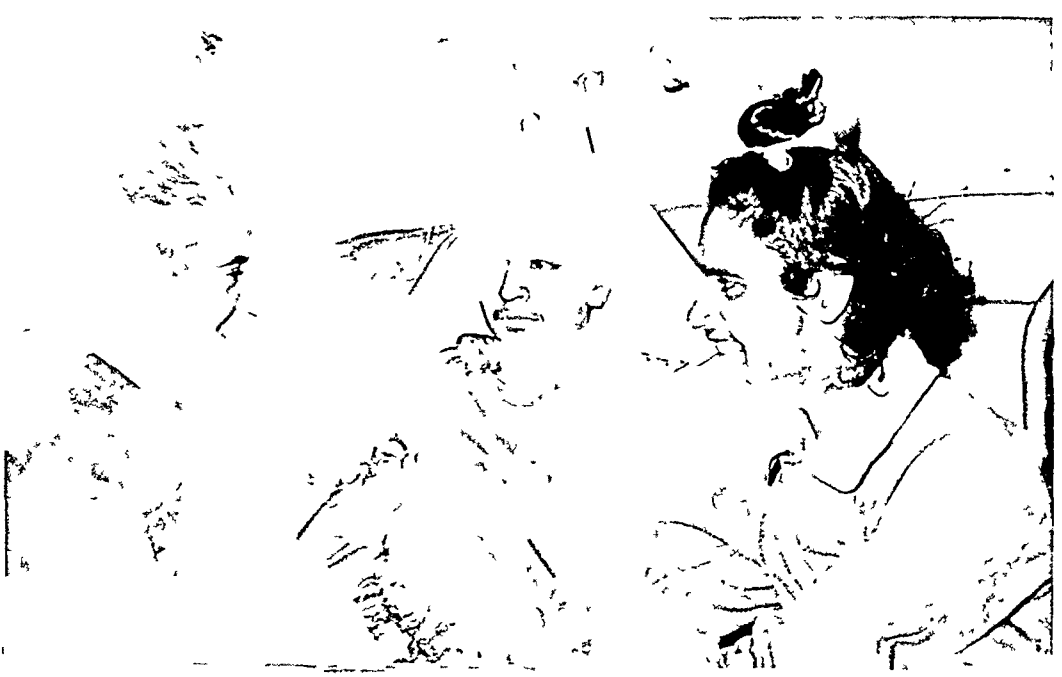


Words of succour to Bangladesh refugees, October, 1971



With a wounded soldier of Mukti Bahini, December, 1971

A bouquet for a wounded jawan at a military hospital, December, 1971





Receiving the 'Bharat Ratna' award from President V. V. Giri, New Delhi, December 17, 1971



With Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman on his arrival from London, after his release by Pakistan, New Delhi, January 22, 1972

Signing the historic Simla Agreement, Simla, July 3, 1972

to come out because of the discrimination and the killing and the concentration camps—would it have eased the situation for them? It is a very similar situation today in East Bengal.

QUESTION : Knowing East Bengal as you do, would you believe it to have the capability of nationhood, economically primarily, in the event they opted for independence and were granted it?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is a question which we had to face when we were fighting for our own independence. We were constantly told that the British would very happily give us independence, but India was not ready for it. Until you try and do a thing yourself, nobody knows whether you are ready or not. And I think we have certainly shown—and so have many other countries—that although once free they make mistakes, but they have to make those mistakes and learn through them and stand on their feet.

QUESTION : From India's experience, is effective birth control needed to bring development in countries like those in South America?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is one of those questions just to get me in trouble with South America. (*Laughter*). I was there a couple of years ago or so. And this was a very hotly debated subject at that time. It is really a question that each country has to decide for itself. I entirely agree that the world's population should be so controlled that we are able to give to each child what is his due, in education, food, better health, and so on.

But I don't think it's right to feel that this is the first priority because certainly in India we find that this settles by itself to a large extent. With all the money we are spending on family planning, the areas where it has been effective are in the cities where the standard of life has gone up. And I think even perhaps without our programme people would have come to this decision and control their families.

QUESTION : Who would you like to see as the next Secretary General of the United Nations?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Whoever is the most competent and the most likely to be elected. (*Laughter*).

CHAIRMAN : Someone wants to know, did you enjoy the history of the world your father wrote for you in letters from prison without reference books when you were a little girl?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I enjoyed it very much; firstly, because it was a link with him, and it was the only link there was. We had interviews sometimes. But quite often for some reason—either he said he wouldn't take interviews or the prison said they wouldn't give interviews—this was

the only link I had. And, secondly, because they were written from the point of view of a small girl, which histories very seldom are. And it opened up so many new doors for me that I can say that it really enriched my life right up till now.

QUESTION : In keeping with the importance you attach to a candid exchange of views between heads of state, wouldn't it be a good idea for you to meet with the President of Pakistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I have said that if the President of Pakistan would like to meet me to discuss the problems which exist between India and Pakistan, I would be very glad to do so. But not to discuss the problems which are not basically concerned with India. That is the future of the people of East Bengal. Now that's not an Indian problem; it's a problem which concerns the people of East Bengal and their elected representatives.

But there is one more aspect. You can only meet a person if there is a two-way trust. I said in London that I may want to shake hands with everybody. But if there is a clenched fist, well, you just can't shake hands with it. And this is the situation. If you have been noticing the sort of remarks which the President of Pakistan is making, either about me personally or in general, it is not an attitude which shows that there could be a very friendly conversation. From my side, I am always friendly. I have never said a rude word about anybody. (*Laughter and applause*).

CHAIRMAN : Madame Gandhi, before asking the final question, I would like to present you with a certificate of appreciation to commemorate your visit with us today. Traditionally we give the official Press Club necktie to our speakers. For obvious reasons, I shall do it a little differently. On your return to India, I would like if you would present these to your two sons.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Thank you. That is very nice of you. Thank you so much.

QUESTION : And the final question : Have you considered unleashing Krishna Menon against the Government of Pakistan? (*Laughter*).

THE PRIME MINISTER : If this question had been asked in our Parliament, we would have said it's a suggestion for action. (*Laughter*).

In continuation of the question before the last one where I said that I have not been rude with anybody, that happens to be not only because I find life more pleasant that way and that I was brought up in that way, but in the last elections I found that it paid very great political dividends. (*Laughter and applause*).

CHAIRMAN : Thank you, Madame Gandhi.

I AM DEEPLY touched by your words and by your asking me to come here this afternoon. The people of America have always shown an understanding of our problems. During our Independence struggle which has influenced my generation very profoundly and which has shaped our present in India, we took inspiration from the words of some of your own great men. India has striven to stand for freedom and democracy in our own country and in other places because we believe that these qualities, these ideals, are indivisible. We believe that what happens in one part of the world does affect other people and other countries.

Now it is very difficult to know what to say about India even to a distinguished audience such as this who are well-informed, because the country is so diverse and so full of contradictions that anything you say about it is true of some parts and equally untrue of other parts. It is a country of great poverty, but one which is fighting poverty with all its strength. But if I were to select just one Indian quality, I would say it is that of tolerance, and I think this is a quality which is so essential for any real working democracy.

The other day in England, I was asked something about the high ideals of India. My reply was that it is true that we have very high ideals, but like other countries India is also inhabited by human beings and not all human beings are able to live up to high ideals. Nevertheless, I think it is important if some of us aim at them and try to work our way by difficult, painful steps towards them.

Democracy can have many meanings. The meaning most often given to it in the West is that there should be a two-party system and that people should vote for one party or the other. In fact, we were told that because we had many parties, perhaps there was something wanting in our democracy and we should aim at a two-party system. Frankly, to us it seems very strange, because the two parties may not be able to contain all the opinions in a country at a time, though I must admit that sometimes the multiplicity of parties which we have in India is not a very great help to the public. But it is a phase of development, and I do not think it basically affects democracy. We have been able to have democracy, and democracy has been strengthened because of this quality of tolerance, which is an old quality in Indian philosophy and in our way of life.

We have many differences among ourselves. We have differences even within my party, but our method has been to try and talk things over and see how we can minimise the difference or points of dispute, how we can talk and arrive at some kind of working compromise. That is why through the years, even though the people of India are not educated and many of them, I am sorry to say, are still illiterate, it

Address at Columbia University, New York, November 6, 1971

would not be true to say that therefore they do not understand the problems which affect them. We have seen in our elections that every election has been an occasion for the education of people and that they have voted with maturity and understanding. I do not mean to say that many of them are not misled or diverted by irrelevant factors, sometimes by misleading propaganda, but if you will forgive me, I will say that their number is no larger than in the more educated countries.

The basic problem in India is one of poverty. We feel, therefore, that democracy cannot be real for the people unless it is accompanied by a system which gives greater equality. You all know that the words freedom and democracy did not always mean what they mean today. In periods of history they applied only to a limited group. A few people were privileged people and were known as citizens; the rest may have been slaves or not entitled to the rights of freedom or democracy. But today no one will accept that situation. Today democracy means that every single person living in a country as a citizen should have full and equal rights.

Now this is our attempt in India. Under the Constitution it is so, but in reality it is not yet. The policy of the Government aims at enabling our people to take advantage of the rights which are theirs under the Constitution. We do not have any dogmatic stand, nor do we like to be labelled. Roughly we say we are a secular, socialist democracy. And 'secular' in India does not mean anti-religion; it merely means that there is no state religion but that all the religions of the different people living there will be equally honoured and equally respected. Socialism, we think, is the only way through which we can lessen the disparities between the different sections and, therefore, make democracy more meaningful.

When we were fighting for freedom, we thought freedom was the end, the ultimate aim. But when we got there, we found it was not. It was merely the opening of a door, the door of opportunity. And the door led to a tremendously difficult path, which was not merely the responsibility of the Government or the party. If we had to go on this journey, we would need the participation and help of all the people of India. Now this is what we are trying to do. We have many parties, parties who are against our basic policies and parties who are not, and parties who say we are not implementing our policies in the manner in which this should be done. We have found room for all these different paths and ideas. And our vision of the future is that it is through co-operation and not conflict that we can go ahead.

Although we have great diversity of languages, of religions, even of races, of customs, we do not think it is a weakening factor. In fact, it is a surprise to me when I come abroad and at almost every place I am asked this question, "Will Indian unity hold ? How do you manage

these different languages?" Each state has its language and the people there study in that language. But it does not prevent their working in other states, travelling in other states. It does not upset the basic feeling of Indianness which binds us all together.

Indian unity is an established fact. It is not dependent on a political party or a person. It is something which just exists in India and I do not think that it can easily be diminished or weakened. But there are many tendencies which could weaken unity. In fact, I think in the whole world there is always constant conflict between things that divide and weaken and others which cement together. It is for us to work towards the cementing, uniting strengthening factors rather than the others.

In the last years I was last in the United States, India has changed a great deal. We have been through an extremely dark period, a period when the question was asked : "Can democracy survive ? Can unity survive? Can you feed your growing population?" Now we have answered all those questions. Democracy has been strengthened. The last election has proved this, if proof were needed. Of course we did not doubt it for an instant. Unity is stronger than ever before, and we are fully self-sufficient in the main cereals which the people eat, namely, wheat and rice. We are now trying to extend our agricultural programme to other farm products. We have improved industry. But there is no doubt that with all this advance, we have merely touched the fringe of the problems. But we face the future with confidence.

Had I come here just a few months ago and you had asked me what are the difficulties, I would have said : "There are no difficulties now. We are united. We are sure of our direction. And we are going ahead solving our problems one after another." But just a week after our new Parliament met and we were still, in the way of all democratic societies, congratulating one another on our victory, a terrific new burden fell on us. All of you are aware what it is. So I do not want to dwell on it. But I would like to point to some questions which arise and which we think are very basic questions. We are told today that because our forces and those of West Pakistan are facing each other on the borders, there is a threat of war. And this is true. But the real problem is not because these forces are face to face. The real problem is because of what has happened in East Bengal. If today there is peace in East Bengal it would not matter if our forces are face to face in the West or in the East. There would be no war. But there is this a very serious problem there. And how did it arise ? It did not arise because there was insurrection or because there was a desire of one part of Pakistan to separate, to secede, to become independent. No such voice was raised. There was an election under the present military leadership of Pakistan. The programme for the election was put frankly and openly before the people. If the

Government of West Pakistan objected to that programme, that was the moment to say, "We will not allow the elections, we cannot allow your six points, we do not approve of them." Nothing was said. The elections were held and the people of both parts of Pakistan overwhelmingly voted for one party—the Awami League.

I am congratulated on my great majority. But it was nothing compared to the majority which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gained in the election in Pakistan. It was a tremendous victory for him. And he is not an extremist. He was a moderate person. In fact, if I may use the term, he used to be called by some others an American stooge at one time. But once the elections were won, apparently this came as surprise to the Government of West Pakistan and they wanted to find out ways of getting around these results.

Negotiations were begun. We were not in touch with either Sheikh Mujib or his party of East Bengal. We did not know what was happening. We read in the papers that there were negotiations. Later, much later, in fact only about a week before I started on this trip, I happened to meet somebody who said he was present at the negotiations. And on the 24th of March they thought that they were coming to a settlement, maybe not a satisfactory settlement but still something that could be worked out. But this period was in fact used to bring troops from West Pakistan and on the 25th of March a reign of terror was let loose. Perhaps you have heard that the biggest concentration, the biggest attack, was on the University of Dacca, where a large number of faculty and students were killed on the very first night. The entire East Bengali population—the civilians, the para-military forces, the East Bengal Regiment and the East Pakistan Rifles—changed their allegiance, that is, they decided to fight the Pakistan Army. They are the base today of the fight of the people of East Bengal. They are the people who are training the guerrillas, the young people who are coming across.

Now we are asked the question why is India hesitating to allow United Nations observers? We are not really hesitating, because we have some observers already. We have United Nations observers on the western frontier who have been there since many years and we have about ten people from the United Nations High Commission for Relief of Refugees on the eastern border. Ours is a very open society—anybody who comes, any of you, any of the diplomats who are there, the Press, parliamentary delegations from Europe, from Latin America, from Asia, from New Zealand, the Arab countries, the Scandinavian countries, all these people have been to our camps; they have been to the border, and many of them have crossed over and have been to East Bengal. Every one of them, without exception, has given one story which is of the very great misery and the utterly chaotic conditions which exist there. Now in these conditions we are told that there is

an attempt to have a civilian government by declaring some seats vacant which are not vacant. The people who were legally, constitutionally elected are still there, but their seats have been declared vacant and I am told that 55 people have been declared elected unopposed. Now in the present conditions they can have the whole Parliament declared unopposed because it is surely not possible for anybody to vote.

If United Nations observers go, what do they hope to achieve? If they go with the intention of really bringing about peace in East Bengal, they are very welcome on our side; on any side they want to go, we will facilitate their going there. But this is not what they want to do. They want to say, "What is happening in East Bengal is an internal problem of Pakistan—we will only want to see what is happening at the border." What is happening at the border cannot be divorced from what is happening inside East Bengal. You cannot say, "We will go and try and prevent the guerrillas, but not prevent the army killing the people." I cannot even mention to you what is happening to some of the women there. The U.N. observers are not going to interfere with those things, but they do want to interfere with what the freedom fighters are doing.

You may ask, "Is India interfering in this by giving some support?" I can tell you that the people of East Bengal are not very happy with what we are doing for them. They think, and I agree with them, we are doing far too little. And what we are doing is something that we cannot help doing. We cannot stop people going across the border either from the other side to our side or from our side across back to East Pakistan. Had we been able to do this, we would certainly have taken measures to stop these millions of refugees from coming. Initially the reaction was, "They are in great trouble, let us allow them in." But very soon the problems for us grew really beyond our control and thus are creating an extremely difficult situation.

The people of America have shown generosity. As I came here, I was given a cheque. I have been given cheques by school children in different countries, by poor people, all kinds of people and we are grateful for that help. But the major problem is not a financial one. We are poor, we cannot afford these millions of people. But because we are poor, because we have known how to live without food, without necessities, we can put up with any difficulty. We can look after any number of people, of course with great discomfort to them and to us and may be some people will die also. Nevertheless, we can survive this problem. What is difficult to survive are the political consequences, the social tensions, the difficulty of the administration, and last but most important, the real threat to our independence, to our stability, to our integrity. Because, with the refugees are coming people who are not genuine refugees. We are having sabotage. Our trains have been blown up, and all kinds of other things have happened.

So India today is facing a real threat. We had reached a point in economic growth, in social stability. This was not an easy task; it was achieved against very great odds. We had help from many countries, including the United States, but it has been a very very small part of the major endeavour. The major brunt of the problems—whether it is of the refugees today or whether it is the problem of our own people, has been borne by the Indian people themselves. If there is progress, it is because the Indian people have put in the effort, put in the sacrifice that was needed to go ahead.

So just when we come to a stage where we think we can go ahead much more easily, much faster, we suddenly have the problems of another country. They are not our problems. This other country has pushed across the border people who did not vote for their Government, but voted for the regime they wanted. There is no other crime which these people have committed, because the cry for independence arose after Sheikh Mujib was arrested and not before. He himself, so far as I know, has not asked for independence, even now. But after he was arrested, after there was this tremendous massacre, it was understandable that the rest of the people should say : "After this how can we live together ? We have to be separate."

This is the situation. We have no animosity towards Pakistan even though they have campaigns of "Crush India", "Conquer India". They observed a Day or a Week and they had these stickers on their cars. We never had anything like this, and we never shall. We have not had anything against even China. China has attacked us. Pakistan has attacked us. On our side we have always said we want friendship. On our side we have always taken unilateral steps which we thought would lead to a normalisation of relations. But there has been no response forthcoming.

We do not mind if there is no response. But we do think that the limit of our endurance has been reached when they think they can just put their troubles on to us. Here was a problem they were facing—that their people had voted against the Government. So what do you do ? You send them across the frontier. At one stroke you get rid of your enemies, you get rid of population, and you weaken India, which you want to weaken. This is something which India just cannot tolerate. Maybe I could tolerate. But with all my majority in Parliament, it is not a dictatorship. I have to carry not only my party, I have to carry in a serious situation all the other parties of India. And we feel that it is not just the question of India, because we believe that if peace is threatened in India, if stability is threatened in India, there cannot be peace and stability in any part of Pakistan. They can have all the armies of the world, whether they have from China or the U.S.A. or any other country. They cannot bring peace if there is instability in the major part of the sub-continent.

Today by some countries wanting to support the prestige of one man, they are threatening peace in the entire sub-continent. I do not personally think that they can save Pakistan or keep it united or keep it strong by supporting a person who is not an elected person, who is a military dictator. This is what we are concerned about—not really today's problems but the basic values for which we have fought, for which so many of our people have given their lives. These are the values which are being attacked.

And if they are attacked next door to us, what guarantee have we that they can survive in our country and they cannot be attacked there? This is what bothers us. It is not important who is to blame, though I think Pakistan is to blame, but I do not want to score a debating point. What is important is : How can we now have peace? You cannot have peace just by saying that the troops should move. You can only have peace if the basic problem which has arisen is solved. And the basic problem is not in the West, where the troops are facing each other, but in the East.

Since I have mentioned troops, I would like to say one word more, and that is that Pakistan moved its troops about a week or ten days before we did anything. And the United Nations observer who was there took up this question with them. They said, "This is nothing serious, this is just ordinary training exercise." It is very strange indeed that you have these exercises and you keep your troops posted not for a day or two days but over a week. And ten days passed without any action from the United Nations or anybody else. Then we said, "These people may attack, and in order to defend ourselves we must move up our troops." Already twice, or three times if you include China, we have been invaded and been found unprepared. No government can last in a country if the people feel that it is not going to defend the country or defend security.

We waited patiently, hoping that something would be done, some way would be found. But nobody was bothered. Not a word was said while these troops were on our borders facing us. It was only when our troops went in that suddenly the world's concern came up : "Oh, the two troops are facing each other."

It is true that war is a dreadful thing. I have lived through the last war in London during the worst part of the blitz. And I know that wars now are much worse. I know what happens to the civilian population. Never would anybody want war for their people. And certainly India will do nothing to provoke a war or conflict. But India is determined to safeguard her interests. India is determined to keep her freedom intact. India is united as never before, and India feels so strongly about these basic things, whether it is freedom, whether it is democracy. It is a whole way of life with us. It is not a dogma, it is not an ism that we follow. It is a way of life which has kept our nation alive for thirty

centuries. And we are not going to have it attacked because it suits somebody or other or does not suit somebody or other. We want help, we want support, we welcome sympathy. But basically in the world every individual ultimately is alone and every nation is ultimately alone. And India is prepared to fight alone for what it thinks worth fighting for.

The fight is not always on the war front. Much of our fight has been a peaceful fight and this is our preference. This is our way, that we should fight and struggle peacefully to establish these ideals. But we are not going to give up the ideals for anything or anybody. We owe a responsibility to our people and to our future generation. We want to bring well-being to our people but we know that economic progress without social justice has no meaning, and economic progress and social justice without freedom for the people also have no meaning. All these things must go together.

We have learnt a lot from the West but we are determined not to become mere imitators of the West. We want to find our own direction and our own path. We want to find strength in the values which our people have held for all these centuries, because these values have given us endurance and courage. By Western standards we may be behind in many things and we may be backward, but we have got something in us that has kept us going.

I am asked the question time and again : "How is it that a woman can lead a government or a country?" Do you know, this question is never asked in India ? Not in the smallest village, because our society and our philosophy are based on the importance of the individual. We are not concerned if this person is a man or a woman, if this person is a Christian or a Hindu or a Muslim. We only say : This is a human being; what has he to contribute to society ? If he has something to contribute, society should make use of that contribution.

This is what India is trying to do. I do not know whether we shall succeed. We can only say that we will put all our strength in taking the country in that direction. We may succeed, we may not succeed. But fortunately our philosophy teaches us that we must do right regardless of whether it brings pleasure or pain, whether it brings success or failure. And we found it to be, although it seems a very philosophical abstract thought, very practical as well. It is the one thing that really gives satisfaction and ultimately gives success also. And I think that in these years by having a democratic form of government, we may not have achieved the material success that perhaps—I say perhaps because I am not sure that it would have happened—we could have got by, say, a stronger type of government—dictatorship or something like that. But if we have lost in that direction, I think we have gained something by not taking that direction. That gain is in human values, it is in the

dignity of the human being. It is the suffering to the individual which has been avoided.

So I think that India has something to offer to the world, but India has also a great deal to take from the world. No country in today's world can live in isolation. Therefore, our policy has been that just as we try to talk and take the people of our country with us, no matter how much against us they may be, so with other nations. Today I have a tremendous majority. But on every issue I talk with all the leaders of the Opposition; some of them may have only one representative in Parliament, but still if he represents a different point of view, I talk with him or with her. And this is the strength of our democracy and ultimately of our country. And I think this is the only way that can succeed in the world at large. We each have our way. But we say, what is there in common, what is there that can keel us together and help us to build one world ?

I am, of course, very proud of our young people in India because in spite of enormous difficulties, they are facing the challenge of the future, and although sometimes their expression of dissent takes violent forms which I certainly do not approve, I think they are generally groping for something worthwhile. I hope that by our work we can persuade them to do their groping in a more constructive, co-operative and peaceful way.

So I would like to thank you once more for this privilege of allowing me to say a few words to you all and to give you the greetings on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of India.

Impressions of Tour Abroad

I HAVE JUST returned from a tour of Belgium, Austria, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The decision to pay official visits to these countries was taken much earlier in response to repeated invitations and in consonance with the practice of reciprocity. The House will remember that President Nixon and Prime Minister Heath had visited our country in 1970, Chancellor Kiesinger in 1969 and President Pompidou when he was Prime Minister. But owing to our general elections, my visit had to be postponed.

In spite of the grave situation in Bangladesh and along our borders in West Pakistan, I undertook this visit as an earnest of our desire

Statement in Parliament, November 15, 1971

to leave nothing unexplored which might lead to an easing of the burdens imposed upon us and to discourage those who are bent upon finding excuses to threaten our security. It is the complete self-assurance of our people and the unity of all our parties which gave me the confidence to undertake the visit at a time of national danger.

My visit enabled me to exchange ideas with the Heads of governments and leaders of public opinion at a point of time when important changes were taking place in the world and to put across to them our point of view on matters of world interest, bilateral relations, and more specially on the situation in Bangladesh and the threat it is posing to our social, political and economic structure and to peace in this region. Our discussions helped to remove certain misgivings and to focus attention on the root-cause of the problem; that is, the refusal of the Pakistan military regime to respect the verdict of their won people, the reign of terror let loose by them in Bangladesh and the consequent influx of refugees into India. I think that these countries as well as others realise that it will not help to deal with peripheral problems without finding a political solution in Bangladesh through negotiations with the already elected leaders of the people of Bangladesh and in accordance with their legitimate wishes. Most countries also realise that the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is essential and intend to impress this upon the military regime of Pakistan.

After a long period of tragic indifference and sheltering behind the thinly disguised legalistic formulation that it was merely an internal affair of Pakistan, there is now a growing sense of urgency in seeking a solution.

Pakistan's efforts to side-track and cloud the basic issue by seeking to involve the United Nations and to transform the struggle of the people of Bangladesh into an Indo-Pakistan confrontation and conflict have been exposed. It is now well understood that India will not be misled by Pakistan's moves and that the military regime in Pakistan must come to terms with the people whom they have treated with such injustice and cruelty. It is also widely appreciated that no country has any right to impose a solution on the people of Bangladesh and that force cannot suppress the spirit of freedom and nationalism with which they are inspired.

During my visit to the United States, I was informed that a decision had been taken to stop further shipments of arms to Pakistan. A formal announcement has since been made. I was given to understand that no arms are being supplied from the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

It is my earnest hope that joint or several efforts of the statesmen whom I met will make the military regime in Pakistan realise that no good can come of sabre-rattling or by forcing a military conflict on India. I hope it is not too late for sane counsel to prevail, for one

cannot go on ignoring hard facts. The just and legitimate aspirations of the people of Bangladesh, indeed of West Pakistan also, cannot be ignored and trampled upon.

There was general sympathy for the manner in which we are bearing the heavy burden of looking after over nine million refugees. There have been indications of additions to the funds for giving relief to the refugees. All these countries agree that conditions must be created inside Bangladesh to stop the further influx of refugees and to facilitate the return to their homeland in safety and human dignity of those now in India.

Having said this, I must make it clear that we cannot depend on the international community, or even the countries which I visited, to solve our problems for us. We appreciate their sympathy and moral, and political support, but the brunt of the burden has to be borne by us and by the people of Bangladesh who have our fullest sympathy and support.

So far as the threat to our security is concerned, we must be prepared —and we are prepared—to the last man and woman, to safeguard our freedom and territorial integrity. Obviously we cannot take risks such as the withdrawal of our forces from the border unless the situation in Bangladesh is resolved satisfactorily as it poses a serious threat to our security.

Solutions have been found or initiated even to seemingly insoluble problems, as for instance in Europe and between the United States and China, by a wise impulse in men of wisdom and vision. But these developments should not lull us into complacency or wishful thinking.

In Europe there is a welcome spirit of detente, which we hope will soon lead to stable security in that continent. This should have a stabilising influence in Asia and other parts of the world. There was a realisation that political detente should be combined with outward-looking economic policies, especially in regard to the needs of the developing world.

Bilateral economic relations were also discussed with those countries. There was a sympathetic response. Belgium, France and the Federal Republic of Germany have shown understanding that there should be a broad outlook in aproaching the relations between India and European Economic Community. There are new possibilities of our collaboration in the industrial, technological and scientific fields.

In brief, these are the impressions which I should like to share with Hon. Members. I am deliberately not mentioning the leaders of individual countries by name because they were all full of sympathy and friendship for India.

I think my visit also helped to restore our relations with Britain which had suffered a serious setback in 1965.

I should like also to express, on behalf of the Government and the people of India, my sincere thanks to the Governments and peoples of the countries I visited for the warm and friendly reception I received everywhere. I should further like to record my appreciation of the world press which, by and large, has given a fair and objective account of the events in Bangladesh, of the inexpressible horror let loose upon the people there, of the heroic struggle which they are waging in defence of the most elementary democratic rights and liberties.

May I take this opportunity of thanking my people and all the political parties who have shown wisdom and restraint and kept the nation united against any external threat.

I conclude this statement with a reminder that in the community of nations our country symbolises the urge for peace, freedom and justice. There was a time when ours was a lone voice in the world which was in the grip of the cold war. Even in the midst of the grave crisis which the military rulers of Pakistan have created for us our people, our country and this great Parliament of the largest democracy in the world have maintained the spirit of peace and of self-restraint. We refused to be excited by threat or provocation from across our borders. Let us then continue to conduct ourselves with quiet confidence in ourselves so that the world should see and know that India cannot be browbeaten nor lulled into a false sense of security. Calmness of spirit and strength go together. India is calm and we are capable of taking decisions in defence of our security and our stability.

Pakistani Tactics

THE HOUSE IS aware of the announcement made by President Yahya Khan yesterday declaring a state of Emergency throughout Pakistan. This declaration is climax of his efforts to divert the attention of the world from Bangladesh and to put the blame on us for a situation which he himself has created. Such a declaration by a military regime, which has been waging war on the people of Bangladesh for the last eight months and has been threatening us with total war for the last three to four months, has no meaning except to deceive his own people and the world at large.

President Yahya Khan's Id message had created the impression that he was at last heeding the advice of a number of world leaders to

Statement in Parliament on border situation, November 24, 1971

abandon the military approach and to seek a political solution. We hope that the declaration of Emergency is not a device to get out of the compulsion of seeking a political solution.

Since the recession of the monsoons, the successes of the Mukti Bahini have apparently upset the plans of the military regime. The liberation forces of Bangladesh, with the full support of their entire people, have taken a heavy toll of Pakistan's armed forces and have freed large parts of their homeland.

At great cost to ourselves, we have been shouldering an intolerable burden of looking after nearly 10 million terror-stricken men, women and children, who have fled from Pakistani oppression. The refugees want to return to their homes under credible guarantees of safety and human dignity. We are determined to ensure that they are enabled to do so as soon as possible.

Pakistan's armed forces have been shelling our border areas inflicting damage on life and property. Their air force has wantonly violated our air space several times and once came right up to Srinagar. Spies and saboteurs have been blowing up trains and bridges. Since March 1971, we have lodged 66 protests for border violations covering 890 incidents. For air violations we have lodged 17 protests covering 50 incidents. However, these protests have had no effect and, to cover up their incessant violations, Pakistani propaganda media have been putting out the story that we are engaged in an undeclared war and have mounted massive attacks with tanks and troops. This is wholly untrue. In fact, it was Pakistan which threatened total war and moved its entire armed strength into operational positions on our borders and launched a massive hate-India campaign with the slogans "Crush India", "Conquer India". We had, therefore, to take appropriate measures and move our forces to defensive positions in order to protect the integrity of our country and the lives and properties of our citizens. It has never been our intention to escalate the situation or to start a conflict. To this end, we have instructed our troops not to cross the borders except in self-defence. We cannot ignore our experiences of 1947-48, January 1965 and of August-September 1965.

On November 21, Pakistani infantry, supported by tanks and artillery, launched an offensive on the Mukti Bahini who were holding the liberated area around Boyra, five miles from our eastern border. Pakistani armour, under heavy artillery cover, advanced to our border threatening our defensive positions. Their shells fell in our territory, wounding a number of our men. The local Indian military Commander took appropriate action to repulse the Pakistani attack. In this action 13 Pakistani Chafee tanks were destroyed.

On November 22, the Pakistani forces called up an air strike of four Sabre jets on our positions. These were intercepted within Indian territory by our Gnats who destroyed three Sabre jets. Two of the

Pakistani pilots, who baled out, were captured on our territory. We regard this as a purely local action.

Even though Pakistan has declared an Emergency, we shall refrain from taking a similar step, unless further aggressive action by Pakistan compels us to do so in the interest of national security. In the meantime, the country should remain unruffled. Our brave armed forces and our people will ensure that any adventurism on the part of the military regime of Pakistan meets with adequate rebuff. The rulers of Pakistan must realise that the path of peace—of peaceful negotiation and reconciliation—is more rewarding than that of war and the suppression of liberty and democracy.

Call of Duty Paramount

POSSIBLY, I HAVE come to Jaipur after a year. There have been many changes in the country during this period and a big tragedy has befallen us. When I was here last, we were facing a general election and many people had doubts about its result. A number of them started saying, without any rhyme or reason, that it might not be possible to form a strong Central Government after the elections and probably the democratic structure of the country would be weakened. But we were convinced that democracy has struck deep roots in the country and it could not be uprooted and nothing could weaken it although it was still in its infancy. Democracy is based on the strength of the people and this strength the people do not want to lose. The elections resulted in a strong Central Government. They have given the country a new unity and a new direction. These were there before but the elections have made them stronger. By returning us with a big majority, the people have expressed their deep faith in our policies and programmes. They believe that we shall take the country forward and reduce poverty and fissiparous tendencies.

We had imagined that after many years we had got an opportunity to advance swiftly with the active co-operation of the people. But the new Parliament had not met even for a week when a big event happened, not in our country but beyond our frontiers, which affected us deeply. We were not responsible for what had happened and were in no way involved in it. As a river overflows its banks during a flood, so an endless stream of people crossed our borders and entered our land.

India has known the influx of refugees earlier also. They have come from far-off lands on ships and across the mountains. When we

Free translation of speech in Hindi at a public meeting, Jaipur, November 28, 1971

became free from British rule, a large number of our oppressed brothers and sisters fled from the Punjab and East Bengal. We rehabilitated them. They found new homes and became a source of strength to the nation. That influx of refugees was a slow process. But now there has been a sudden influx of people in large numbers and in a very short time. They entered a region which already had a large population. There were other difficulties also. Hardly any other country in the world could bear such a heavy burden. We have done so and are doing our best. What encouraged us was the hope that the refugees would soon return to their homes. Just now, we have to look after and provide for our unhappy brothers and sisters and their wounded and ailing children. But conditions must be created to enable them to return to their homes soon. We have borne this burden only in the hope that this would happen. Otherwise, we could not have done this. We had every hope that the world community would understand the correct position and realise how unjust it was to us to have to bear this burden at a time when our big country was reaching the stage of self-sufficiency in its economic development. If we became weak, this would affect not only our country, but the peace of Asia as a whole. It might even affect world peace.

All the countries of the world expressed sympathy for us. They said they were happy that India was bearing a very heavy burden. These, we realised, were mere words of appreciation. We got no substantial help from anywhere. We told the world powers that conditions would worsen as days passed. We are bearing the burden at present but we do not know how long the crisis would continue, because we had nothing to do with it. If it concerned us, we could have controlled it. The crisis had occurred beyond our frontiers in another country. The tragedy had befallen the people of that country and it is their sentiments which are involved. We can advise and offer help. But it is only for the people of that country to decide about their future. It is not for us to tell them what this should be. We have learnt from experience that once a people decide to become free, there is no going back. We also fought for our freedom. Millions of people of all ranks and walks of life joined that struggle and suffered for it. The truth about Bangladesh is that the people there are determined to be free. They have declared that no one from outside could rule over them so long as even a single person there was alive—and they have a large population. When even a small part of a country should want to be independent, they cannot be ignored. Many countries hold the view that no one from outside should interfere where a country's unity and integrity is involved. But in this case, the majority of the people of Pakistan feel that justice has been denied to them. This is the feeling not of a small section of the people. It is the assertion of a party which has won a big majority in a general election. So

this is not an ordinary problem and the people there have undergone terrible atrocities. Seldom has the world witnessed such events or heard such tales of repression. It was but natural that a wave of sympathy swept the whole country and everyone became anxious to help these people. Just now, the Speaker of your State Assembly has made a donation for the Bangladesh Fund. I am grateful to him and other citizens of Jaipur who have contributed to the Fund. Similar contributions are being made in all our towns and villages, schools and colleges.

I went abroad. The day I reached the United States, I learnt that about two thousand students of schools and colleges had decided to keep fast that day and donate the money thus saved for Bangladesh. They wrote to me that I also should forego my lunch and I agreed. This is a small thing, but it reveals that whatever the policy of the Government, the active sympathy of the people and particularly of the youth is with Bangladesh and they are anxious to do something. When I was in Oxford during my visit to England, there was a huge demonstration of students who wanted to express their gratitude towards me and India. They carried placards which said : "We are grateful to India which is carrying the world's burden alone." This reveals the feelings of the people of the world about the Bangladesh problem. But mere expression of sympathy is not enough. It can be a source of mental satisfaction, but the need of the hour is for some concrete action.

I did not go with a begging bowl and I asked for nothing. I went only to explain to them what the real problem was, what were the fundamental causes behind the present situation and the danger posed by the refugee influx. Years before, we had expressed our opinion about several things but nobody listened to us then. Later, history revealed that what we had said was correct. We say something not because we want that future events should take a certain turn but because we cannot ignore the truth by closing our eyes to it. The truth will remain unchanged. We could foresee what was bound to happen. We want them to understand the influence of the current events on India and other countries. I had gone abroad only to tell this. I hope I could make them understand this in some measure. But this does not mean that they will help us or will not oppose us. Nobody knows what they will do. I had gone also to tell them that the burden on us was very heavy. It was not only a tremendous economic burden but more than that—social, political and administrative burden. Greater than all these is the risk to our security. It is apparent that we want others to share our burden. I went abroad also to tell them that whether they help us or not, India will do what it thinks proper, what it thinks to be in the national interest and in accordance with the high ideals which this country upholds. If any help comes to us, we shall welcome it and accept it. If nobody helps us, even then we shall do what is necessary,

however great the risk, however great the burden. Wherever I have gone in this country, the people have assured me that I am only echoing their sentiments.

So far we have kept quiet and patiently listened to threats and abuses. Others thought that there was peace and all was well. Forces were massed on our borders. We told the world that this was being done but we did not order any troop movements. When we complained, we were told that the forces had been brought to the borders for exercises. Over a week passed and we felt that it would be a mistake if we did not move our forces and were found unprepared for any emergency. We moved our forces after waiting patiently for quite some time and telling the world about the troop movements on the other side. But as soon as our forces were moved forward within our own frontiers, there was a hue and cry abroad and talk of hostilities. If there is to be war, it is not we who have taken the initiative or threatened anyone.

We have told the world from the very beginning that we firmly believe in peace. We do so even now. We have declared from the very beginning that we have no quarrel either with Pakistan or its people but we shall not sit quiet if India's freedom or territorial integrity is in peril. This was the least we could have done or said. We also said that the present conflict was not over a minor issue. It was an ideological conflict. Pakistan was formed on the basis of religion. We always emphasised that this was a very dangerous principle and would not work. Now everyone has realised the dangers that have resulted by working out on that basis. But when we said this earlier, we were accused of wishing ill of Pakistan. It was stated that we shall never unite because ours is a multi-religious and a multi-lingual country. We sometimes quarrel among ourselves, as people sometimes do. It was further stated that the military *junta* in Pakistan had the strength to forge unity not only in East Bengal, but also in West Pakistan. The world is now witnessing the truth of all that we had said not only about Pakistan but about our country as well. Differences in religion, language, dress and ways of living are not important for national unity. What is important in the life of an individual as well as a nation is the feeling of unity. Every individual can continue to remain loyal to his religion, his family or his city. What is important is that when the question of the nation comes up, everyone must keep the nation before self.

There is great pressure from abroad that the matter should be taken to the Security Council. Everyone knows that we never attacked anyone, not even in 1965. On the contrary, we have been victims of aggression three or four times. But the Security Council never took up the stand that India was the victim of aggression. It was never stated in clear terms. Today, they seem to be worried that there has

been an aggression, only because we have taken some steps in self-defence. Those who care for the truth know that the Security Council, sitting far away, is not doing justice to us. Every country looks only to its self-interest and speaks accordingly. They are not worried about the loss of millions of lives or that people are still being killed and oppressed. Women in particular have had to undergo all sorts of atrocities. All this has resulted in greatly strengthening the feeling of nationalism in Bangladesh. The greater the oppression, the stronger this feeling. The Security Council may decide one way or the other. But it is for the people of this country to consider how their decision affects us. There has been aggression in the past in other parts of the world as well. What has the Security Council done about it? What has it done to help the victims of aggression? No one listened to what we said while we exercised the utmost restraint. Now, when we are taking steps for self-defence, there is a hue and cry all around. It does not matter. As I have said many a time before, we do not threaten anyone; nor do we fear any threats from others. We have only one question before us—to strengthen our forces for any emergency. I can assure you that they are fully prepared to meet any aggression and our territory and freedom are completely safe in their hands. We hope there will be no war. We shall do our best to avoid it but you must know that in a modern war it is not only the armed forces but the people as well who have to be prepared for it. A modern war is a big economic burden and will impose all sorts of hardships on people in towns and villages. I believe our people are prepared for it. To say once that we are prepared is not enough. We have to be prepared for it every day and at all times and to ensure that we are prepared in every way, physically as well as mentally, in the towns and in the villages.

I visited our men of the border force today, yesterday and sometimes earlier also. They told me I could rely on them whatever happened, for they have been trained to sacrifice their lives but not to quit their post of duty. Every citizen has to take a similar pledge today.

United Approach

I AM NOT talking about my Statement even though that is the main matter under consideration, because most of the Hon. Members who

From reply to discussion in Rajya Sabha on Prime Minister's Statement on her tour abroad, November 30, 1971

spoke, rightly spoke about the question which was uppermost in my mind when I went abroad. Whatever I have to say about my tour, I have already stated in my Statement and I do not think any new questions have arisen on that account. Here in this House I see a basic unity of outlook on this issue and I think there is general support also. I should like to thank the Hon. Members for the manner in which they have spoken. I should specially like to thank my old friend, Shri Babubhai Chinai and Shri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee who spoke just now with such understanding of the situation. Prof. Ruthnaswamy was kind but of course he expressed the typical Swatantra point of view.

Dr. Bhai Mahavir not unexpectedly made some rather carping remarks, which were typical of him. I seem to irritate President Yahya Khan and who does not even—I am not talking of Dr. Mahavir but the other gentleman—like to take my name when he refers to me. Dr. Bhai Mahavir spoke about my projecting a personal image. Now when one goes abroad, especially as Prime Minister one goes as a representative of the people—any honour that is done to an Indian is an honour to the country and usually another country can only honour a country through somebody, whether he is a scientist or even if he is an ordinary citizen. So, I do not think that if an honour is done to me or if I have been able to project an image, it is certainly not to a person isolated from a country, but as I have said on a previous occasion, it is an honour to the country and what they think the country stands for. So, from that point of view, any honour I received is as important as paying tribute to the country direct.

Another remark made by Dr. Bhai Mahavir was about our showing restraint at the wrong time. I think some Hon. Members were not listening to him as quietly as they should have and he remarked that they were not being patient when they should be patient and the Government was patient when it should not be patient. I agree with him that Hon. Members could occasionally show greater patience but I think the Government should always show restraint and patience, especially a Government which is sure of itself and sure of its people. I do not think that our friends from across the border have gained much by their lack of patience and by the tone of their statements, their threats and provocations, and I think we have gained a great deal by putting all these threats, all these abusive words, if I can put it that way, in their proper perspective; that is, they do not ruffle us, they do not divert us from what we are going to do, what we think is right for our country and they do not rouse our anger in that sense. Of course one is angry, not because of words used; one is angry at what is happening in Bangladesh; one is angry because it seems to us such an unnecessary tragedy. It has taken the lives of millions of people and has uprooted millions of people from their homes. It is not only those who have come to our refugee camps who are uprooted but

from what one hears from foreign correspondents and those who have been to Dacca and other parts of Bangladesh, the entire country is like a refugee camp; that is, vast masses of the population are moving from village to village, nobody knows who belongs to which village. When they are harassed in one area and when they see an empty village or part of an empty village they may settle down there or they may find that they cannot live there and they move on. So the conditions there are quite chaotic but I would only like to say that the Jan Sangh has its own manner of functioning. They are welcome to it. They have seen, I think, in the past whether it has brought them honour or success. We have a different way of functioning and we are going to stick to our way which I think is certainly more dignified and gets us better results also.

Now there was one point. I think it was Prof. Ruthnaswamy who said something about the Indo-Soviet Treaty being a handicap in the Prime Minister's baggage. I do not know who is handicapped; it certainly did not handicap me. No foreign official or head of State or Government whom I met even mentioned the Treaty. The question was asked at press conferences. Nobody else was at all concerned. I think they understood the situation; people may use these phrases but I do not think anybody really thinks that India has changed her policy or is going to change her policy. In fact my own guess is part of the reason why we irritate other people so much is just this that they find it irritating that here is a Government and people who are not willing to change at their request or at their hint or whatever it is.

Shri Chatterjee spoke of my concentrating on seeking financial aid for the refugees. This also I explained everywhere. I have never asked for financial aid. It was again in reply to questions at press conferences that I have said that the help from the international community has been negligible, which it has been, and I can hardly not answer a simple question like that. I have never asked for help of this kind or another. Neither have I given any advice to foreign Governments. I have said, it is for you to decide what is in your national interests; we cannot expect you to do something which is not in your national interests but we think what is happening here on the sub-continent and its likely consequences will affect peace in Asia and therefore peace in the world. I think all the countries will be affected by it in the long run and it is better they realised the situation and faced up to it now rather than make changes in their policy later on.

Something else Shri Chatterjee said. I do not know whether I misunderstood him. Did he say that I had said either the Mukti Bahini or those who are fighting were seeking a solution within Pakistan?

My point has been that it is only the people of Bangladesh who have the authority to say what they want; I mean they know what they

want. I do not think I have the authority to say on their behalf that this is what should be the solution. So far as I am concerned I can give my view, as I did give my view, that they would not now settle for anything less than liberation. I told them very clearly that if any talks are to be held, it should be with the people who have been elected by the public of Bangladesh. By that I did not mean these new people who have come in unopposed by any means. So, we have all along stressed the main and the basic issues involved and tried to draw people's attention to it. Now, it has been Pakistan's consistent effort to try to internationalise the issue and to try to turn it into an Indo-Pak dispute. This is what I had to face everywhere. Everywhere they said : If only you will agree to talk to General Yahya Khan, if only your Foreign Minister can go or your representative can go, then things will be solved. It is in answer to them that I had to say that they will not be solved because this is not our country and it is only the people of the country who can solve their problems or who can state them. Naturally I had to say that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is their undisputed leader and he is the person who is the most authorised to speak on their behalf, but I did add that in order to voice the opinion of the people of Bangladesh, he must be free. He must be able to know what is happening in Bangladesh. He cannot express his opinion if he has had no knowledge of what has happened and what is happening, as is to be the case. So, this attempt to bring the whole matter to the Security Council, I think, is part of the same game, that is, to confuse the realities of the situation, and those who are moving in this direction cannot but be suspect in the eyes of the Indian people.

Kashmir, of course, is as much a part of India as Gujarat or Maharashtra or any other part of the country and any attack there, as any attack anywhere else, will be repulsed and fought with all the strength at our command. The Hon. Member, who spoke just before me, has given you, in brief, an account of what happened in the earlier periods, that in both the wars which we have had on the borders of Kashmir in 1947 and in 1965 we did not have adequate forces there, for good reasons. The people, the common people, the Gujjars, the nomadic tribes, the peasants or the other people stood so solidly with us. They brought the first news, that the people were coming and doing propaganda against us. They gave all this news. They were the first in the line of resistance and we were able to stand up to those invasions which in the beginning were not obvious invasions. They were hidden because they were infiltrators. Today also aggression is committed on India. As I said in my speeches, there was a new kind of aggression. The Pakistani armies may not have massed on our soil, but it was an invasion when we have such a large proportion of the population of another country coming on to our soil. It is a kind of invasion. Now, many of them are genuine refugees in difficulties.

Nevertheless, the problem that their coming has created does threaten the security of our country and the stability of our country. Amongst them are people who are not genuine refugees. So, from all these points of view, they are threatening our security and, therefore, it is a kind of aggression. Now, we have remained restrained. But we have silenced some Pakistani guns, we have dealt with their tanks and we have brought down some of their intruding aircraft. But we have not posed a counter-threat in any sense of the word. But we cannot allow the annihilation of the people next door to us. I mean, this is what has to be very clearly understood by the world and which I did speak to them. It is not like two equal armies fighting there, the Mukti Bahini and the West Pakistan troops. It is a fully equipped army fighting with the people, some of whom have been trained in the East Pakistan Rifles and the East Bengal Regiment, some of whom have been trained very quickly in the various camps run by the leaders of these two para-military forces. But nevertheless, they are not equal in that way to the army, and it is not in our national interest that an entire people, not just the Mukti Bahini, but the entire unarmed population of Bangladesh should be annihilated. Although the threat is already great, anything like this happening or even happening partially would increase the threat to our security immediately and also for the future.

On the western side, our armed forces were deployed some time after the Pakistani troops moved up to our borders. We have not taken any initiative there. But, as I said, we shall meet any threat to our freedom or our security and, of course, we feel that the present threat just is not merely a threat but a threat to the very foundation on which India is built and on which India is surviving.

Now, there are suggestions you have heard about the withdrawal of troops. I have already explained in the other forum why we cannot withdraw our troops in the west because our lines of communication, the cantonments and so on are so placed that Pakistan has a very great advantage, and having twice been taken unawares by Pakistan in this very area, in Kashmir and so on, we cannot afford that risk. But I would certainly welcome the withdrawal of troops and I think the troops that should be withdrawn straightway are the Pakistani troops in Bangladesh. They are far from their homes, they are also suffering and I think that they should be taken back to rejoin their families and friends in West Pakistan. And this would be a positive response from Pakistan to show that they do want a solution in Bangladesh. It would be a gesture for peace. And I do feel that in today's circumstances, the very presence of Pakistani troops in Bangladesh, as I said earlier, is a threat to our own security.

I think that I have answered most of the points. So far as the present situation is concerned, as you know, the Mukti Bahini is facing

very courageously; it is a very difficult fight but they are fighting very bravely, and they have our good wishes, and they have our support also. Nobody can predict what the future will bring but, as I have said on an earlier occasion, nothing is going to ease the situation immediately. No matter what happens, what steps we take, the next month will be of very great difficulty to us and also to the people of Bangladesh. I mean we have to know there is no solution, which is a magic solution, which will end the suffering of the refugees or end the burdens on us. This just cannot happen with the best will in the world. I am glad that this unity has been shown. Shri Chatterjee spoke something about our singling out his party and so on. I can assure him that it is not at all our intention. But certain things had happened in West Bengal. I am glad that the situation has improved greatly and once there is peace there will be no cause for anybody to be poised against anybody else, and this is the time when all parties should unite, because, as I said, the burden on the Indian people is very great and the challenge and the difficulties we face are extremely difficult, and they will need all the strength we have, all the resources we have and all the unity and determination which we can bring to bear upon. I have full confidence that all parties will respond to this challenge and together we will be able to come out of what is a dark period for us and for the people of Bangladesh. We will come out of it and they will be able to make a new life for themselves.

We Shall Succeed

they were not in the least worried about the causes of the crisis—why a huge mass of people were quitting their homes and coming to us like a river in flood. No disease can be cured unless it is correctly diagnosed. What is to be done if, without caring to find out the cause of the influx, we try to stop it? We told the truth and others agreed with us, but nobody did anything in the matter.

To understand the present crisis, we have to go into its historical background and find out how Pakistan was formed. The battle for freedom was fought in the whole country—also in the region now called Pakistan. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, better known as Frontier Gandhi, and Abdul Samad Khan, who was called Baluch Gandhi, took part in the fight for freedom. But when Pakistan was formed, it was not these leaders of the people who came to power. In India, the freedom fighters won the elections and set up their Government. But in Pakistan, they remained behind prison walls and those who were co-operating with the British set up their Government. They held positions in the Army or other offices. There was a basic difference in our ideologies. We were anxious then and are so even now that we should have the best of friendly relations with our new neighbour—now that Pakistan had come into being. It is not good for any country to be always quarrelling with a neighbour. But whenever we extended our hand of friendship, we were faced with a closed fist on the other side and also an atmosphere of tension. We believe that the reason for this was that several countries were encouraging Pakistan to do so. If the big powers, which were friendly to Pakistan, had advised it in the very beginning not to fight with India, Pakistan would not have taken up the posture of war. Pakistan had neither the strength nor the courage to go to war with us. But they did so because they were getting help and war materials from abroad. Even when they went to war with us, they got all encouragement from their friends. They were not branded as aggressors with the result that they did not change their ways. The result of all this was that despite its friendship with Big Powers, Pakistan could not become a strong power. It grew weaker.

We are all Indians though we speak different languages and profess different faiths. To whatever State we belong, we are all citizens of this country engaged in the common endeavour of taking it forward towards progress. What binds men of different religions, habits, dress and languages are some high ideals. Religion and language cannot bind any people in the world of today. We have to get over these. Religion is good and everyone must adhere to his religion. But you cannot build up a nation and keep the people united, on the basis of religion. We said this at the time of the formation of Pakistan but neither the British nor others listened to us then and Pakistan came into being. But we saw from the very beginning that in Pakistan, the

people of one religion committed atrocities on the minorities belonging to a different religion.

Another thing that was happening in Pakistan and which the world overlooked was that even those who were in a religious majority in the country were being oppressed. We knew it but we could not interfere in the affairs of another country. But the situation could not last long and in the end this has weakened Pakistan. If Pakistan has become weak, it is not because we wanted it. It has become weak because other nations helped it in pursuing wrong policies, which were probably in their own interest and not in the interest of Pakistan. We also were pressurised to follow their policies but it was our good fortune that we had leaders who followed policies which were in the national interest and stuck to them firmly.

Our development plans are in progress but, in the meanwhile, a big burden has been cast on us. The burden is economic because the number of refugees is very large. The influx has also created social, administrative and political problems. But the most important thing is the danger it poses to our security. It might develop into a big danger.

You are aware that we have rehabilitated all the refugees who came to us so far. We did so although we are a poor country and received meagre help from outside. We became worried as the danger to our security slowly increased. Across the border between West Bengal and East Bengal, there was the Border Security Force on our side and East Bengal or the East Pakistan Rifles on the other side but they had changed their name and called themselves the Mukti Bahini.

At this stage, Pakistan moved its forces towards our borders; in the west they moved further towards Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. When their forces reached the Kashmir border, we drew the attention of the U.N. observers towards this. They told us that the Pakistani forces were carrying out training exercises. Who could believe it? Could a country, which had been the victim of Pakistani aggression thrice, believe it? The danger to our security increased but we took no steps for ten days. After ten days, we also moved our forces forward. As long as we had not moved our forces towards our borders, no country in the world, big or small, took note of the presence of Pakistani forces on our borders. They were not worried about the danger posed to our security and that they should do something. No opinions were expressed about it. But when our forces moved forward, not on another's territory but on our own, some world powers raised a furore that peace was in peril and they began saying that both the countries should withdraw their forces. Now could we agree to this? No Government with any sense of responsibility, no minister or any officer could endanger the security of the country and its borders. We asked why the Pakistani forces had been moved

to our borders and whether it did not involve a risk to our security. If we withdrew our forces, they had to be moved far from the borders where our cantonments and other arrangements exist. But the cities and cantonments of Pakistan are quite close to their borders. If they withdraw just a little, they will still be in an advantageous position. They can reach the borders quickly whenever they want to attack us. We cannot do so. Who are there to guarantee that if we are attacked, they would help us and get us back quickly the land occupied by the aggressor? Nobody is prepared to consider this aspect of the matter. They all say that the forces must be withdrawn. We do not say "No" to this demand. We have suggestions to make. But how far is it proper that only the suggestions made by the other party should be accepted? Our suggestion is that the Pakistani forces should be withdrawn from East Bengal. It is their arrival and their stay which has resulted in a reign of terror there and the influx of refugees into this country. If they leave East Bengal, the fighting will stop immediately. But no one is prepared to think on these lines.

We were also told to agree to have U.N. observers on our eastern border as well. As far as I am aware, a few of them were there. Possibly they are still there. But the question is why should they be posted there? Will their presence ensure the return of the refugees? The refugees say they will not go back unless there is complete peace in Bangladesh. Now can we ask them to go when we see there is a war in progress there, people are being massacred, women are being tortured and one village after another is being set on fire? How can we ask them to return under these conditions? The first duty of the world community as well as our own is to try to establish peace there. We waited for many days, waited to see if other countries could help in the matter and stop the reign of terror.

I visited some countries in Europe and the United States. I was assured everywhere that they agreed with me on the need of a political solution to restore peace in Bangladesh and to ensure the return of the refugees. They said they were stressing this aspect of the problem. But nothing came out of it. We do not threaten, nor do we raise a hue and cry. But we know what is in our national interest and we are not going to give it up. The people of East Bengal are shedding their blood to achieve freedom. This has happened in the past in our country as well. A large number of farmers, intellectuals and members of the Bar sacrificed their lives for freedom. Now if some countries want that we should not defend our freedom and allow them to carry out their own evil designs, we cannot be the victims of their evil designs.

Every citizen of this country has to share this burden, be he young or old, man or woman. We have to share all hardships and meet the danger. Although the whole country has to bear the burden, you in

Bengal have to bear a little more of it. We should be prepared for whatever happened.

I assure you that I do not want war. I earnestly desire peace. I know what war is and how it affects the people, specially the weaker sections of the community. I detest war. It is my sincere wish that I should not be instrumental in bringing about war. Nehru talked much about peace and wanted peace but even he said that if we have to meet any attack on our freedom, we must do so with all our might.

Some foreign papers have described me as stubborn. I am stubborn in matters affecting our security and, in my opinion, the massacre going on in Bangladesh must stop and peace restored. The annihilation of the 75 million people of Bangladesh is not in our national interest. Therefore, we have to ensure that the terrible atrocities going on there must stop. This is not being stubborn. There is no alternative to this if we consider our own national interests. You are aware that we have taken some steps only after calm consideration. We have done nothing in haste. We are doing only what is proper and in our interest. Whenever some foreign power talked to us, it was only after careful deliberation that we refused to accept any suggestion made and we accepted what we could. We are faced with a crisis and there must be enthusiasm among the people. We have also to see how to utilise this enthusiasm to meet the challenge before us. An army must fight to be victorious. This will not be possible if our industries and schools are closed down and the working of our hospitals is affected. If we want to be truly victorious, the citizens of Calcutta must ensure that the work in towns and villages is carried on more efficiently and with greater vigour.

It is a testing time for our country but I am confident that we shall succeed. Whatever the nature of the fight, we shall deal with it firmly and with a cool head so that the promises we have made to the people are fulfilled and we continue our march towards progress. However great the danger, however great the pressure, we have to move forward even if we are alone. The people who live near our borders know that the Pakistanis have been firing on Agartala and other places. Our hospitals are full of injured people. Our hearts go to them and I express gratitude to them on my behalf and on behalf of the nation. We are proud of their courage and we hope that their morale will continue to be high. Although they are now no longer in uniform, they are our soldiers. We are proud of their bravery and enthusiasm.

Aggression Must be Met

I SPEAK TO you at a moment of grave peril to our country and to our people. Some hours ago, soon after 5.30 p.m. on December 3, 1971, Pakistan launched a full-scale war against us. The Pakistani Air Force suddenly struck at our airfields in Amritsar, Pathankot, Srinagar, Avantipur, Uttarlai, Jodhpur, Ambala and Agra. Their ground forces are shelling our defence positions in Sulaimanki, Khemkaran, Poonch and other sectors.

Since last March, we have borne the heaviest burden and withstood the greatest pressure, in a tremendous effort to urge the world to help in bringing about a peaceful solution and preventing the annihilation of an entire people, whose only crime was to vote for democracy. But the world ignored the basic cause and concerned itself only with certain repercussions. The situation was bound to deteriorate and the courageous band of freedom fighters have been staking their all in defence of the values, for which we also have struggled, and which are basic to our way of life.

Today the war in Bangladesh has become a war on India. This has imposed upon me, my Government and the people of India great responsibility. We have no other option but to put our country on a war footing. Our brave officers and jawans are at their post mobilised for the defence of the country. An emergency has been declared for the whole of India. Every necessary step is being taken, and we are prepared for all eventualities.

I have no doubt that it is the united will of our people that this wanton and unprovoked aggression should be decisively and finally repelled. In this resolve, the Government is assured of the full and unflinching support of all political parties and every Indian citizen. We must be prepared for a long period of hardship and sacrifice.

We are a peace-loving people. But we know that peace cannot last, if we do not guard our democracy and our way of life. So today, we fight not merely for territorial integrity but for the basic ideals, which have given strength to this country, and on which alone we can progress to a better future.

Aggression must be met, and the people of India will meet it with fortitude and determination and with discipline and utmost unity.

Broadcast over All India Radio, December 4, 1971

Attack by Pakistan

THIS MORNING, ACCORDING to the news, the Government of West Pakistan have declared war upon us. Last evening the West Pakistan Air Force violated our air space wantonly and attacked a large number of airfields. Simultaneously their ground forces shelled our positions along the Western border. Their propaganda media have made totally baseless allegations that India had launched an attack and assault.

The news reached me just as I was leaving Calcutta. Immediately on my return I took counsel with my colleagues and with the leaders of the Opposition parties. We were all of one mind, united in our resolve that the nation's freedom should be defended and unanimous that the aggressor should be beaten back. I am sure the same sense of solidarity will mark our work in the difficult days ahead. A state of Emergency has been proclaimed.

I lay on the Table a copy of Notification No. G.S.R. 1789 published in Gazette of India dated the December 3, 1971, under Sub-clause (b) of Clause (2) of Article 352 of the Constitution, publishing the Proclamation of Emergency issued by the President on December 3, 1971, under Clause (1) of the said Article.

We are approaching the House to adopt the Defence of India Bill.

Our feeling is one of regret that Pakistan did not desist from the ultimate folly and sorrow that at a time when the greatest need of this sub-continent is development, the peoples of India and Pakistan have been pushed into war. We could have lived as good neighbours but the people of West Pakistan have never had a say in their destiny. In this grave hour our own dominant emotion is one of confidence and faith.

For over nine months the military regime of West Pakistan has barbarously trampled upon freedom and basic human rights in Bangladesh. The Army of occupation has committed heinous crimes unmatched for their vindictive ferocity. Many millions have been uprooted, ten millions have been pushed into our country.

We repeatedly drew the attention of the world to this annihilation of a whole people, to this menace to our security. Everywhere the people showed sympathy and understanding for the economic and other burdens and the danger to India. But Governments seemed morally and politically paralysed. Belated efforts to persuade the Islamabad regime to take some step which would lead to a lasting solution fell on deaf ears.

The wrath of the West Pakistan Army has been aroused because the people of Bangladesh have stood and struggled for values which

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Statement in Lok Sabha, December 4, 1971

the Army is unable to comprehend and which it has suppressed in every province of Pakistan.

As the Mukti Bahini's effectiveness increased, the West Pakistan Army became more desperate. Our tradition is to stand not with tyrants, but with the oppressed and so the anger has been turned upon us.

West Pakistan has escalated and enlarged the aggression against Bangladesh into full war against India. War needs as much patience and self-restraint as does peace. Military regime of West Pakistan will go all out to sow suspicion and rumour in the hope of fomenting communal tension and internal trouble. Let us not be taken in by their designs. We must maintain unity and a sense of high purpose.

We should be prepared for a long struggle. High production—agricultural and industrial—is the foundation upon which defence rests. The courage and fighting capability of the jawans have to be backed by the dedication of the farmer, the worker, the technician and the trader. The business community has a special responsibility to resist the temptation to hoard or to charge higher profit. Artists and writers, teachers and students—the nation looks to them to defend our ideals and to keep high our morale. To the women of our country I make special appeal to save every possible grain and rupee and to avoid waste. The sacrifice of each of us will build the nation's strength and enduring power.

We have stood for peace, but peace itself has to be defended. Today we are fighting to safeguard our territorial integrity and national honour. Above all, we are fighting for the ideals we cherish and the cause of peace.

Recognition to Bangladesh

THE VALIANT STRUGGLE of the people of Bangladesh in the face of tremendous odds has opened a new chapter of heroism in the history of freedom movements.

Earlier, they had recorded a great democratic victory in their elections and even the President of Pakistan had conceded the right of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to become Prime Minister of Pakistan. We shall never know what intervened to transform this benevolent mood and realistic approach, if it really was that, to deception and the posture of open hatred.

Statement in Parliament, December 6, 1971

We are told that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his party, the Awami League, had planned a non-violent movement of resistance to the Government of West Pakistan. But they were caught unawares and overtaken by a brutal military assault. They had no alternative but to declare for independence. The East Pakistan Rifles and East Bengal Regiment became the Mukti Fauj and later the Mukti Bahini, which was joined by thousands of young East Bengalis determined to sacrifice their lives for freedom and the right to fashion their future. The unity, determination and courage with which the entire population of Bangladesh is fighting have been recorded by the world press.

These events on our doorstep and the resulting flood of refugees into our territory could not but have far-reaching repercussions on our country. It was natural that our sympathy should be with the people of Bangladesh in their just struggle. But we did not act precipitately in the matter of recognition. Our decisions were not guided merely by emotion but by an assessment of prevailing and future realities.

With the unanimous revolt of the entire people of Bangladesh and the success of their struggle it has become increasingly apparent that the so-called mother State of Pakistan is totally incapable of bringing the people of Bangladesh back under its control. As for the legitimacy of the Government of Bangladesh the whole world is now aware that it reflects the will of the overwhelming majority of the people, which not many Governments can claim to represent. In Jefferson's famous words to Governor Morris, the Government of Bangladesh is supported by the "will of the nation, substantially expressed". Applying this criterion, the military regime in Pakistan, whom some States are so anxious to buttress, is hardly representative of its people even in West Pakistan.

Now that Pakistan is waging war against India, the normal hesitation on our part not to do anything which could come in the way of a peaceful solution, or which might be construed as intervention, has lost significance. The people of Bangladesh battling for their very existence and the people of India fighting to defeat aggression now find themselves partisans in the same cause.

I am glad to inform the House that in the light of the existing situation and in response to the repeated requests of the Government of Bangladesh, the Government of India have, after the most careful consideration, decided to grant recognition to the GANA PRAJATANTRI BANGLADESH

It is our hope that with the passage of time more nations will grant recognition and that the GANA PRAJATANTRI BANGLADESH will soon form part of the family of nations.

Our thoughts at this moment are with the father of this new State—Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I am sure that this House would wish me to convey to Their Excellencies the Acting President of Bangladesh

and the Prime Minister and to their colleagues our greetings and warm felicitations.

I am placing on the Table of the House copies of the communications which we have received from the Government of Bangladesh. Hon. Members will be glad to know that the Government of Bangladesh have proclaimed their basic principles of State policy to be democracy, socialism, secularism and the establishment of an egalitarian society in which there would be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex or creed. In regard to foreign relations, the Bangladesh Government have expressed their determination to follow a policy of non-alignment, peaceful co-existence and opposition to colonialism, racialism and imperialism in all its manifestations. These are the ideals to which India also is dedicated.

The Bangladesh Government have reiterated their anxiety to organise the expeditious return of their citizens who have found temporary refuge in our country, and to restore their lands and belongings to them. We shall naturally help in every way in these arrangements.

I am confident that in future the Governments and the peoples of India and Bangladesh, who share common ideals and sacrifices, will forge a relationship based on the principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit. Thus working together for freedom and democracy we shall set an example of good neighbourliness which alone can ensure peace, stability and progress in this region. Our good wishes to Bangladesh.

Why This Fight

I AM HAPPY to be with you, to see your enthusiasm and to talk to you, although I have nothing particularly new to tell you. What are we fighting for ? We are fighting not only for our territory and honour but also for some high ideals which this country has upheld during the past several centuries. I am happy that in the present war not only our brave officers and soldiers but the people as a whole, including the students, are taking part in one way or the other. I am thankful to you for the purse of Rs. 1,01,000 which you have presented to me for the welfare of the Jawans. I am sure that you will be the pioneers in every work which the nation undertakes.

Free translation of speech in Hindi at the University of Delhi, December 10, 1971

Students have played an important part in the freedom movement of their country, whether in India or abroad. If the student community had not been in the forefront of our struggle for freedom, we would not have achieved the success that we got. For the past many years, we have been trying to strengthen that freedom. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We must always act so as to strengthen our unity and do so with firmness and courage. Also, these actions of ours should be meaningful for the people as a whole.

We have achieved a lot and yet you must be aware that we have not been able to shape our destiny as we wanted to. Poverty and backwardness are obstacles in the way of the common man getting the fruits of freedom. Our people are not able to enjoy all the rights of a free citizen. While you have the opportunity to study in a university, there are lots of people in this country who do not yet have this privilege. Our freedom will remain incomplete so long as we are not able to give full opportunity for development to every village, be they in the plains, on the mountains or in the deserts.

We are proud of continuously treading the path we have chosen for ourselves. Many have been our weaknesses and mistakes and many obstacles on our path. There were aggressions against us. There were natural calamities which weakened us, yet we went forward in spite of all this. We had not had a moment's respite. Once again there is a big obstacle in the way of our progress and a big task before the people of this country. You have assured me of your loyalty and I am happy to know that the student community is prepared for the dangers facing this country. But we must know that mere enthusiasm is not enough. We have to understand the ideals and the fundamental principles for which we are fighting and which form the basis of this country's unity.

We do not want to go to war. In fact we tried hard to avoid it. The whole world knows that we have been trying for world peace for the past 25 years, and we certainly had a part to play in bringing about peace in certain areas of the world. But, what is peace? Peace does not mean that we keep quiet while the people of a neighbouring country are being annihilated. This is not peace. The war that is going on today began not in our territory but in Bangladesh and India had no hand in it. We did not even know that there was to be a war.

We were happy that Pakistan had a general election after many years of military rule. The leader of a certain party won a majority in that election. We were not concerned either with election or with the selection of the leader, but we were certainly happy to know that the particular leader, who had won, wanted India's friendship. We know that we cannot always be fighting with a neighbouring country. If, however, there is some disturbance there, it does affect us. We were, therefore, happy that an election had been held and there were

hopes of the formation of a government which would be friendly to us, and we would join together to solve the main problem affecting us. This was the poverty of the people and the progress of the country.

We too had a general election, and we formed a new government. The party which had secured a majority in the elections in our neighbouring country was not allowed to form its own government. It is at this stage that the war really began.

I would like to give you the historical background of the present trouble because it is necessary to understand it. The Pakistan President had talks with the leaders of the Awami League and we expected that the talks would be fruitful and a popular government would be set up. We, however, learnt that the negotiations were a ruse to gain time to land a big army in Bangladesh from West Pakistan. These forces launched a big attack on the poor unarmed people on the night of March 25. The leaders of the Awami League, who had assembled there, have told us that on the 24th they were expecting that the negotiations would be fruitful. They were not at all prepared for the sudden attack on them the next day. They had some idea of launching a struggle, a non-violent struggle of the type which India waged against the British. But they did not get any opportunity for that. They were attacked with guns and mortar. Their great leader was arrested and they were accused of being traitors to the country. All this left no alternative for them except to declare that they wanted complete freedom.

Despite the anger in our hearts against the atrocities in Bangladesh and our deep sympathy for the people there, we kept quiet. We did not want to utter a word or take a step which might come in the way of a settlement between the leaders of Bangladesh and West Pakistan. However, what was a matter of Pakistan ceased to be so when the people of Bangladesh, young and old, women and children, entered our country like a river in flood. It soon became a big question and a big burden for us. After all this the statement by any country that it was an internal matter of Pakistan ceased to have any meaning.

Even at this stage we said that what was happening in Bangladesh concerned only the people there and we had no right to speak about the nature of a settlement. It was for the people of Bangladesh and their leaders alone to decide what they wanted and what sort of a settlement they could make. We had said that India had to consider seriously what effect the conditions in that country will have on us, and this certainly was our internal matter. We could not close our eyes to this aspect of the question. We made it clear to the whole world that the situation was deteriorating and that the two countries were moving towards a war. If the nations of the world wanted to stop a war, there was still time for them and they could have done so by securing justice for the people of Bangladesh.

We know that this could not be done suddenly and we did not say that it should be done immediately. We only said that a step or two should be taken which might meet the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh and also ensure that their voice was heard. Among such steps could be the release of the Bangladesh leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the annulment of the fake elections that were scheduled to be held, and lastly, some sort of negotiations by which the people of Bangladesh could have an assurance that something would really be done. They could not be told to forget and forgive or that it was not necessary that the refugees must go back.

It was also necessary for some sort of popular government to be set up. We were told that civilian rule might be established. We made it clear that we could not accept a government formed by those who had lost in the recent elections. The people of Bangladesh also would never accept such a government.

We never said what we thought about the whole question or what we wanted to be done. We only explained the real situation, because we were aware that certain forces had raised their heads in Bangladesh, which nothing in the world could suppress. When a whole people fight for freedom, and when every individual is determined to lay down his life for it, the struggle is bound to succeed. This has been the experience of people all over the world. We repeatedly told the people of the United States and also nations of Europe that they must look to the realities of the situation. If the struggle for freedom could not be suppressed, further steps had to be considered in future because Bangladesh is so close to our borders and we cannot ignore the effect on us of events taking place there.

Every country has its own ideals and interests. Our ideals and the interests of the country are the same. We want peace, and we shall have peace, even though we have at times to fight to secure peace. This is the reason for the war going on today. Unless the situation in Bangladesh changes there can be no peace either there or in the eastern region of our country.

Let us now examine the reasons for the present situation. Pakistan was built up on a wrong foundation, namely, that one religion could form the basis of a nation. There is no country in the world which has people only of one religion. In fact, every country today has people professing several religions and if all of them are not treated with equality and justice that country can have neither unity nor strength. The very basis of the formation of Pakistan was thus wrong.

There are some people in this country who do say that Pakistan must be crushed and that this is the opportunity to end Pakistan. This, however, has never been the stand of the Government. I am convinced that this is not the opinion of the people of this country. We want Pakistan to continue to exist. But this is possible only if it follows

the right path. If Pakistan was bent on destroying itself, no outsider could help.

Big powers have done all they could to add to the strength of the Pakistan army but they have done little to strengthen its people. The help they gave never reached the people. It swelled the coffers of only a handful of rulers. The result was that Pakistan got a false sense of strength, its foundations continued to be weak.

Many countries ridiculed our unity, saying that we had people who spoke many languages and professed many religions. They asked how democracy could flourish in a country of illiterate and poor people. Western commentators wondered how India could maintain unity in the face of so much diversity. However, we adhered to our path, because we were sure that it was the correct path, and those who criticised us had not known India. Many times in the past also what we said had proved to be correct. But it was unfortunate that they failed to understand India and her brave people.

Ours is an ancient country with a civilisation several centuries old, and we have been trying to follow the principles laid down ages ago. As human beings, we are liable to commit mistakes, but we have certainly been trying to follow the highest ideals. We also know that our social life does not always reflect them. However, we do try, and we shall continue to uphold those ideals. We have to go on trying to build up the country of our dreams and it is this endeavour which binds our people who belong to different religions, speak different languages and hold different views. So long as we pursue these ideals and adhere to our chosen path, nothing can break up our unity or weaken us. This is what the people outside our country have failed to understand.

Even in small countries where people speak more than one language, we witness interminable fighting going on. The question of language agitates us also, but people outside India are unable to understand how a country where people speak so many languages—sixteen of which have been recognised in our Constitution—can maintain its unity. For us, however, these differences are a matter of little consequence.

We are engaged in the great task of nation-building ever since we attained freedom. It was a great pity that we became slaves and that we continued to be so for many years. This great country of ours, with its great civilisation, was crushed under the heels of foreign domination. Our language, culture and traditions were destroyed to such a large extent that we ourselves began to feel that we had some weakness and that we could not compete with other nations. Unfortunately, this fear lurks somewhere in the minds of some people. They purchase goods manufactured abroad, thinking that these are superior in quality. This is in spite of the fact that the people of foreign countries them-

selves are happy to purchase something made in India. This is just symbolic of the inferiority complex among the people who come under foreign domination. It is that we are fighting against.

It is true that we are backward in many things. It is so because we did not get an opportunity to go forward. Because we were slaves at a time when countries in Europe and the United States underwent the Industrial Revolution, we were left behind in the race. Our administrators did not like any progressive force in this country to flourish. They wanted us to lose faith in ourselves because they knew that this was the only way to keep us backward. But a time comes in the history of a nation when events take a sudden turn. During the period of foreign rule, something of this type happened. It gave strength to the people and they raised their heads.

The British rulers suppressed our culture and asked us to learn the English language. Today you should not oppose the study of English because this language has served as a vehicle for new ideas and inspired our struggle for freedom. We learnt English, and those who went abroad brought with them a concept of what freedom was and showed how we could achieve it. They learnt how we could unite and bring about a revolution in our own land. Earlier, our people did not think on these lines, but thoughts and ideas that came to us from Britain inspired us and strengthened us in our resolve to fight the British rule.

I will narrate to you an incident which I now recall. When I was at school in England and was preparing for a degree at the University of Oxford, the Principal of the school told a visitor that he had asked me at our first meeting why I had left my home and parents and come to a country where the ways of living were entirely different. The Principal told the visitor that my reply was that I had come to England to know the people more closely so that I could be better prepared to fight them. It is the English language which gave us the concept of freedom. This, however is an old story.

Our freedom is again in peril. There has been an aggression not only on our territory but also on our thinking and high ideals—our ideal of secularism, our independent thinking about international affairs and our determination to stick to our opinions. All this has come under attack.

There are nations which cannot tolerate that India should take independent decisions. They dictate to other nations to behave in a particular manner and they are obeyed. We welcome their friendship and say that we shall be grateful for all help received. If, however, there are strings attached to this friendship, or the help that is offered, or if it affects our freedom and our ability to take independent decisions, we spurn their offers of help. We shall stand on our own legs. It seems they have not been able to understand that we shall stick to

what we say and that we are determined to implement our independent decisions.

There is a lot of criticism of India abroad. At the United Nations a large number of countries voted against us. They say that war is a very bad thing and that only when it is stopped some settlement would be reached. We waited for a settlement for over eight months. I met some people and told them all about this situation.

Once we were asked in a foreign country how much time we could allow for a settlement. Our Ambassador said, "just a few weeks". They then said that a settlement was possible if we could wait for a few months. Our Ambassador said that the situation would take a critical turn in just a week. Several weeks passed and even months, but they did nothing. It was stated by some people abroad that I did not abide by my earlier statement, or that I did not warn them against the possibility of a war. I did not know at all that there would be a war. But I had very clearly stated that it was getting difficult to prevent a war although we shall try our best to do so. If, however, the situation went beyond limit, it might not be possible to avert a war.

I told them that if they wanted to prevent a war they should put pressure on the Pakistan President and Government to change their ways. If this were done there would be no war. Otherwise, it would be difficult to avoid war. India cannot tolerate a whole nation being annihilated and that this should be treated as a purely internal matter of another country. The repression in Bangladesh was so great that we were forced to bear a big burden. A situation was thus brought about in which we had to face war. Even then, the initiative was not ours.

If we had wanted to begin a war, some of our leaders would have been in the capital. I was away to Calcutta, where there was a very big meeting attended by about a million people. The Defence Minister was in Patna and on way to Bangalore. The Finance Minister was in Poona and did not even know if he was returning or going elsewhere. At 5.45 p.m. we were told about the Pakistani aggression, which had begun at 5 p.m. We all tried to return to the capital as soon as possible. We did not begin the war. Even then, some people abroad accused India of aggression.

We were naturally deeply hurt that people who professed to be upholders of democracy remained quiet when the time came to defend it. They were not worried whether a country had a democratic form of government or was under military rule. They talked of big ideals, but when the time came they ignored them completely. I do not know whether they did so in their own interests or in the interest of somebody else. I told everybody that if they were not concerned with the freedom of the people of Bangladesh, or our own difficulties, they could do what they liked.

I also said that if they could take a long range view of their self-interest, it was in their own interest that Bangladesh must not be crushed. The annihilation of Bangladesh could not strengthen Pakistan, but only weaken it. The armed forces of many countries might be brought there but they could not build up a strong nation when the people were victims of untold atrocities.

Today we are fighting not against the people of Pakistan who, we know, are being suppressed. Their voice is not heard and they are not able to hear what others say. They do not know what has happened in Bangladesh. Even the people of Karachi do not know what is happening in Baluchistan or in the North-West Frontier Province or in other regions. The people there are as poor as our own people. The help their Government is getting does not reach them at all. In any case this help is not being used for development work. The nations of the world are helping a handful of army leaders to remain in power there. We want to ask the people of Pakistan and the armed forces there why they are fighting for a government which is not prepared to do anything for them. Why are they fighting, when it is not going to strengthen their nation, but weaken it?

Now that we are at war, our first effort is to win it. Not for a moment have I lost the confidence that victory shall be ours, and must be ours. We shall win because our army is strong and brave, and also because it is a new type of army. When we were first attacked, our armed forces were similar to those of Pakistan. A wide gulf separated them from the people. But after the war of 1962, and particularly after the war of 1965, the people and the armed forces have got very close to each other. Men in the army know what the people are doing, what are their social and financial problems and how they can be solved to ensure a better life. Our brave soldiers have their parents, brothers or sisters elsewhere in the country and whatever happens to one affects the other.

The people who are not in uniform also form a kind of army today. All have to join hands in the fight. I am glad that you are donating blood. If need be, we shall ask for more. But the time has not yet come. Today we have to convince the army that behind them is a strong and united nation, which will go on growing stronger as time passes.

We shall achieve full victory only when Bangladesh is completely free and has her own Government. They have a Government just now, but it has to go there, organise its machinery, and, as they have said, take back all the refugees, who should be provided work, so that Bangladesh again becomes the Sonar Bangla, as stated in their National Anthem.

All this we have to do. We, who are not on the borders, have to ensure that all weaknesses in our social fabric are removed so that

when the war is over, the country takes a big leap forward. We should be victorious not only on the battlefield but also in our civic life. We should adhere to a path which takes us forward to glory. There is a big task before you and me.

We have also to ensure that we do not speak ill of others, however much we are opposed to them. We have to show to the world that we are resolute, and that we shall not change even if we are opposed by the whole world. We are on the correct path, and we shall prove that this is so. It is my belief that we have to take all this in our stride. This is proved by events in our country and in international affairs.

We are among those who have given greater support to the United Nations and do so even today. While we respect that august body, we are also aware of its weaknesses. It has adopted many resolutions before but these have been ineffective. The nations of the world have to decide whether they want to be friendly with the 55 crores of our people or not.

There are only a few countries in the world today where the whole population is engaged in the common endeavour of nation-building. The war going on is a recent affair but our main task has been to take our country forward on the road to development. There are only a few countries treading a similar path with foresight. If we become strong, and our people uphold our ideals, this would benefit not only India but the whole world. We have to convey this message to the world. But it is not being heard today.

It has been a tiring business to receive all sorts of advice from outside, advice which has come from people whose own policies have been proved to be wrong. Even in our own country we sometimes get advice from our newspapers and our brethren. If they are here before us, they need not take this reference to heart, because it is their leaders who are responsible for the opinions they express. Even an ordinary person would reconsider his opinion if he is proved to be wrong. Instead, their leaders express yet another opinion which is proved to be equally wrong.

I do not want to criticise them today, because we are united at present in a common purpose. We are all determined to help our armed forces. This can be done only in two ways, by donating blood and by helping the families of the soldiers who have lost their lives. It is also important for the people to know that for the present we have done away with our differences and that we shall not talk about them. We shall only discuss how to strengthen the country and not to do anything which might be opposed to our interests. They sometimes utter something very insignificant but it is misinterpreted and misused in the international field. Although we never for a moment thought of waging a war, there was some talk of war in

this country. This gave an excuse to others to say that we had decided to go to war. This is the time when everyone must realise what is in his country's interest and adhere to it firmly.

I am grateful to you for your assurances that you are with me. I want to assure you that the Government and the people are one. The Government will do its best to strengthen the people because that is our goal. We know that democracy cannot be firm if there is a gulf separating the Government from the people. A weak democracy means a weak people, and if the people are weak, the army, however strong, cannot by itself give strength to the nation. We must bear all this in mind.

Today our good wishes and prayers are with those brave officers and soldiers who are sacrificing their lives on the front. It is a thing of glory if a citizen lays down his life to protect the country. It is a great opportunity to have this privilege. We all must decide what sacrifices we have to make in the various fields. I hope the students will seriously consider what help they can give at this time of crisis.

The students should also consider what useful changes they can make in the city and in the university at the present moment. I hope you all are aware that during the years of World War II there were shortages of everything in England. There were difficulties of all sorts. Yet the people there reformed their educational system, their health organisation and other things. Now that we are all united, we have the opportunity to give a new shape to the nation, to improve the health of the people and the sanitary conditions.

Let us take the pledge that we shall walk shoulder to shoulder, that we shall not fear any threats, and that we reject all pressures. This does not mean that we are averse to receiving advice from others. We always certainly listen to what others say. We will seriously consider their suggestions. But when we find that they are not in our interest, we shall refuse to accept them. We do not say that we shall not accept any suggestion if it is worthwhile. We shall consider it and take the opinion of the people as well. But if everyone felt that it was not in the nation's interest, then, it is our right to follow the path which we consider to be the best for us.

We are happy at the achievements of our brave soldiers on the front. They have been victorious at many places. A hard and difficult future lies ahead. But we should keep aloft the light of the ideal that shines in our hearts; it should be kept up. If we stick to our ideals, we shall be able to bring such prosperity and happiness to our land as neither our own people nor nations abroad have ever known. I am convinced that only the youth can lit the lamp and build up a new society and a new humanity. Wars will come and go, but our biggest task is to build up the India of our dreams.

* * *

I LAST ADDRESSED you from this platform soon after the General Election which we had fought for certain principles and ideals. During the election campaign we put before our own people, and the world, a picture of the country's aims and objects. And we proved to the world that our people fully understood the path they had to follow and the shape of things to come. If the earlier struggle could at all be called a war, it was a war of words and arguments and we achieved victory by the vote of the people.

The war now in progress is of another kind. All those who differed with one another during the elections are today united. The people of this country, belonging to all States and religions, and speaking different languages, have put up a common front. We are fighting today for democracy and to show the world that a nation cannot be founded on the basis of religion alone. There is no country in the world today in which all the people profess only one religion. Every country has people of different religions as its citizens. The important question, therefore, is whether the minorities in the country have been given all the rights of citizenship. We are today fighting because we believe that every nation has the right to freedom and to make its voice heard provided its demand is just. We are convinced that when people fight for freedom, justice and fraternity they are bound to be victorious. Many of our brave soldiers are today fighting on our borders, many have lost their lives, and many others have been wounded. All the people of India stand behind them.

India had made good progress in recent years. We achieved a part of what we wanted to. But we know that dark days lie ahead because the danger to the country from all sides is increasing. Those who talked of democracy and raised a finger at us, saying that possibly our faith in democracy was not strong enough, have now forgotten what they used to say about us earlier. Those, who professed to be the champions of the poor and claimed that they supported all struggles for freedom, have today forgotten those principles and professions, and they are trying to coerce us.

You have just heard a song—*Sarfaroshi ki tamanna*...(we are prepared to lay down our lives in the cause of freedom). When I was a little girl, this song was very popular all through our struggle for freedom. It used to be sung at meetings and demonstrations. Another popular song was—*Sar jae to jae*...(India must regain freedom even at the cost of our lives). These old songs have acquired a new meaning in our national life today. We are facing a big danger now. This is not because we want to grab another nation's territory or to destroy another nation. We have no territorial ambitions, not even for

Free translation of speech in Hindi at a public meeting at Ramlila Grounds, Delhi, December 12, 1971

an inch of another's territory. We do not want to harm any country, whether our neighbour or some other. We know that radical changes have come about in Bangladesh, and that the demand for freedom there could not be crushed by any power of the world. We are also aware that if we allow the fire that is burning within the hearts of the patriots to be put out, it might endanger our own freedom, our democracy and our basic principles. These are precisely the reasons why we are fighting today.

We are fighting not because we covet any inch of another's land or to harm any other country. I repeat it because a lot of vicious propaganda against us is being carried on in several foreign countries, and this in spite of our earnest efforts to find a peaceful solution. To the demand of the people of Bangladesh for freedom, were added the sufferings of the common people there and the atrocities committed on the young men, women and children. It had its repercussions on our own country for in a very short time the suffering people came to us like a river in flood. Although the Pakistani army was massacring lakhs of people many nations of the world shut their eyes to this. They said it was purely an internal matter. But, where whole nation or community was facing annihilation, it ceased to be an internal affair of that country.

How could India remain an idle spectator when people came to us in millions to save their lives? Their spirit and culture were being crushed. During my recent tour abroad, I told the people in several countries clearly and frankly that India could not be just a silent spectator to all this. But it was alleged that I did not abide by what I had said earlier. They do not perhaps know us.

We, in this country, young men and women, have inherited a great civilisation, which has existed not for the last century or two, but for thousands of years. We have learnt to suffer. But, out of our suffering has come the strength to fight against oppression, especially when it crosses the limits. India lost her own freedom and was oppressed in every way. People tried to raise their heads here and there but they were put down. A time came when the people of this country, whether they were illiterate, poor or weak, stood up. They all declared that freedom was their birthright. All efforts were made to crush them. But we won.

We believe that we are fighting today to strengthen our own freedom. There is a lot of opposition to us abroad, not because anybody is really worried about what has happened in Pakistan. It might be so in some measure, but they are really worried that an oppressed nation of dark-skinned people is not prepared to toe their line. They are annoyed that we have dared to chalk out our own path and that we have dared to do what we know is just and right. We believe we are fighting not only for our own country, and our own

principles, but for all those in the world who have been oppressed under foreign domination for centuries. These nations may not be aware, and may not realize how the down-trodden under foreign domination feel. We, however, know it, and we are also aware that if we do not fight today we shall in future meet the same fate as they do today. When India fought for freedom and regained it, our success inspired others to throw out their foreign rulers one after the other. The reasons why we are at war today are therefore deep and far-reaching. We are prepared to undergo any sacrifice to face the dangers which threaten us and to pursue the high ideals which are the basis of our national life.

A foreign power has threatened us. It has told us that it is bound by certain treaty alliances with Pakistan. We were aware of these alliances. There were many Pacts and so far as I am aware they were intended to contain Communism. The object of these alliances was certainly not to fight democracy, or to suppress justice or the voice of the oppressed. If this was the object of these alliances, then it was a deliberate effort to deceive the world. There were people who used to criticise our policies and were of the view that we were encouraging Communism in this country. They told us that they wanted to save us from China. But we did not co-operate with them.

Now, however, there has been a complete change in their attitude. They say today that China is the biggest country in the world and nobody should come in its way. This is how the Great Powers completely shift their stand. If you look at the past history you will find that there is only one country and one people—India—who have never changed their stand. We have always remained steadfast to our principles and policies and would continue to do so.

And, let me repeat that, howsoever weak we may be—our forces are not so strong as those of the other world powers, who can strike terror in Europe and we do not have the weapons they possess nor the resources or the industries to match them—the Indian spirit is indomitable—indomitable because we follow the path of truth and justice. We shall show the world that despite the opposition of all those forces, there is no power on earth which can bend us. But we have to remember that such an attitude could be based only on firm courage and not on mere slogans. It is not an expression of courage to say that we shall destroy another nation or commit atrocities for no reason whatsoever. True courage implies firm adherence to principles, and we must all know what they are.

Our first commitment is to democracy and to make it truly meaningful for the people. This is possible only when all the people living in the land, of whatever religion or community and speaking whatever language, are given equal rights. It is our fundamental principle that people of all religions must be treated equally. Democracy

cannot strike deep roots, unless disparities between the rich and the poor are reduced. If we pursue these twin ideals, we shall achieve true victory.

How did we get involved in this crisis ?

As I told you earlier, efforts were made to crush a poor neighbouring country. This country is more backward than us, because it did not get any opportunity to go forward. It was an unequal battle, with the people on one side, and the army on the other. Even if this country were far away from our borders, it would have had our sympathies in its struggle for freedom because India has always raised her voice in defence of justice and the poor. In this particular case, the country concerned is our neighbour, a neighbour at our very doorstep. Even if we had tried to exercise restraints and kept our eyes and ears closed we might not have done so successfully, because all that was happening there affected not only our economy, our social system or politics but also our security.

Countries far off from the scene closed their eyes to what was happening there. We also watched all these events with great patience, not for one day, one week or one month, but for full nine months. And not a day passed when we did not try our utmost to find out a peaceful solution by which Bangladesh would achieve its freedom. We were all aware that the people there were not prepared to accept anything less than freedom, and as I told the countries of the world, the question was not what India wanted or did not want. The basic question was what the people of Bangladesh wanted or could accept. We only expressed our opinion that, insofar as we could understand them, they would not accept anything less than complete independence. There was a period of full nine months when the world powers could mediate and find out if any solution was possible. But all through this period these nations had been only advising India what to do or not to do.

And when we were attacked, some of these countries even accused us of being an "aggressor". We have experienced such incidents in the life of our nation, as well as in international affairs. The world knows about it and also the effects of these events. Many of these rich countries have sometimes complained that their youth followed a wrong path. They failed to see the effect on the youth of the gulf of difference between their precepts and practices. These are fundamental questions, which must be considered seriously. The time has now come when we should be far-sighted and should be prepared to do what is necessary.

There is unity in the nation today. But we have to ensure that the unity we have achieved should not only be on the war front, but also about our fundamental ideals and ways of thinking. Only then, we shall have real unity, which will make the country strong and powerful. We are doing all that we can to fight the war that is going on. Our

minds go to those who are fighting on the front. We pray for their victory and our good wishes are with all of them. We are proud of their courage, their bravery and the spirit with which they are trying to protect their brothers and sisters. We have to assure them that the people stand solidly behind them and are building the strength of the country to fight the war. This is the duty of everyone of us to build a healthy nation, a clean and progressive nation striding rapidly on the road to socialism to eradicate poverty. We have to inspire this confidence in our jawans and others.

And while we praise our armed forces, let us not forget our brethren of the Mukti Bahini who had no training for war. Boys of the age of 12 have joined the Mukti Bahini, and they have gone to the front after a few days of training. They are fighting with great courage. It is not an ordinary courage, which inspires the men and women, the old and the young of Bangladesh. This courage could come only out of a burning desire for freedom. The Bangladesh of their dreams has today become a reality. But her foundations are still not so strong as we wish them to be. We hope that their leaders and the people who are fighting bravely will try to build up a strong nation. Let us remember that the shooting war that is going on will not last long. The real fight will begin after that. The tale of the suffering of the people of Bangladesh is very old. They have today got an opportunity to build anew, because they are free. India does not want to interfere in their internal affairs and will make all efforts to live in friendship with them and show the world how two neighbours can help each other without any interference in their domestic matters. We have to present to the world a new ideal.

The Pakistani army now in Bangladesh is no longer a cohesive force. I wish they could see what the demands of the people of Bangladesh are, and with what enthusiasm the onward march of the Mukti Bahini and the Indian soldiers has been welcomed by the people. It is in the interest of the Pakistani army to see the reality and immediately withdraw from there. If this happens, the bitter feelings between them and the people of Bangladesh might be assuaged. A small step taken today can ensure that they could be good friends in the future. This would come about only if they withdraw from Bangladesh and return to their homes. I do not know how far all this could go through. However, I understand that they really want to do so, and have even sent messages in this connection. But it is the people in power in West Pakistan, sitting quietly in their homes who are not permitting them to return. On the contrary, India is being accused of all that is happening in Bangladesh.

Some officials of the United Nations wanted to get out of Dacca. They requested us to stop bombing of the city so that they could easily get out. We told them that India agreed to their suggestion and

would enable them to leave Dacca safely. We also told them that if they wanted our help they should come to Calcutta and leave in safety from there. We had agreed to bring them to Calcutta and assured them that they would not be in any danger. But when the aeroplanes flew to Dacca to bring the U.N. personnel, the authorities at the airport did not allow the planes to land. And it was stated that India first permitted their evacuation and, later, refused to let the planes land. False propaganda is being carried on that India went back on her word and she did not allow the planes to land. Every effort is being made to make foreigners in Dacca blame India for the discomforts caused to them. We, on our part, have done the best to ensure that they are not put to any trouble and are safely evacuated.

I hope you all know what you have to do in the present circumstances. You have to ensure that prices do not rise and that there is no hoarding. People should purchase only what they need and not spend unnecessarily. All of us, men, women and children, are in a way soldiers and we have to see that the country remains united and strong and that there is no waste. We shall get over these dark days only if we exercise restraint and austerity.

I am very sad that one of our old comrades of the freedom struggle, the Kashmir Chief Minister, Shri Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, died today. He had been ailing for several months, and had been seriously ill for the past two weeks. His death is a great loss to us. I met him first in 1935, and he was among the handful who fought for freedom in Kashmir, first against the Maharaja and the Britishers and afterwards against the Pakistanis who attacked Kashmir. In the critical period, before the arrival of the Indian army, he was among those handful of Kashmiris who prepared their people to fight the Pakistani army and irregulars. They rallied the people, men, women, young and old and told them of what India stood for. Kashmir chose to be part of India when the time came to make the choice. Great temptations were put before the people of Kashmir to make them accept the leadership of the Muslim League and to become an Islamic State, a communal theocratic State. But, they stuck firmly to their principles, which are the same as our own. They are taking Kashmir forward towards these ideals. We are very sad that at the time when we most needed Shri Sadiq's advice and wisdom, he has left us. However, I am sure that the people of Kashmir who loved him and honoured him, will adhere to the path shown by him and that the people of all religions will live in amity in Kashmir and eradicate the poverty and backwardness of their State.

Tragedies like the present one have occurred in the lives of individuals and nations. The test at such moments is whether we go under, or we take them in our stride. Difficulties and dangers do arise and we shall face them. Nothing will stop us in our march. If some obstacle

comes in our way we shall remove it. Such is the position today. I congratulate you all, because we stand united. We are devoting our energies to repelling the enemy and defeating his evil designs.

Our enemy is not Pakistan, nor are its people. The people of Pakistan have been suppressed for long. Because of the war fever they might abuse us but they are a poor people who never had a say in their country's administration and would have never opted for war had they been told the truth. I am sure that they also want to eradicate poverty and put their country on its feet. Their leaders have made them dependent on other countries and they have been following policies which are not in their interests. If a poor and weak country is supplied free a large quantity of arms by a big nation, it does not make that country strong. Instead, the burden breaks its back. This precisely is what has happened. Because the rulers of Pakistan knew that mighty nations were at their beck and call, they ignored the will of their own people. They thought that, with surfeit of foreign money and arms, they could spurn democracy and ignore the will of the people. They ignored the demands of the Bengalis, the Baluchis and the people of the Frontier Province as well. I can say with all the emphasis at my command that the countries which have been supplying arms to Pakistan have made her weak. If Pakistan comes to harm today, it is they who will be responsible for it. These powers are unhappy with us, because we have refused such help. We knew that if we curtailed our own freedom, nothing could make us strong. If our freedom was genuine, we shall be strong, without any foreign aid, and we shall be able to do what we want.

Let us all join together and march on the right path and I am sure our difficulties will be removed. Whether or not we are in a soldier's uniform, whether or not we have a gun with us, we still continue to be soldiers, or as good as those who are fighting on the front. We must perform our duties in this spirit. Only then can we give our jawans and the country the help they need. We have to march forward together. Only then can we be sure of victory.

Victory Will be Ours

YOU ARE FIGHTING with courage to defend our freedom and honour. The entire country admires you. Our people are with you. The people of all region, all languages, all religions, all political parties

Message to the Armed Forces, broadcast over All India Radio, December 10, 1971

are united as never before. They are as determined as you to defeat the aggressor. They are imbued with boundless faith in their cause and in your capacity to meet any challenge.

The enemy has raised the false and pernicious cry of a religious war. The people of Bangladesh, who are overwhelmingly Muslims, have given a fitting reply to the military rulers of Islamabad.

You and we are fighting in defence of the great principle that the people of all religions are equally our brothers. We are defending the great ideals of equality and brotherhood, which are the life and blood of our democracy. Bharat means not only the fields, hills and rivers which make up our country, not only the 560,000 villages and towns, not only the 550 millions of people, but the ideals of tolerance and respect for higher morality which the very mention of India has evoked for 30 centuries.

Fight well, my countrymen. Victory will be ours.

Letter to President Nixon

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, I am writing at a moment of deep anguish at the unhappy turn which the relations between our two countries have taken.

I am setting aside all pride, prejudice and passion and trying, as calmly as I can, to analyse once again the origins of the tragedy which is being enacted.

There are moments in history when brooding tragedy and its dark shadows can be lightened by recalling great moments of the past. One such great moment which has inspired millions of people to die for liberty was the Declaration of Independence by the United States of America. That Declaration stated that whenever any form of Government became destructive of man's inalienable rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, it was the right of the people to alter or abolish it.

All unprejudiced persons objectively surveying the grim events in Bangladesh since March 25 have recognised the revolt of 75 million people, a people who were forced to the conclusion that neither their life, nor their liberty, to say nothing of the possibility of the pursuit of happiness, was available to them. The world press, radio and television have faithfully recorded the story. The most perceptive of American scholars who are knowledgeable about the affairs of this subcontinent revealed the anatomy of East Bengal's frustrations.

Letter to President Nixon of the U.S.A., December 15, 1971

The tragic war, which is continuing, could have been averted if during the nine months prior to Pakistan's attack on us on December 3, the great leaders of the world had paid some attention to the fact of revolt, tried to see the reality of the situation and searched for a genuine basis for reconciliation. I wrote letters along these lines. I undertook a tour in quest of peace at a time when it was extremely difficult to leave the country in the hope of presenting to some of the leaders of the world the situation as I saw it. It was heart-breaking to find that while there was sympathy for the poor refugees, the disease itself was ignored.

War could also have been avoided if the power, influence and authority of all the States, and above all the United States, had got Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released. Instead, we were told that a civilian administration was being installed. Everyone knows that this civilian administration was a farce; today the farce has turned into a tragedy.

Lip service was paid to the need for a political solution, but not a single worthwhile step was taken to bring this about. Instead, the rulers of West Pakistan went ahead holding farcical elections to seats which had been arbitrarily declared vacant.

There was not even a whisper that anyone from the outside world had tried to have contact with Mujibur Rahman. Our earnest plea that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be released, or that, even if he were to be kept under detention, contact with him might be established, was not considered practical on the ground that the U.S. could not urge policies which might lead to the overthrow of President Yahya Khan. While the United States recognised that Mujib was a core factor in the situation and that unquestionably in the long run Pakistan must acquiesce in the direction of greater autonomy for East Pakistan, arguments were advanced to demonstrate the fragility of the situation and of Yahya Khan's difficulty.

Mr. President, may I ask you in all sincerity : Was the release or even secret negotiations with a single human being, namely, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, more disastrous than the waging of a war ?

The fact of the matter is that the rulers of West Pakistan got away with the impression that they could do what they liked because no one, not even the United States, would choose to take a public position that while Pakistan's integrity was certainly sacrosanct, human rights, liberty were no less so and that there was a necessary inter-connection between the inviolability of States and the contentment of their people.

Mr. President, despite the continued defiance by the rulers of Pakistan of the most elementary facts of life, we would still have tried our hardest to restrain the mounting pressure as we had for nine long months, and war could have been prevented had the rulers of Pakistan not launched a massive attack on us by bombing our airfields in Amritsar, Pathankot, Srinagar, Avantipur, Uttarlai, Jodhpur, Ambala and Agra in the broad daylight on December 3, 1971 at a time when

I was away in Calcutta, my colleague, the Defence Minister, was in Patna and was due to leave further for Bangalore in the South and another senior colleague of mine, the Finance Minister, was in Bombay. The fact that this initiative was taken at this particular time of our absence from the Capital showed perfidious intentions. In the face of this, could we simply sit back trusting that the rulers of Pakistan or those who were advising them had peaceful, constructive and reasonable intent?

We are asked what we want. We seek nothing for ourselves. We do not want any territory of what was East Pakistan and now constitutes Bangladesh. We do not want any territory of West Pakistan. We do want lasting peace with Pakistan. But will Pakistan give up its ceaseless and yet pointless agitation of the last 24 years over Kashmir? Are they willing to give up their hate campaign and posture of perpetual hostility towards India? How many times in the last 24 years have my father and I offered a Pact of Non-aggression to Pakistan? It is a matter of recorded history that each time such offer was made, Pakistan rejected it out of hand.

We are deeply hurt by the innuendos and insinuations that it was we who have precipitated the crisis and have in any way thwarted the emergence of solutions. I do not really know who is responsible for this calumny. During my visit to the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria and Belgium, the point I emphasised, publicly as well as privately, was the immediate need for a political settlement. We waited nine months for it. When Dr. Kissinger came on July 7, 1971, I had emphasised to him the importance of seeking an early political settlement. But we have not received, even to this day, the barest framework of a settlement which would take into account the facts as they are and not as we imagine them to be.

Be that as it may, it is my earnest and sincere hope that with all the knowledge and deep understanding of human affairs you as President of the United States and reflecting the will, the aspirations and idealism of the great American people, will at least let me know where precisely we have gone wrong before your representatives or spokesmen deal with us with such harshness of language.

With regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Indira Gandhi

circumstances and needs. These 24 years, we have heard many aggressive speeches and much abusive and false propaganda against us. We cannot believe that this is the true voice of the Pakistani people. They have been kept in darkness by their successive regimes.

We want to assure them that we have no enmity towards them. There are more things in common between us than those which divide us. We should like to fashion our relations with the people of Pakistan on the basis of friendship and understanding. Let them live as masters in their own house and devote their energies to the removal of poverty and inequalities in their country.

It is this sincere desire which prompted us last evening to instruct our Army, Navy and Air Force to cease operations from 20.00 hours today on all fronts in the West.

I am grateful for the support which all political parties of the country have given during this difficult period and specially to this initiative on behalf of peace.

This offer was communicated to the world community by our Minister of External Affairs, Sardar Swaran Singh, in New York. We also had it formally conveyed to the Government of Pakistan through the Swiss Embassy. We hope that the people and the rulers of Pakistan will appreciate and reciprocate this offer.

The consequences which would flow from a failure to do so will rest squarely upon the military rulers of Pakistan. However, regardless of what happens on the Western front, let us not be complacent. The coming months specially will bring new and complex problems. We must be very vigilant to safeguard our integrity and our interests and above all, the fundamental beliefs of our national existence.

A Debt of Gratitude

DURING THE LAST few difficult days, the thoughts of the nation have been with the gallant officers and men of our Army, Navy, Air Force and the Border Security Force. Soon the lights will go up in our cities but in many hearts darkness will remain. However proud a nation or a family is of sacrificing its best for the country, this sentiment cannot help the widow in grappling with the problems of daily life, or the children who are bereft of a father's guiding hand. For brave young men, straight and strong in body, to be suddenly without a limb, is not only a matter of physical pain but of mental shock and agony. None of these want pity or charity. What they need is compassionate under-

Statement in Lok Sabha, December 18, 1971

standing, and assistance to re-adjust themselves to the sudden and unforeseen change in their lives. We must assure them that life still has much to offer them and they in turn have much to offer society.

I have been deeply concerned with this question since 1962 when I became Chairman of the Citizens' Central Council. Then and again in 1965, I visited almost every military hospital along our borders and also our rehabilitation centres. I have been haunted by the thought that we have not done enough.

The lives of martyrs cannot be valued in terms of money. Their sacrifice is beyond recompense. But a grateful nation remembers its debt, and its obligation to them to mitigate the sufferings of their wives and children. Government have now decided to rectify, insofar as possible, the deficiencies in our programmes for the war disabled and the families of those who have died fighting.

Since our aim has been to give special help to the weakest in our society, at this moment we should not forget the other physically handicapped and disabled. They also need our help. They can and should become useful workers in various fields. Many of them show special aptitude for certain vocations which compensate for their handicap.

For all these handicapped, the problem is one of providing the appropriate training and opportunity. Hence, we propose to bring a Bill before Parliament to make it obligatory for all employers who employ more than 25 people in the public as well as the private sector to reserve a certain proportion of their vacancies for the physically handicapped. Many industrialists and employers have already assured me that they have begun to do this and will pursue the matter further. I hope that even those employers who are not covered by this enactment will come forward voluntarily to follow this law.

The public sector undertakings are required to reserve vacancies for ex-servicemen including the disabled. However, it is true that the position regarding actual employment is not satisfactory. Government have, therefore, decided to issue a directive to all undertakings, where necessary by amending their Articles of Association, to fill vacancies on the same basis as Government departments. Such a directive would enlarge the reservations for disabled servicemen.

Coming to employment under Government, there are already orders for the rehabilitation of disabled officers of the Defence Forces in civil posts—classes I and II—by relaxation of age limits, medical standards, etc. Effective implementation of these facilities will be ensured. As regards disabled ex-servicemen, preference will be given to them in the 10 per cent and 20 per cent vacancies reserved for ex-servicemen generally in class III and IV posts respectively. In addition, in certain circumstances vacancies up to another 7 per cent will be made available to disabled ex-servicemen.

In the unreserved quota of vacancies in both these classes disabled servicemen already get some preference. It has now been decided to give them first priority along with retrenched Government employees. It has also been decided that up to two members of the family of a serviceman killed in action will be given priority for employment immediately after the retrenched Government employees and disabled servicemen. They will be exempted from going through the employment exchange.

We realise that merely expanding the employment opportunities will not be enough. It will be equally necessary to assist the disabled ex-servicemen to take full advantage of these opportunities. Government propose to arrange a variety of training courses.

The widows of our fighting men need special consideration. We intend to start schemes to train them in skills particularly suited to their requirements. The details are being worked out by a small group.

Government have also decided to meet the full cost of education up to the end of the first degree course of the dependants of all personnel of the defence and para-military forces killed or permanently disabled during the current hostilities. Government will also meet the full cost of such dependants who are at present undergoing post-graduate courses.

We can enact laws, but it is the outlook of the public which makes all the difference. Public behaviour towards the handicapped should not be affected by old prejudices. On the contrary, we must all help to make them self-reliant again. No longer need such a handicap prevent a person from leading a full life.

I am glad that actuated by the same considerations as the Union Government, several State Governments have taken up schemes to assist servicemen and their families through land allocation, cash grants, educational stipends etc. I hope that this governmental effort will be reinforced by the widest measure of popular support.

Break-up of Pakistan

QUESTION : If Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were released now, could he heal the serious factional strife that has already split the leadership of Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Any time for Mujib's release is a good time. So, the sooner it comes the better it will be—for Bangladesh, for himself, and I would say for Pakistan also. I don't believe there are any fissipa-

From interview published in *'Newsweek'* of January 3, 1972

rous tendencies within Bangladesh. In any democratic set-up there is a tendency for any amount of rivalries or differences of opinion. But I believe this helps to strengthen and unify, rather than weaken. It is when you suppress such tendencies that there is a danger of break-up.

QUESTION : Do you believe that normal relations can be established with Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I believe normal relations can come and will come if outside countries do not interfere. As I have said, I believe that Pakistan's break-up is directly due to countries that thought they were helping Pakistan; but, because they themselves were unable to assess the realities of the situation, what they considered help in fact weakened Pakistan.

QUESTION : What difficulties will there be in getting negotiations going between India and Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : What is the difficulty ? There is no difficulty at all. They can start as soon as Pakistan is in a mood to do so. Obviously, it is a difficult time for them now, but as soon as they are willing to face up to realities there should be no problem. But I think they have to have time. Mr. Bhutto has just come back. Everybody needs to have time to calm down.

QUESTION : Would you insist on Bangladesh representatives being present in talks with Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It depends. If Bangladesh is directly concerned, then it would be their affair... It would be different in other problems where we are directly concerned.

QUESTION : Do you consider release of Mujib to be a pre-requisite to negotiations with Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, his release would certainly help all along the line. I cannot say anything more at this moment.

QUESTION : Some people say that it will take many years for relations between U.S. and India to become normal again. Do you agree ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No. Relations can get back to normal today if the United States wants it. Insofar as I am concerned they are perfectly normal. I have nothing against the United States. I cannot tell you how many hundreds and hundreds of letters I have received from eminent people in the U.S. right down to school children in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. I must say I have been very greatly touched by their sentiments.

QUESTION : Do you feel that President Nixon genuinely misunderstood India's case ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not just a question of India's case insofar as Bangladesh is concerned. It is a question of recognising what India is, what India stands for, and what India wants to do....Let me say there is fantastic nonsense being talked about in America about our having received promises from the Soviet Union (to intervene in event of either U.S. or Chinese military action on the sub-continent). If after all this, the U.S. refuses to recognise what sort of person I am and what sort of country India is, then I cannot say what will happen and what sort of relationship we will have. You must be able to judge persons and know what they are like.

QUESTION : What will be the economic consequences of war?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, we will have more hardship, but we are used to it and can bear it. We are also determined to cut down on all foreign aid. No matter what consequences. We want to be as self-reliant as possible—from all sources, insofar as this is possible.

Kinship with Bangladesh

I THINK YOU realise by now, Prime Minister, what a great joy it is to have you with us and perhaps you are the first guest who has been universally welcomed by all the parties and all the people of India. It was your shining faith in your people which inspired the Mukti Bahini to penetrate the dark gloom which had engulfed Bangladesh. This achievement is yet another proof that the human spirit can never be crushed and that the flame of freedom cannot be extinguished.

Your freedom has been won with a sacrifice perhaps greater than given by any other country. But freedom is not a culmination; it is a beginning. You, Prime Minister, are already engrossed in the manifold tasks of building a *Sonar* Bangladesh, preparing your people for the responsibilities that freedom brings.

What has been achieved in the last few weeks in Bangladesh is an index of its great future. All sections of your nation, specially the young people, have rallied around their great leader and will, I am sure, divert their energies to the constructive purpose of building a new nation.

We in India are also struggling hard to reconstruct our country. We want to build a strong edifice which will be the home of free men and women, who are self-reliant and unafraid, yet compassionate and

Speech at banquet in honour of the Prime Minister of Bangla Desh, Calcutta, February 6, 1972

tolerant. The real wealth of a nation is its people. Its true power is the strength of their will. A system of Government which does not constantly draw sustenance from the people cannot endure. Tyrannies come and go, but ultimately it is the common people who are victorious. Many countries tend to under-estimate the strength of nationalism in our countries and our determination to go our own path. I do firmly believe that it is only the combination of democracy, socialism and secularism which can give a solid base to countries such as ours.

Parliamentary democracy has not worked in many countries. But it has worked in India in spite of our poverty and illiteracy. This is due to the vision and conscious efforts of our nation builders and the will of our people, who know that they are the source of power. The Indian experience shows that self-respect, independence of judgment and true progress are not dependent on literacy and levels of income. We hail your own initiative in establishing a system of Government in Bangladesh which is fully representative of the sovereignty of the people.

Our aspirations mingle through our common allegiance to freedom, equality and progress. We, in whom our respective people have reposed their trust, must work incessantly to make our people free of spirit, steadfast in faith, and rich in achievement. Above all we must work for tolerance. As inheritors of a great civilisation we know that we have endured because of our tolerance and because we have looked towards the future.

The culture and economy of India and of Bangladesh are complementary. Both countries are fortunately well endowed in human resources. There is much scope for economic, cultural and technological co-operation.

We all know that a nation rises through its own efforts. Foreign help can at best be marginal. Even so, I assure you that India will deem it a privilege to assist you in the same spirit in which we shared the struggle and sufferings of your people last year.

Friendship between Bangladesh and India is not negative. It is not aimed against any other country. Our outlook towards the world is not narrowed by exclusive alliances. Only when nations derive their strength by drawing out the best in their people, and when they are friends with their neighbours, outsiders can play no mischief.

The art, literature and creative impulses of Bengal have profoundly influenced modern India. Gurudev Tagore was a philosopher whose perceptive eye saw through the superficial and the false. It is a measure of his greatness that two of his songs have inspired our people and yours. You and your people have made true his prophecy : *tomar duar aji khule gachhe sonar prantarey* (your door has opened to the golden fields). May the doors ever remain open to friendship, to co-operation and to new ideas.

Once again may I say what a privilege and pleasure it is for us to have you and the other members of your party with us. And through you, may I once again give our very best wishes to your people. May I request you, ladies and gentlemen, to join me in wishing long life and success to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and enduring friendship between our two countries?

* * *

I HAVE THE honour to lay on the Table of the House texts of the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace and of the Joint Declaration which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and I signed at Dacca on March 19, 1972.

I should like to emphasise that the Treaty embodies the will of the two Governments to pursue common policies in matters of interest to both countries and solemnises the close ties of friendship between our two countries and peoples cemented through blood and sacrifice. The Treaty and the Declaration will guide us on our journey, into the future in quest of peace, good neighbourliness and the well-being of our two peoples.

The Joint Declaration emphasises the importance of close coordination and co-operation between the two countries in trade and payments, economic development and transit. I should like to invite the attention of Hon. Members to that portion of the Declaration which deals with the exciting prospect of harnessing the waters of Brahmaputra, Meghna and Ganga to the benefit of our two peoples.

It is our earnest hope that the Treaty which affirms our common goals and ideals and reiterates our firm adherence to the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence, will lead to lasting peace and co-operation not only between India and Bangladesh but in the sub-continent and the region as a whole.

Visit to Bangladesh

MY HEART OVERFLOWS as I come to your beautiful country and to this historic ground. For many years, we had all heard of the beauty

Statement in Parliament, March 20, 1972

Free translation of speech in Hindi at a public rally at Suhrawardy Udyan, Dacca, March 17, 1972

of Bangladesh. For many years, we had known about the agony you have suffered, and especially the fierce atrocities of the last year. The story of your journey through darkness has moved the hearts of people and brought tears to the eyes wherever people value the human spirit.

I have come here today to pay homage to those millions who have sacrificed their lives and to the young and old who have borne arms to liberate their country. I salute the gallant men who have fought this battle, for it is their sacrifice and courage that has brought you freedom. To the ten million, who had to leave their homes and seek shelter in our country, and the millions more who were forced out of their homes, and who today are starting a new life, I give my good wishes.

Today is specially auspicious, because it is the birthday of the leader of your nation, who is not only *Bangabandhu* but brother to wherever there are people who suffer from injustice or from tyranny. To Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I offer congratulations and good wishes on my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and the entire people of India. We earnestly hope that the inspiration which he provided in your freedom struggle will continue to guide you in your forward march, and make Bangladesh strong and prosperous.

When Sheikh Mujib was in Delhi a few weeks ago, he told the people of Delhi that in nine months the people of Bangladesh had traversed several centuries and had emerged from darkness into light. You have many problems today. It is only natural that a newly-freed country is beset by problems on all sides. You may be lacking in many resources today, but you are fortunate to have a leader of high eminence, who has devoted his entire life to your good, and who has given you unity and courage. This is your greatest resource, and I have no doubt that Bangladesh will grow strong under his leadership.

At the beginning of your struggle *Bangabandhu* was arrested and removed to Pakistan. But some of his close colleagues, dedicated men, remaining true to their great leader, held aloft the green and red flag of free Bangladesh in Mujibnagar. They rallied the people and worked to arouse the conscience of the world in spite of all types of foreign intrigues. They proclaimed to the whole world your ideals, your aspirations and the story of your sacrifices. Many attempts were made to silence the voice of Bangladesh but owing to the efforts of the colleagues of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whether they were in Mujibnagar or elsewhere, the true voice of Bangladesh was heard round the world. In course of time, the world attitude changed and everyone came to acknowledge that Bangladesh is a reality. At the same time, gallant young men of the Students' League and later of the Mukti Bahini, took up arms and resolved to lay down their lives if need be for their country. Theirs is a saga of courage, of the flame of truth, the flame of justice. It is this flame which keeps a nation alive.

If India had helped you it was because we could not sit by idly after hearing your tales of sorrow and suffering that you had to undergo. It was also because we wanted to be true to ourselves and the principles to which we have adhered for years. I trust that, in the coming years, friendship between our two countries will be built not on the basis of the assistance we gave you but on the basis of full equality and to the mutual benefit of the two free and sovereign nations.

Today, as it were, one by one nations are hastening to accord diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh. But there was a time when most of these nations turned away their faces even though their own newspapers wrote about the events which took place here, with conviction and authentic documentation. There were only few countries who were willing to take up your just cause and still fewer who actually contributed their mite to relieve sufferings of the millions who sought shelter in India. In fact, it fell to the Indian people to share from out of their poverty and want, in spite of their own difficulties. The poorest of the poor in our land willingly came forward with whatever they could give.

You have given me today a most moving welcome but I know that this is not a welcome to an individual but to the representative of a people who have always been guided in their policies by some basic principles. We may be poor and illiterate but we have shown the world that we feel greatly concerned whenever injustice or wrong is done.

We know from our experience that freedom is not an end but a beginning. Freedom opens the door to new opportunities and to a new life. This new life is not built by a handful of leaders but by the entire nation, through its sacrifice, its endeavour, its discipline and its unity. Your country is a beautiful country. It is a golden land. But the gold will be seen only when the burden of the people is lightened, and there is beauty in their lives. We found that when we proclaimed the ideal of socialism for our country and adopted measures to remove poverty and bring about equality, we incurred the wrath of many vested interests at home and abroad. They are continuing to oppose us. Similarly, when we espoused the cause of the democratic rights of the people of Bangladesh and pressed for the release of *Bangabandhu* and his return to Bangladesh, and finally when we gave support to the fight of Bangladesh to survive and live in freedom, we annoyed powerful interests and countries. But we were not daunted by their opposition.

I want to tell you from our experience that whenever we take a forward step, new controversies and differences arise. We might imagine that the world has changed, but even the new often falls into the old rut, the rut of old thought and methods of work. The freedom of Bangladesh is not only your birthright and the assertion of your destiny; it is equally essential to us in India. It is in India's interest

that Bangladesh should be free and strong. If we offer you co-operation, it is not out of any desire to wield influence over you. We want you to stand on your own legs. The burden you bear is not of Bangladesh alone but of the poor and the oppressed all over the world. In bearing it we should all be together. Just as we seek a strong and friendly Bangladesh, so also we seek friendship with all our other neighbours. We want all of them to be strong. We do not want any country to dominate or pressurise other countries. Every nation should seek friendship with others but achieve internal strength through solving the problems of its own people. Only then will the countries of Asia be able to make progress, and Asia will be strengthened.

The freedom struggle of India was a long-drawn-out one. Each step forward was achieved through the sacrifice of millions of people. And finally we became free. We then found that the difficulties of the freedom struggle were nothing as compared to the difficulties which came after freedom was won. When unity was the need, voices of dissent arose. Some people expected miracles and thought the freedom would work some magic to remove poverty, unemployment and all the other problems. The hardest moment is when a new nation is born. If the people remain united and everyone bears his responsibilities then it will be possible to lay firm foundations of a new society. A new nation has to face not only internal problems but many external challenges as well. Other nations will attempt to induce you to follow their path. I am sure that you will decide for yourself what your path should be, what kind of future you want for your people and what kind of society you want to create. This is what we did in India. It is a long and time-consuming journey. Voices are bound to be raised outside the country, and even inside, to make you choose the easy path. No help or soft words should corrode the determination and the will to strive. I am reminded of the lines of Gurudev who told us that however dark and difficult the path, and even if no one else kept you company, you should be ready to walk alone. If we called out for help and no help came, then in the darkness we should become a light unto ourselves and go forward. Every free nation should follow its own road and face the difficulties that might arise. I know that you will face your difficulties with courage and not let weakness overtake you. Every difficulty strengthens, every danger beckons. This is how a nation's character and a nation's future are moulded.

Change is the law of life. Many changes are taking place in the world today. It is our duty in India and Bangladesh, and in all the other poor countries, to bring about a change in the lives of our peoples. Our policies in India are based upon democracy, secularism and socialism, not because they are fine-sounding words but because only a combination of these three principles can enable a country of our size and diversity to be united and strong. We have chosen democracy

because it is only in a democratic system that the people's voice is heard and that they can play their full part in building the country and transforming it. We have chosen secularism because it accords equal honour and treatment to all religions. We have chosen socialism because without economic and social justice, democracy cannot be real and its foundations cannot be strong.

Common principles and objectives have brought Bangladesh and India together. We shall firmly stand together by them, and derive inspiration from them for our march forward. Each of our two countries will be able to co-operate with and help the other better if we grow stronger internally. You have just become free. You have thanked us, but whatever we have done, let me tell you, we have not done for your sake but for the sake of the human spirit and for the sake of doing our own duty. Whatever the immensity of the problems facing Bangladesh, yours is a rich country because of the ability and heroism of your people. There is much that your people can give the whole world and India. And I have every confidence that through your internal strength you will build a new life not only for your own country but contribute to the building of a better world.

The Indian nation was built by men of different religions and different streams of thought, to name only a few, Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Bose, Chittaranjan Das, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Khan Sahib and Maulana Azad. These are only a few names but each one of them illumined a different facet of our national life. It is these people, and thousands of others who worked with them, who helped to build up our strength. Whether it is the strength to help you or the strength to go forward independently on our own came about because of the light shown by these people. They continue to influence our young people who are building our national life. There is the same kind of strength in you. By coming together both of us can contribute a great deal to the world. The younger generation of your country has shown how much it is possible to achieve. I know that they will show the same strength in building the country which they have shown in fight and give a new direction to their country, a direction not derived from any other country. Our ideals are similar but your path has to be your own. Just as India's path is India's own, the path of Bangladesh has to be Bangladesh's own, designed to meet the needs and aspirations of your people.

I thank you for this great welcome. I hope that all of you who have gathered here in such large numbers, and others who have not been able to come here, will build a new life out of the very agony, blood and suffering that you have experienced and new instances of which come to light with each new day. I am proud of the fact that the blood of India's soldiers has mingled in the soil of this land. It will serve to cement further our mutual friendship. Our jawans have returned

home with fond memories of the great friendship which you have shown them. It is my sincere hope that the people of Bangladesh and the people of India will work together in building up their countries and will march together on their path, refusing to be influenced or pushed around by others, however much they try. We shall go forward whatever the dangers and difficulties. There are many religions here as there are in India and elsewhere in the world. Every person, every nation can derive strength from religion. But we have seen that as long as the basic needs of the people have not been fulfilled, no other factor can help a country to be united and to advance.

The people of the advanced and affluent countries of today are also full of discontent. They are also trying to seek out a new path. It is up to us to give a new way to the world by our experience or culture or ideals. It is only when justice is done to the people that a new life can be built. A great beginning has been made here and I am confident that you will go forward step by step, and that with each step Bangladesh will become stronger, and that the progress you will achieve will not be limited to a few people but extend to all your people and reach every doorstep whether in villages or towns. It is then that your country will become *Sonar Bangla*.

The road is long and difficult but a courageous people fear no obstacles and are not deterred by any danger. It is a moment when all of us should unite to go forward. If we can help you, we shall do so to the best of our ability. We are ready to place at your disposal whatever experience or skills we have. You know that India is not a rich country. We have not been able to ameliorate the poverty of our people with all our resolute endeavour since we became free. But our people are confident that they can achieve self-reliance out of their own efforts, and today all our energies are concentrated on building a country in which we can stand on our own legs and become strong—strong not to dominate or influence others, or to seize others' territories, but to lighten the sorrows and burdens of our own people. We desire friendship with all our neighbours so that all of us can make progress.

Once again I thank you for this welcome. I offer homage to the martyrs who have been cradled by this gallant land. To the heroes who are present here I give my greetings, and to all those who have suffered I give good wishes that their sorrows may soon recede.

With Pakistani Journalists

QUESTION : When are you coming to Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : That will be decided later. There is no question of any definite date at present.

QUESTION : Do you wish to visit Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not a question of anybody's wish. It is of what we want to do. I have long felt, particularly ever since the new trend of friendship and of forgetting old conflicts began in Europe. If we have a look at history, Europe has been dominating the whole of the world. It seems to me that if we do not resolve our problems, Asia will always remain in a state of suppression and will be subject to pressures. There is poverty everywhere in all our countries, big and small. There are problems which we can never solve whatever help we get from outside and whatever effort we make ourselves. It is absolutely essential that we begin a similar trend here (in Asia) not from the chauvinistic point of view. There are masses who have been under suppression since centuries and have remained poor. They should get a chance to begin a new life. It is therefore, necessary to settle all mutual disputes. If my visit helps this purpose, I shall be only too happy to go there.

QUESTION : Did you ever visit Pakistan after partition ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I had gone once with Panditji. Perhaps at the time of Liaquat Ali Sahib. I don't recollect the date.

QUESTION : (Not clear, it related to the Summit).

THE PRIME MINISTER : A brief summit took place yesterday.

QUESTION : When is the next meeting ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There will be one today also.

QUESTION : Are you satisfied with yesterday's meeting ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The whole situation is quite complex—both for Pakistan and for us. The fact that a meeting takes place at all, is bound to have some effect.

QUESTION : Are you satisfied with the progress of the talks ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is a word that is being used in all connections. I am not a person who is ever satisfied because I feel no

Free translation of questions and answers, mostly in Urdu, at conversation with Pakistani journalists at Simla, July 1, 1972

matter what happens something better could have happened. But in the circumstances one can't expect very much; one can only expect that a small beginning is made in lessening tension and suspicion and fear of the people on both sides.

QUESTION : There is a common feeling that the biggest hurdle in the present situation is the lack of trust. In your view how can this trust be revived so that there is a relaxation in the situation and things get moving?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The first basic thing is whether both the sides really want peace and compromise.

QUESTION : What is your opinion ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I believe they do want it.

QUESTION : Both ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes; both want it.

QUESTION : Have you any idea what our problems are ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Your President has tried to give me some idea.

QUESTION : Has he succeeded or not ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Even before his telling us we did know about your difficulties. People who have reached agreements in Europe and elsewhere faced no less difficult problems.

QUESTION : At the end of Mr. Dhar's talks when he visited us it was thought that the situation had become more favourable. After the lapse of these two months, it now appears that more obstacles have arisen. This is the impression of others and those present here.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Some of the statements that have been made have not helped. Their effect has not been very good. The President himself feels that, that some hardening of attitude has taken place among certain elements.

QUESTION : We also feel that as time passes and if there is no forward movement—things cannot remain static in this age...

THE PRIME MINISTER : They can never remain static.

QUESTION : The movement is always there, backward or forward. If they do not move forward they will move backward.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is correct. There has been some hardening of attitude in Bangladesh as well during this period.

QUESTION : How can a softening in these attitudes be brought about ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no prescription for such things. There is no patent medicine that can be given. Only an effort can be made.

QUESTION : But you are the doctor.

THE PRIME MINISTER : No. I am not.

QUESTION : As the bigger country, some gesture...

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not believe in big or small. As I told the President on the first day, everything is automatically balanced in the world. If we have some advantages in being bigger we have the same amount of disadvantages, because of the size of the population, the area and the levels of development. It is possible that if the progress continues for many years, we might be some power at some time. As it is we are equally balanced.

QUESTION : (Inaudible)

THE PRIME MINISTER : Perhaps it is there in your country. I do not know. There is far greater political consciousness here than in other countries I have visited. Everyone follows everything. He has his own opinion.

QUESTION : It has grown much in our country also. More than required. The people express views on every matter, on the biggest problems. Mrs. Gandhi, there is a request. Can you permit Pakistan TV team to visit the POW camps.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know if it will be of any use.

QUESTION : This will help improve the climate between the two countries.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It can be good and it can be the other way round. They are in a good condition. The question really is...

QUESTION : Our friends have told us that they are in a very good condition. But it will have a good effect on our country if a group of journalists were allowed to visit the camps. I think they would report on their very good condition.

THE PRIME MINISTER : It will have to be seen from every point of view what will be its effect.

QUESTION : If we go into the details and depths the whole issue becomes confusing.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Even then one has to look at all the four sides before doing anything, and consider what the implications are.

QUESTION : Apart from the Jan Sangh is there any determined opposition to a rapproachment with Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, in the political parties, the Socialist party. They say they want a rapproachment but they want a federation or a confederation, something like that. But in the ordinary people there is still some fear and especially among people who live along the borders. Quite honestly they say that you will agree to something and as soon as they are ready they will attack once again and we are the ones who will suffer. This is very bluntly said.

QUESTION : But there is change in the effective conditions. The fact is that Pakistan is one-tenth of the sub-continent.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, in military strength there is not much difference. We have a very big frontier and we have two frontiers. So I don't think we are superior. One of the difficulties in this interim period is the startling size of your defence budget...

QUESTION : Compared to yours ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Ours is a smaller fraction of the total.

QUESTION : But you are self-sufficient.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, not really. Only in foodgrains.

QUESTION : (not clear).

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, you see this is where we have diametrically opposed views, because we have never used our forces for any aggressive purposes nor do we ever intend to do so. But we have had unprovoked invasions on both sides. Even the first time your troops went into Kashmir, we had no troops there at all, not a single one. There was no presence at all. And your own Foreign Minister at that time finally admitted at the U.N. that the Pakistan troops had gone, although in the beginning you had said "no, they were merely tribals".

QUESTION : Won't it probably have a good impact if your and Bhutto Sahib's visits to each other are frequent ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It may. I admit that meetings can be useful. You have seen the friendly welcome accorded to him despite fears and suspicions. If the people do not cheer him loudly it does not mean that they did not want to do so. They did not know what would be his thoughts. Many people told me that they were wanting but

they were hesitant. But whenever the President raised his hand even slightly then everybody waved.

QUESTION : Is there any possibility of your visit ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no definite discussion. The President just made a reference to it.

QUESTION : (Not fully audible—but it referred to POWs and that Pakistan is not short of manpower but only of weapons).

THE PRIME MINISTER : And you have no shortage of resources for those either.

QUESTION : The other point I like you to comment on is that you are a signatory to the Geneva Convention. If I remember rightly, Article 118 says that the POWs will be exchanged soon after the cessation of active hostilities—I think that is the phrase. Bearing these two points in mind, how do you justify your position on the POWs issue ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have fully conformed with the Geneva Convention. But if you look at that the situation is not that simple. For instance, they do make provision for trials for war crimes. The majority of the troops have surrendered in Bangladesh to a joint command and this also is something which just cannot be ignored. And we have no choice. It is not a question whether we want to do this or do not want to do that. We have no choice in this matter, unless we have the concurrence of the leaders of Bangladesh. We cannot take any action without that.

QUESTION : Even on the question of those civilians who never wore any arms ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : But they were taken there, you see. They were found in that area. So far as those who surrendered on the Western front there should be no...

QUESTION : But the Article refers to detaining country ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : To that Bangladesh said if you have any problem you send them back here and we will look after them. So you see this...

QUESTION : It is said that those army officers who are possibly repatriated will be used against you. But not the civilian officers. At least civilians...

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not such a simple situation. There is a third country involved and we cannot interfere in your relations with them any more than we could with your relations with any other country. So, the sooner you patch up or come to some agreement the

easier it would be to deal with all the other questions. That is the complicating factor.

QUESTION : Where would you like to make the beginning ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You see some things are not in my hands. So it is no use saying where I will make a beginning. In Bangladesh, at the most I can say, " well in our view, perhaps you should do this." But that is for them to judge.

QUESTION : If I recall correctly, it was at your, I mean at the request of the Indian delegation, which visited Pakistan that Pakistan agreed to the participation of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at a certain stage of this session between you and Mr. Bhutto. And so far as we know there was no other condition than this on the question of Mr. Mujibur Rahman such as that we should first recognise Bangladesh; then he would come here. What has really been the development in the intervening period ? Isn't it that the idea is to secure recognition before he could come and join the talks ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : So far as we are concerned, there is no condition. But as I said, he is the leader of his country and we can only tell him "Well, this is a good thing or this will help." But it is for him to take the ultimate decision. And as I said earlier in reply to another question, we feel that the attitude there has also hardened.

QUESTION : But this becomes your condition. So far as we are concerned....

THE PRIME MINISTER : But look, what can we do about it ? Our situation is like those countries which are sending telegrams to me and probably to your President, such as Canada and others, who say that we must do everything to have a solution or an agreement. "Please make the summit a success." This is all we can say to Bangladesh also.

QUESTION : Bangladesh will listen to you because of the help you have given...

THE PRIME MINISTER : The world is neither like that nor it should be. Because we gave a little help to Bangladesh, towards the end, it does not mean that they are not a sovereign people. That is a fully independent country. They have their own opinions. They have their own difficulties. It is not an easy situation.

QUESTION : But if you....

THE PRIME MINISTER : Now you have the Bengalis. It might help if you did something about it.

QUESTION : Now this is a question for the peace of the whole of the sub-continent. You are the major partner.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I sincerely do not believe in major or minor. There are many countries far smaller than Pakistan. But all are equals—whether in U.N. or in other world matters. Compact states have their own advantages.

QUESTION : But you are in a good bargaining position.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am not a debater. That is one of my disadvantages.

QUESTION : (Not fully audible—but concerned Bangladesh)

THE PRIME MINISTER : We cannot help it. Our liking or not liking something does not change history. A situation was created in Bangladesh which caught us unawares. We had no idea of it until it burst upon us as a bombshell. At that time we had come to a certain stage in our political and economic situation where we were looking forward to big progress. We were absorbed in our own affairs. Suddenly the whole situation burst open and the manner in which it developed overflowed into our territory affecting the stability of our country. The social, political and administrative tensions are yet to be overcome.

QUESTION : A new leaf has been turned, has it not been ? Can't we make a new beginning ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : If we did not appreciate the fact, there would not be this summit. We do appreciate that a government has been formed in Pakistan, and that there is a democratically elected President, that can reflect the thinking of the country...

I myself have been saying that we should not keep looking backwards. We must look towards the future. But, certainly, you cannot ignore history in this sense that certain mental attitudes have led to certain situations. But if you stick to those attitudes, may be you come to an agreement but very soon again you have the same sort of situation. The past intrudes only to that extent.

QUESTION : Well, to make a beginning we will have to clear the air. Let us say the present democratically elected Government of Pakistan has been handed down certain things by a regime which the people of Pakistan never accepted or never endorsed.

THE PRIME MINISTER : No. But if you will excuse my saying so, we sometimes see the Pakistani press. Now you have only to compare the newspapers—this is not a question of what I say or your people say—of the last year or two years or three years if you like, and see what sort of attitude was projected to the people as a whole. You will not find any sort of "hate Pakistan" campaign in our press except perhaps in the Jan Sangh newspapers. And that also has come out very recently.

QUESTION : The press in Pakistan till a few months ago was completely controlled. So the press really at that time reflected the attitude of the Government. It can't be interpreted as reflecting the people's attitude.

THE PRIME MINISTER : But does it not have an effect on the people when they read this sort of thing ?

QUESTION : There is a realisation. I do not know if it is in India or not, that with the change of regime this is the time for some sort of settlement between Pakistan and India. A time like this would probably never come again. Mr. Bhutto is the kind of person who can deliver the goods and he can thrash out certain issues. If the settlement is not made today such an opportunity would never come probably for many years. I don't know whether there is such a realisation here or not.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think there is. Of course I think that any time is opportune for something good, such as an agreement. But I entirely agree with you that President Bhutto is certainly better placed and, as I said earlier, he himself has the type of attitude which can help towards an agreement. We are not always sure whether this attitude is reflected in other members of the delegation.

QUESTION : Has a breakthrough taken place ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is very difficult to say anything categorically. But I wouldn't be too pessimistic about it either. I think something can be done. You see, nothing very definite has emerged. So it would not be correct for me to give any definite answer. But as I have said, I am not pessimistic.

QUESTION : My question may be hypothetical but suppose this current discussion fails to produce any very meaningful results, would you think that it would close the door on any future discussions also ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I hope not.

QUESTION : When are you meeting again ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We will be meeting in a smaller group. I don't know whether it is a secret or not, but I share a lot of secrets with others! I think we are meeting in a smaller group. We will be just deciding that. We had originally thought of 10 o'clock but anyway we are not quite ready. So it may either be later this morning or in the afternoon.

QUESTION : We are not a part of the delegation, but if something happens we will also return home happy.

THE PRIME MINISTER : There must be hope always.

The Simla Agreement

QUESTION : Simla Agreement with Pakistan has been widely welcomed here and also abroad as opening a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations and perhaps for Asian peace. But some misgivings have arisen regarding Kashmir. India was in the strongest position now to make Pakistan accept the ceasefire line as the international border. Did we try for this particular line and if so, why did we not insist on it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am sure you know our point of view on this matter. But all these things are still under discussion and I do not think any useful purpose will be served by talking about them here.

QUESTION : Sheikh Abdullah in his latest letter to you expressed his feelings that Kashmiris have no faith in the present State Government which is not representing the State Kashmiris. Secondly, he has expressed the view that till any true Kashmiri leader is included in the coming Summit, the talks cannot be very much successful. What are your comments ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not really think I am called upon to comment on this. In our type of democracy, we take all these various aspects into consideration. In all these matters, decisions have to be taken on the basis of national interest.

QUESTION : Yesterday the Pakistan National Assembly was assured that Mr. Bhutto would not withdraw the Kashmir issue from the United Nations. Does this conform with India's interpretation of the clause on bilaterialism in the Agreement ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Not. Not exactly.

QUESTION : What has been the exact gain for India from the Simla Accord ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do not have agreements or discussions with other countries on the basis of gain and loss, and I think that would be a very narrow-minded and shortsighted way of looking at any governmental action. The question before us is : Is it in the interest of India and Pakistan to work in co-operation, or is it in their interest to have continuous confrontation in their short-term interest as well as the long-term interest ? Now the Simla Agreement is a beginning. I won't call it more than that. But a beginning is also very important, considering what has gone before it.

Earlier a question was asked about the United Nations. We know that all these years it has not contributed to more peaceful or normal relations or solution of anything in this area.

From replies to questions at a Press Conference, New Delhi, July 12, 1972

QUESTION : Simla Agreement talks about withdrawal of troops to each side of the international frontier. But is it that troops will return to their peace-time positions or will they remain close to the border ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that is anybody's business except people who are incharge of defence.

QUESTION : There was the issue of the historic Gurudwaras left in Pakistan on the Agenda. Was that question discussed with President Bhutto ? If so, what was his reaction ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We did not discuss any specific issue like this at all.

QUESTION : The three summits which have taken place recently—Peking, Moscow and Simla—how do you think they have affected the international situation, more especially the situation in Asia ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I have already spoken about how I think the Simla meeting can affect us. So far as the other summits are concerned, we have also expressed our views publicly that we welcome any move towards detente or a more realistic appreciation of world conditions. But what effect any of these has, only the future can show. As I said about the other two summits that certain things were said, for instance, in one of the communiques in the Summit in Peking which was not very conducive to consideration of peace in other parts of the world. So, only time can tell whether these will work in the larger interest or not.

QUESTION : Have you made any assessment of your meeting at Simla with the Presidential Emissary, Mr. Connally. He held a press conference here after his discussion with you and he concentrated mostly on what he had apparently said about Vietnam. Do you think his discussions with you perhaps open some sort of a way for some kind of reconciliation with United States ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have no fight as such with United States and I certainly hope, it will never come to that. Mr. Connally's visit was very pleasant. He told us about what had happened in Peking and Moscow and something about the situation in the United States, and we both hoped that relations would improve.

QUESTION : Has any agenda been fixed or some understanding was reached for the next Summit meeting in Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No.

QUESTION : Whether Kashmir will form part of the discussion, obviously it forms part of discussion, or whether any broad outlines were chalked out as to how the Kashmir issue is going to be discussed there ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You know there has been a change of position. Firstly, I think, you heard me. I said there is no agenda and the next meeting was not discussed at all except for the fact that there would be such a meeting. Earlier India had been pressing for a step-by-step approach and we were saying if we can have normalisation of relationship, may be it will create an atmosphere in which we could work for peace. Now, since this approach did not succeed for 25 long years of effort on our part today we do feel that we must first try for a durable peace. And obviously durable peace is very closely connected with the border.

QUESTION : Do you think the recent Agreement between India and Pakistan opens the way for India to approach China through the medium of Pakistan for a settlement ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that this Summit makes any difference really. As I have said in previous Press conferences, our diplomats there have been in touch with their counterparts in Peking. I saw in some newspaper that during my recent tour abroad, Chinese diplomatic personnel came. But, perhaps, you know they have been coming to our functions now for quite some time.

QUESTION : What do you think is the position of those two posts which were taken after the cease-fire on 17th December ? And, now when Pakistan agrees to respect the international line, and respect the cease-fire line as it existed on 17th December, will it vacate those two posts which it took afterwards ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, all these matters will be discussed.

QUESTION : Both sides have agreed to bilateralism so far as the question of Kashmir is concerned.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have agreed to bilateralism so far as any question is concerned.

QUESTION : On the cease-fire line, is there any arrangement for any joint machinery for the supervision of the existing cease-fire line ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think you need a machinery. I think both the countries are aware what happens there and we get to know immediately. We had a machinery on the old cease-fire line. I don't know how that has helped in any way.

QUESTION : From the published reports and other sources, the fact has come out that during the recent Simla talks the Indian side felt that there were some hawks in President Bhutto's party. Reportedly once during the session an official belonging to the Pakistani camp threatened another war with India, in case India tried to impose, what he called,

on Pakistan her own problems. In view of this do you think that doves in Pakistan will be able to exert sufficient influence on their hawks to change their stand and ensure a durable peace in this sub-continent?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I certainly hope so.

QUESTION : Since the presence of the U.N. Military Observers' Group in Kashmir has become redundant, do you intend to ask them to go back?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, they have no role to play there now. As I said, even their presence earlier had not made any contribution.

QUESTION : If Pakistan raises the Kashmir issue again in the United Nations, would it be a violation of the Simla Agreement?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Why do you want to jump and cross hypothetical bridges? If and when such a situation arises, we will no doubt be prepared for it.

QUESTION : If you want to make some entries in your autobiography, if it were ever to be written, what will be the description of the Simla Agreement, presuming that the autobiographies are written in a very informal manner?

THE PRIME MINISTER : That is another very hypothetical question, since there is no intention at the moment of writing an autobiography. Presumably I will say the same thing that I have said to you here that it is a worthwhile beginning.

QUESTION : There has been some speculation after the Simla Conference that a tripartite meeting between India, Bangladesh and Pakistan might take place. Do you feel such a meeting is necessary, and, if so, what is the possibility?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know anything about it. There are various problems which concern Pakistan and Bangladesh and they should be resolved between those two countries. If there is something which concerns us also, then, of course, we should certainly be in it too.

QUESTION : I hope you are interested in seeing that Pakistan is economically developed and strengthened as a good neighbour. What would be your approach with regard to your financial and economic assistance supposing their present-day need be of the order of Rs. 500 crores.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that they have far less lack of resources, compared to their size and needs, than we have.

QUESTION : Has your Government made any assessment of Mrs. Bandaranaike's visit to Peking? There is a report from Hong Kong that Ceylon has offered a naval base to China.

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have heard nothing about naval base.

QUESTION : The Simla Agreement lists three subjects for the next summit, *viz.*, P.O.Ws, Kashmir and diplomatic ties. Do you think that these issues will be taken as a package or do they admit of step-by-step approach ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I said, the basic thing is how to have peace and that concerns the border. So far as the prisoners-of-war are concerned, there is a third country which is very much concerned, that is, Bangladesh, and that problem cannot be solved unless they are also in the picture.

QUESTION : You just said about the border. Again and again you have been talking about the border. Does it mean that there is something more to be done about the border apart from Simla Agreement or the withdrawal of troops from the international border is complete and no disengagement across the line of control in Kashmir. Is that final or something more has to be done about it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, you have seen in the Simla Agreement that nothing very definite has been said about it.

QUESTION : In the communique issued after her meeting with the Chinese leaders Mrs. Bandaranaike has called for a peace zone in this part of the sub-continent. What is your reaction to that ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have always believed in peace. If the proposition is that there should be peace in the sub-continent, in the Indian Ocean, well, we have always supported it. In fact, it has been our own view from long ago. So whether it is in a communique or elsewhere, our view does not change. We stand for certain basic things.

QUESTION : Mr. Connally while in Delhi gave the advice that India should subdue its criticism of the United States' action in Vietnam. Did he give you this advice while talking to you and if so, what is your reaction ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, he did not give me any such advice, but it is true that the American Administration is extremely sensitive about anything that is said about Vietnam. India's stand on this matter has been very consistent and we stick to it. We do not go out of our way to say anything, but if an occasion arises and you have to say it, well we say it.

QUESTION : In his press conference in Simla, Mr. Bhutto, speaking about the possible trials in Bangladesh said that if India handed over these prisoners-of-war for trial to the authorities in Bangladesh, it would make it impossible, hinting that this might threaten the success of future Summit talks. Could you give us your views on that, please ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is nothing much we can do about it because these troops did surrender to a joint command in Bangladesh, Joint command of the Bangladesh forces and the Indian forces and, therefore, the Bangladesh Government has got a say in what should happen and the holding of war crime trials is not against the Geneva Conventions.

QUESTION : Do you think that Iraq's recognition to Bangladesh indicates a new trend ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, obviously if they had not recognised so far and now they have recognised it, it is a new action. Is it not ? What it will lead to, I do not know.

QUESTION : Coming back to Mr. Connally's visit again, Mr. Connally said that the topic of resumption of American aid to India was not discussed because Indians never brought it up. He said that he would have been more than happy to talk about it but that the question never arose. I am wondering why this occurred ? Was it a purposeful strategy ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There is no question of strategy. If he had brought it up, we would have said something about it. But I see no reason why we should bring it up.

QUESTION : Does that indicate, for example, India is not really interested in the resumption of aid from the USA ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are interested in help from any country if that help is without strings and if it is going to assist us in becoming stronger economically. We are not interested in any help which is going to impose conditions or try to influence our judgment or our actions.

QUESTION : In Simla both of you, Pakistani President and yourself, agreed for durable peace. Was there any discussion about the limitation on the arms race in the sub-continent or are you going to initiate this move in your future meetings with Mr. Bhutto for the establishment of durable peace in this area ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : All these are detailed matters. If once you really feel that you are not only agreed on peace but certain basic decisions which lead to peace are taken, then all these things follow. They are not something you can do before hand.

QUESTION : There is an impression that some of the Ministers in charge of economic ministries are not taking important decisions because they are not certain about the Cabinet reshuffle. When are you going to end their uncertainty and our curiosity ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Since your seem to know more about it as to who is taking what decision, presumably you know about other matters as well, because I have not heard about people not taking decisions. Not a single decision has been held up in any Ministry to my knowledge.

QUESTION : Lately the economy has been showing signs of slide-back. The food production is expected to be lower this year than the last year. Prices are under pressure. There has been an increase of 3.1 per cent in the last one month. Industrial production has also not picked up as was expected. What is the Government going to do about it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Government has been taking steps. I do not agree with you at all that the economy is sliding back. In fact if you had taken the trouble to see what was said at the Consortium meeting and the International Monetary Fund; they have been full of praise for the manner in which India's economy has kept up in spite of the very heavy burdens imposed on it. They have said that it is nothing short of miraculous. We have not gone back in anything at all. It is true that in industry, the progress has not been as far as we had wanted it. But here again I do not think that with the burdens and the other complications which had arisen there could have been very much more. We have taken certain steps. We are taking them with regard to removing any difficulties. Some of these difficulties, I might say, are entirely imaginary, as when people talk about delays. Now there is certain amount of delays inherent in the system. What we could avoid, we are trying to work out and I think it is being sorted out. We are now allowing all kinds of people; we are not being so rigid. For instance, where the development of backward areas is concerned, we are allowing people to go there even though earlier we had thought that we would not allow particular types of expansion and so on. It is true that the prices have risen. But, perhaps, you will note that this is part of a world-wide inflation. This is not something that is peculiar to India. There is no country in the world today where there has not been very sharp rise in prices. So far as rise in prices in this particular month is concerned, if you again go back to your records, the seasonal rise always takes place before the monsoons. And this year because the monsoons were delayed for sometime in parts of India, this sort of thing happened. But I am told that already they have shown some decline and I am sure they will decline further. But in a developing economy a certain amount of rise in prices is inevitable as I have said on countless occasions. What the Government can do and is trying to do is to see that the poorer sections are assured their basic needs at fair prices.

QUESTION : Recently there is a trend in the industrial field for labour to go on strike whether necessary or unnecessary and thus bring down

production as a whole. Have we thought of disciplining labour where it is well-established and well-paid ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, it depends on what meaning you give to the word "discipline", whether a person is industrial labour or anything else he is a human being, and I think that these matters have to be dealt with certainly in some cases with firmness but also with understanding. Here of course many of these problems arise because of union rivalries. It is not the labour by itself ? I think the Labour Ministry and others are trying to solve these problems along with other political parties.

QUESTION : You wanted to say something about lifting the Emergency.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think that the time has arrived for that yet.

QUESTION : What are you doing to curb rise in food prices because the rise is not in other commodities ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I just spoke about it that the rise in food prices was because of the delay in the monsoon. I am told that the price has already come down a little and it is expected to come down further.

QUESTION : May I come to Simla Agreement ? Those who have followed the discussion at the Simla Conference come to the conclusion that this Agreement has not come as a result of discussions but this Agreement was reached within ten minutes at dinner time over a sweet dish. Do you think this is an improvement on Tashkent Agreement ? And do you think it will be a lasting one ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I do not eat sweets, I do not know. I did not take it. I have already expressed my views that this is a worthwhile beginning. Now where we go from there, naturally depends on many things.

QUESTION : There is an impression that the Chief Ministers are standing as road blocks in the progress of land reforms—lowering of ceilings etc. What is your comment on this ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is a wrong impression.

QUESTION : We would like to know your comments on the Tamil Nadu situation.

THE PRIME MINISTER : As you perhaps know I spoke with the Chief Minister and I am seeing one of the Ministers today. I think the major problem is not on the levy but on the manner in which this situation was handled.

QUESTION : Referring to the Tamil Nadu situation, just now you said it is the manner in which it was handled. Are you aware that in Tamil Nadu there is para-military organisation of DMK called *Tamil Padai* and this is the organisation which has been responsible for the intensity of the clash. Have you any comment to offer on this ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know about this organisation. And whichever organisation it is, I think it is in the interest of the Tamil Nadu Government to create a rapport with all their people.

QUESTION : May I ask you a slightly philosophical question ? At this time of the year, when you are supposedly thinking of Cabinet reshuffle many of your colleagues, ex-colleagues and colleague-aspirants are all looking to astrologers. Do you think that a party committed to socialism and a leadership trying to have recourse to astrology are compatible ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that everybody has different hobbies and if anybody enjoys going to astrologers, I do not see why I should stand in their way. I can only tell you it will not affect my thinking, which at this moment is not at all occupied with Cabinet changes but with this Press conference.

QUESTION : There is hot news that Miss Benazir Bhutto is going to be appointed as the first High Commissioner after this war in India. If it is so, don't you feel that her new assignment will create more friendly relations between India and Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There are one or two papers which have gone out of their way in printing totally false news. Not that this is a bad news. But I think that our papers should be more responsible in the sort of news they put out. While we were at Simla every day there was some item which was quite baseless. I do think that the reputation of the Indian Press is such that we should not do anything to diminish it in any way.

QUESTION : That is because the Indian side did not take the Press into confidence at all.

THE PRIME MINISTER : That is no reason to cook up things.

QUESTION : We are told that the Indian correspondents had to rely more on Pakistani delegates. Your side was absolutely mum and did not give out anything.

THE PRIME MINISTER : May be that you are not so persuasive in getting things out.

QUESTION : Is it true that the ultra-Leftists in your party are creating a lot of difficulty for you and that is why you recently denounced

strongly competition in radicalism and you also said those of the party members who do not want to function within the framework of the party may better quit the party organisation. Was this reference to the ultra-Leftists or to the farm lobby which has been opposing lowering of land ceiling.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Reference was to anybody who wants to function outside the party—the limits put by the party.

QUESTION : What is your attitude to the ultra-Leftists ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : My attitude is exactly the same whether they are on one side or another. We have a programme to which we are committed; to which we are pledged to the people and we are determined to implement that programme and nobody's speeches one way or the other are going to make a difference.

QUESTION : In Kerala there is a crisis in the educational field. All the private colleges are closed and there is a sort of impasse between Government and the management. There is no point of agreement. Would you mind intervening in view of both parties not coming together ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is better for the State Government to handle the situation. And even though it looks very difficult at this point, I am sure a solution can be found.

QUESTION : The question of minorities is involved in these colleges and institutions.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I don't think that minority rights really are involved.

QUESTION : We get the impression that these so-called ultra-Leftists or whoever they are, they function as some kind of a corrective conscience of the Congress party with the result that your position becomes a little dubious. Now, what really is the relationship. I mean is it a party within a party or is it a kind of conscience keeper or what is it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Nothing. Just some very enthusiastic young people.

QUESTION : Some of them are pretty old, Madam.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, they consider themselves young.

QUESTION : Some people from border areas captured by India wanted to settle in India, and a few hundred people have already come to Gujarat. Will they be allowed to settle in India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I think they should really go back. And I hope that their security and safety will be well looked after.

QUESTION : Would you like to comment on an Indian political party issuing a joint communique in another country. Our CPI delegation went there and there was a joint communique in Moscow. Would you like to comment? What is this development? Because, the CPI is the main supporter of your party now-a-days.

THE PRIME MINISTER : The main supporter of my party are the people of India, and you should know by the election results and by the number of CPI people who are in Parliament.

QUESTION : The Joint Secretary of the *Socialist Internationale* wrote a letter to your party asking it to be an affiliate of the *Socialist Internationale*. And the PSP which has been a member of this has been deprived of the membership. I mean the new party has also been deprived of the membership. Would you like your party to join the *Socialist Internationale*?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We will consider it.

QUESTION : At the recent summit meeting at Simla, did you get an impression that Pakistan was following a policy of peaceful relations with India to get more concessions than a policy of confrontation as she did during the last 25 years?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The basic point is : Do we want to live... if we are living in peace and co-operation, there is no question of concession. I personally believe that the progress of all the countries on the sub-continent is very much dependent on whether there is peace. And therefore, it is a question of understanding one another's problems and finding a way towards peace. If any country is trying to squeeze out concessions, that cannot lead to peace.

QUESTION : One phrase in the Simla accord has created a lot of confusion, and that is "until the final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir". Since we take it that Jammu and Kashmir is no longer a problem, the question arises why did we agree to this phrase in the communique?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know what the exact wording is. I do not think the wording is that. I do not have it with me here. But obviously it is a question. It is a question, and the border is connected with it. And this has not been finally settled.

QUESTION : After the Agreement, we were told that the question of POWs captured on the Western front is of no consequence and it can be settled in no time. Are you thinking of releasing the POWs captured on the Western front, who were about 3,000 in number, I presume? Secondly, do we consider the international border extending up to Ladakh or stopping at Sialkot?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The whole question of the border will be discussed when these matters are gone into. The return of the POWs depends on the establishment of peace. I think it is very closely linked with that.

QUESTION : The National Development Council approved the document regarding the approach to Fifth Five Year Plan, and there it mentioned about Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 7,500 crores are to be raised during the Fifth Five Year Plan for the schemes indicated therein. In view of the opposition by the Congress party—rather the support which the Congress party has given to the rich farmers' agitation in Tamil Nadu, don't you think that similar problems will arise in other States when attempts to raise resources are made ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Congress party has not supported the rich farmers' lobby. As I have said earlier the real conflict or whatever you want to call it, arose only because of the manner in which the *situation was handled.*

QUESTION : Who, in your view, is really *Benazir*—Miss Bhutto or Mr. Bhutto ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Each person in his or her way.

QUESTION : Is it correct that the POWs cannot be returned until there is a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Until there is a final settlement, until we are assured that there will be peace.

QUESTION : What is our stand on the part of Kashmir, which is held by Pakistan as "Azad Kashmir"? Is it a part of India?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do regard it as such.

QUESTION : Is the resumption of diplomatic relations awaiting the final signing of the treaty ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think it is awaiting anything in particular. But having diplomatic relations by itself does not help towards anything. There are countries which have very close relations who do not have diplomatic relations yet and we have had diplomatic relations and yet had a lot of confrontation. I do not think it is a major point.

QUESTION : There are forces in Bangladesh which are trying to create a wedge between India and Bangladesh. Would you like to comment on it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think these reports are greatly exaggerated by the Press.

QUESTION : Did you get any agreement at Simla on the UN Observers, whether they can be removed at this point from Kashmir ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I said, we think that they have no role to play there. Whether they are to be removed or not, I do not know. This is for the UN to decide.

QUESTION : Do you regard the issue of the trial of war criminals as a bilateral issue between Pakistan and Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, Bangladesh is the most concerned about it.

QUESTION : What is the position of our Indian rupee vis-a-vis the European currency ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think we are still waiting and watching.

QUESTION : Sheikh Abdullah had a meeting with you some time ago. Now, he has written a letter to you recently. In the talks about Kashmir, so far as we are concerned, do you intend associating Sheikh or somebody on his behalf ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The talks are on behalf of the Government of India. We are not associating anybody from outside.

QUESTION : Now that you have found success in the summit talks with Pakistan, what do you think of the possibilities of a similar summit with China ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not see any possibility right now. But as you know, for the last six years I have been saying and meaning it that we should have more normal relationship with China, and things were improving very, very gradually, but by the millimetre one could say, until the Bangladesh crisis when they took a very anti-Bangladesh and anti-India posture and in fact, they worked with the United States in the UN against us too.

QUESTION : Do you feel disappointed with the meagre volume of opposition to the Simla Agreement ? Were you expecting a larger volume of opposition ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think it is more or less as expected.

QUESTION : On the report of the Congress Committee on land ceilings a number of members of your party have said that the Committee have gone beyond the scope of party's election manifesto. Are you in favour of giving weightage for land irrigated by private sources ? Do you also support the view that this report should be watered down ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think it is a question of watering down. Different States have different problems and I think they should be helped to resolve those problems in a way which does not affect our ultimate aims.

QUESTION : In your efforts to achieve a durable peace for the sub-continent, if it is guaranteed by a situation in which the ceasefire line in Kashmir was recognised as the international border to assure that the dispute was eventually resolved and the sub-continent assured of a durable peace, would you accept it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, we will consider it.

QUESTION : About this phrase of Indian sub-continent or Hindustan peninsula, which do you prefer ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is the Press that makes all this phraseology and usually I find everybody accepts it after some time.

QUESTION : Have you any comments on the reported resignation of Mr. Keating ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, we are sorry he is leaving us.

QUESTION : The entire emphasis has been on land redistribution which, I am afraid, you can never accomplish to the satisfaction of the people of this country because there are too many of people and too few lands. Can it be that the shifting of this emphasis from production to land redistribution is a trap for you ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, in life one must always be on the look-out for traps but I do not think this question of land distribution is necessarily conflicting with that of production. In fact, very great part of the debate on the different modes of irrigation is to ensure that production does not suffer and just because you cannot give land to everybody who wants it, it does not mean that a few people should have a very large amount of land. What can be distributed should certainly be distributed. I think both questions are equally important because at least that number of people who can get, why should they be denied it because everybody cannot get it ?

QUESTION : About a Civil Code being applicable to all religions, to Hindus, Muslims and Christians, are you in favour of a common Civil Code ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As you know, this is a tricky question. And as I have said before it is for the minorities to make up their minds about these things. And perhaps you know that in every minority there is a division of opinion. Some of the younger people have certain views which are more radical than the others.

QUESTION : In this context, it is reported that the Maharashtra Government has written to the Centre that there should be a Civil Code common to all communities. Any comment ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think they have. I have just commented on the other thing. So why should it be different if the Maharashtra Government writes ?

QUESTION : Since Japan has got a new dynamic Prime Minister, how do you visualise Indo-Japanese relations?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, we would like them to improve. Our relations with Japan are good. But we would certainly like to improve them further. I admire the achievements of Japan, and the dynamism of the people.

QUESTION : What about the ceiling on urban property ? There is an impression that your Government is not serious about urban ceilings while you are stressing on land ceiling all the time.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our Government is serious about whatever it says and the matter of urban ceilings is also being discussed. It is a little more complicated than land ceiling and also it is being taken up at a later stage. But we are committed to that also.

QUESTION : Mr. Connally, Mr. Nixon's representative, carried the impression that India is not interested in US aid. He said in all the talks with the Prime Minister and Finance Minister, India had impressed on international financial processes, not about aid.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I just said—that it is the US that has stopped aid. Now if they want to do something about it, it is for them to initiate the subject. We certainly are not going to talk about it. So far as I am concerned, I had never talked about it to anybody.

QUESTION : There is a trend among the Secretaries of your Ministries. They whisper to certain selected correspondents and not to others. Is it under your guidance ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not my guidance certainly. It is a little difficult to whisper into everybody's ear.

QUESTION : Would you care to take us into confidence as to really what brought about the miracle at the Simla Summit ? We were told at 5.00 p.m., there was a firm deadlock and something happened between 5.00 p.m. and midnight. We have been told many stories on this subject. Would you care to throw some light ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think there is any very great mystery. When President Bhutto came to see me, I can't remember exactly what time it was, but I certainly got the impression that perhaps we could

come to an agreement and only some things had to be sorted out. He had a Press conference. That is why he had to go otherwise we might have finished it there and then. So, he had to go to his Press conference. And after that we were with the other guests. It was only when we were free after dinner that we went back to it.

QUESTION : What was the real hitch ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : There was no hitch as such. It was just he put forward his difficulties and I put forward my difficulties.

QUESTION : Do you think with a little more preparatory work, the discussions between the two sides on substantive issues would have made a difference to the summit.

THE PRIME MINISTER : I doubt it. There was nothing to prevent that discussion.

QUESTION : Jan Sangh leaders have been saying that there is a secret understanding entered into with Mr. Bhutto and also that the Simla accord has been arrived at under certain foreign pressure. Would you like to comment on that ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Unless you want me to explode, I do not know what comment I can give here. You know how strongly I feel about all these insinuations about foreign pressure. And you also know that we have not yet been able to keep anything secret from the Indian Press.

QUESTION : What is the secret of your good health ? You are doing a lot of work and for the last 25 years you have been just like that.

THE PRIME MINISTER : My hair is much whiter now.

QUESTION : A question was asked about the rise in prices. Obviously prices are manipulated by monopolists in the private sector. Are you contemplating to have consumer industries in the public sector ? Already some of the consumer industries in the public sector have been able to check the price rise, like the Modern Bakeries which has not allowed the Britannia bread to raise its price.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, but you see, the public sector has to decide how much money it can afford for such things. It is a question of priority.

QUESTION : What progress has been achieved by the ministerial committee on ownership of the Press and is there any time-limit given to it ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am sorry to say that I have not kept in touch with this committee but yesterday without knowing that you were going

to pose this question, I did ask for a report which I hope I will get today. Report only on how far they have got.

Thank you very much. May I wish you, since you seem to be jealous of my health, all the best of health and good humour and good reporting.

* * *

THERE IS HARDLY any need for me to intervene in this debate because I find that from our own side and from Members of the Opposition there has come solid support for this Agreement. And the only arguments, if one can call them arguments, which were put forward by the Jan Sangh have been very ably refuted by Members from all sides of the House.

This morning, we witnessed what I can only call an utterly deplorable and ridiculous demonstration on the floor of the House. I do not think that any Member of the House, no matter on which side or which policy he stands for, will say that such doings have anything whatsoever to do with democratic functioning and that is why it is astonishing that the same Members had the cheek to talk of democracy in this House today. One could have called such action childish. But it would be an insult to the children of India to call it so.

I must repudiate very strongly—I do not think there is any need to do so but these things must go on record—the constant allegation that the Government of India is acting at the behest of some outside power. I think—I am sorry for these people—I can only say that they must be suffering from a deep inferiority complex. They must be suffering from an utter lack of confidence in the people of India.

Shri Vajpayee spoke also of Indian unity. I know something about the unity of this country and the unity of the people. Let me repeat what I have said before, that unity is for a purpose. You do not have unity just for the sake of unity. You have unity to make the country strong; you have unity to take the country forward. You do not have unity to take the country down, to show meanness, to show pettiness and to show lack of statesmanship.

Today Shri Vajpayee was right in saying that he had some lakhs of people with him. He does have. But let me remind him that the population of India is 60 crores, and those crores are not with Shri Vajpayee. He may have a few lakhs but there are still the crores of people. Are we going to listen to the voice of the crores or are we going to listen to the voice of the small, whining minority? It is not a minority that speaks up with strength; it is a whining, weak,

From debate in Lok Sabha on Statement on Agreement on Bilateral Relations between India and Pakistan, July 31, 1972

full-of-inferiority minority. He has not only no confidence in the people of India, he has shown utter disregard for the people of Kashmir. How dare he say that we are leaving the people of Kashmir to the tender mercies of the Pakistanis ? Do not blame the people of Kashmir who have stood by us in all times of turmoil. At a time when there was no Indian military to help the people of Kashmir, it was their own militia who met the Pakistani attack. How dare he challenge their bravery ? How dare he challenge their solidarity with India ?

This country, and this Government, is keenly aware of where it is going and where it wants to go. There was a time—not very long ago—only last year when the same Hon. Member did not believe me when I said that we knew what was going to happen in Bangladesh, that we were going to solve the problem, that we were going to see that the refugees were returned with honour and safety. Shri Vajpayee said to me, 'I do not believe you'. I said, 'Shri Vajpayee, I am not concerned with whether you believe me or not; I am concerned with what is going to happen.' And today it is not I who am saying what happened. Can Shri Vajpayee deny that there is Bangladesh today ? Can Shri Vajpayee deny that the refugees have gone back to Bangladesh ? And still he says. 'I do not believe you'. Let him not believe me; it matters little to the people of India whether he believes or does not believe; it matters little to the people of the world whether he believes or does not believe. But history will show whether what has happened has been for the good of India.

I have made no tall claims for the Simla Agreement; I make no tall claims now. All I say is that is a beginning; it is a small beginning perhaps, but it is a good beginning. Why do I say so ? I am not concerned with whether we can trust the President of Pakistan or not; I am only concerned with whether we can trust ourselves or not. Have we confidence in our strength or not ? Have we the strength to handle the situation or not ? This is what concerns me. Are we afraid ? May be, the Jan Sangh is afraid of Pakistan.

Now we have a certain national pride. And when I use the word 'pride', I do not have any false pride, I do not mean any feeling of arrogance, but pride in this nation and what it has stood for, pride in the Indian people and what they are capable of doing. Pride which makes you want to do your best, to give your utmost, no matter what it costs, for the good of the country. Perhaps it is a sentiment that cannot be understood by some of our friends opposite. We cannot blame them. They are, no less than Pakistan, creatures of Partition. They had no place in India before, and perhaps they fear that they will have no place when there is complete peace. That is why they are so concerned that the spirit of confrontation should continue.

What is the basic issue before us ? May I take the House into

confidence? No, I must digress a moment—we have been blamed by all sides for not consulting the Opposition. We held a meeting of the leaders of the Opposition on May 18 where we told them whatever it was possible to say before the Simla talks actually took place. We put our points before them. Our friends from the C.P.I. (M) refused to attend the meeting, but we cannot be blamed for that. The others, including the Jan Sangh, were present. There was nothing more we could have said had we met even one day before the talks. Therefore, it is not true to say that we did not put our views before them. Naturally, we could not know the details. We did not know the details ourselves. We did not know how things would proceed.

The very first remark I made to Mr. Bhutto was that we have to decide, Pakistan and India have to decide, whether the interests of these two countries are complementary or are they now or are they always going to be conflicting? This is a major issue to decide. If we think that our interests conflict, then you can have one agreement or a hundred agreements and you will not have peace. But we believe as India has believed and India does believe today, that our interests are largely the same, that the major problems we face are the problems of the poverty of our peoples, of the economic backwardness of our countries and the incessant effort of foreign powers to pressurise us. We all know—and most of us have been involved in the freedom struggle—what deliberate attempt there was to create friction within ourselves. Why? So as to weaken the freedom struggle. They knew that if all the religions and all the communities kept together, then their unity would create a strength which nobody could move, not even the great British Empire. But they knew also that if they could divide us on any issue, whether it was language or religion or anything else, well, then they would have a chance of defeating us. That is why their effort was to create dissensions.

After Partition, they could not do it in the same manner. Therefore, the attempt of those forces who were interested in keeping the sub-continent weak, was to see that this confrontation should continue between the different parts of the sub-continent so that we would be more involved in this sort of quarrel than in tackling our basic problems and trying to become strong in ourselves.

This is what we have to study. When this is the state of affairs, do we permit it, or should we say, 'Enough, we have had enough of the traps of others. Today we must realise what is in our real interests." There is no doubt that the real interests of this country, as of Pakistan, lie in peace between the two countries.

Will there be peace or not? I am neither an astrologer nor do I consult astrologers, I do not know. All I know is that I must fight

for peace and I must take those steps which will lead us to peace. If they do not work out, we are prepared. It is not as if we are disregarding the interests of the nation. We are not saying, 'No, No. We thought there would be peace. Even if somebody attacks us, we are not ready'. That is not our attitude. We are prepared to face any threat or any kind of aggression should it take place. But we must all consider, as our friend, Hon. Member Shri Anthony has said, whether this is really within the realm of possibility or whether it is a remote consideration.

In a situation like this, when we obviously have the upper hand, we are in a position to guide affairs. Had we stood up saying as when two children are quarrelling, 'You have taken my toy; I must have it before I speak to you', or something like that, if we had that kind of attitude what would have happened?

It may be that the talks would have broken down. We could have said, 'Mr. Bhutto, go back and we shall meet again.' And the same would happen next time. We could keep on meeting and have very pleasant meetings or perhaps not so pleasant. What would have been achieved? Would India have been stronger? Would we have been able to relax more than what we can today for instance? We would not. As some historian has said, 'Had the countries of Europe treated Germany with the understanding that India has shown to Pakistan, there would not have been a Hitler and there would not have been a Second World War'.

So, it is a question of the manner of dealing with things. A situation has been created whereby it is, I am not saying impossible, but difficult for Pakistan to do very much against us. It is for us, by our actions, by our behaviour, to see that this situation is maintained. This is not done by taking up a hard attitude or soft attitude but by assuming a situation whereby the capacity for Pakistan or any other country acting against us is minimised.

Several Members have pointed out that the situation has changed in Pakistan. I think the leadership of Pakistan and President Bhutto of Pakistan are fully aware of the changes. We in India are fully aware that the situation has changed in India also. It is not the situation which pertained at the time of Tashkent; it is not the situation which pertained at the time of previous agreements; it is a different situation. Today we have the whole Indian public, and, in spite of the Jan Sangh, it is a united public, it is united on the main issues, it is united in guarding its interests. I do not think it is feasible for anybody to go against the interests of the people.

As I said, we are not afraid of Pakistan; we are not afraid of any other people either. But, we do realise that the danger is not so much from Pakistan as it is from those forces who envisage confron-

tation on this sub-continent, or confrontation in Asia, to be in their interest. As I have said on a previous occasion, Asia is a continent which has given great richness to the world. It is to the exploitation of Africa and Asia that today the affluent countries owe their wealth and their riches and their industrial advance.

But we remain where we are. Why? Because, we are caught up in past thinking. Somebody provokes us and we get provoked into saying: All right, let us fight amongst ourselves. We do not see that the third parties are taking advantage of us.

The time has come when Asia must wake up to its destiny, must wake up to the real needs of its people, must stop fighting amongst ourselves, no matter what our previous quarrels, no matter what the previous hatred and the bitterness. The time has come today when we must bury the past. We should see in what way we can make the people of Asia, who were rich not only in wealth, not only in talent, but in culture, in heritage, once more regain—I don't say, past glory, because I don't believe in that kind of glory but certainly a status in the world, where they can guide the destinies of the world, they can also mould the future in order to make the world a fit place for man to live in.

This is the vision of the future which must guide us today. If we get entangled in petty quarrels then we have to say good-bye to such a future and we shall always be enmeshed in conflicts. That is why we must now look not to the past, but to the future. If we say, we must look to the past, how can we ask Pakistan not to look to the past? We have to choose—either both look to the past or both say good-bye to the past; let us try to build a new future. It is easier for us to say good-bye to the past; because we have never preached hatred. At the worst of times, we have expressed our concern for the people of Pakistan, we have expressed our sorrows at their being deluded by their leaders, by their military dictatorship and so on. We have never preached hatred against Pakistan. So, for us it is a little easier, but in the case of Pakistan which has promoted a hate campaign, and which has attacked India so many times, is it realistic to expect a sudden washing away of past attitude and adoption of new? It is not easy. These things do not come about by wishing or wanting. I think that President Bhutto is making a sincere effort to take his people towards a new future. Whether he will succeed or not, I do not know. But at least, he is making an effort, and I think that it is in our interest that his effort to turn the face of Pakistan from its past hatred and bitterness to a new future of peace and friendship is supported by us.

During the debate it was also said that certain remarks here were not made for political purposes. This is a ridiculous statement. There is nothing in the world which is not political. The people who consider themselves as non-political are usually those who do not

want change, but they are no less political than those who do want change.

We also remember that at the time of Bangladesh crisis also, while everybody was with us and broadly supported us, there were parties which tried to take political advantage of the situation. They did raise the sort of issues which they thought would catch the public imagination, which would show the Government in a poor light, whether it was the question of the refugees or the question of marching our Army into Bangladesh or anything else. Therefore, let us not get lulled by these soft words or imagine that these things were not political. All of us in the House are political beings, and we are very conscious of the political actions taken by others. Had there been no political motive, there should have been no reason to have the sort of *tamasha* held on the border—that is the only word that describes it. It was *tamasha,* that the people regarded it also. Or to have the sort of *tamasha* that we witnessed here.

There is one other point to demonstrate how little regard these people have for truth. Almost every day, there is some story or other in their newspaper which is completely fabricated and baseless. Today there was one which caused me some worry, something about a Pakistani attack on Naya Chor. I have enquired and am told that it is absolutely baseless. It is completely fabricated. So, there is a constant effort to renew an atmosphere of confrontation, of giving out news that would incite people.

I do not want to say anything more at this stage. But, there is one point. Some Members from my own party talk about hope in the leadership and so on, but this leadership has always stood for one thing and that is hope in the people of India, confidence in the people of India. Let us not lose that, because that is our strength. I think that is India's strength. We are with the people. My colleague Shri Swaran Singh reminds me of another point. It seems that apart from the other heavy work that the Jan Sangh has, they indulge in eavesdropping on telephone conversations—imaginary ones. I had not phoned to anybody while I was in Simla, neither privately nor officially. I do not remember whether the Hon. Member said that I phoned or Sardar Saheb phoned or Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan phoned or Shri Jagjivan Ram phoned or Shri F. A. Ahmed phoned or somebody else did so on our behalf. It is immaterial whether they took my name or not. The question is whether anybody spoke to Moscow. I categorically declare that nobody spoke to any foreign country at all. We did receive a large number of messages from various countries hoping and wishing that the talks would be successful. But nobody gave us any advice as to what we should do for the good reason that they know that our reaction to such advice is not very good. We like advice on some occasions, but not on all

occasions because each country must make its own decisions. It is only the country itself and the leaders of the country who can judge what is in the interest of the country. Nobody from outside, however great a friend or enemy, can tell us what is in the true interest of India. We know, as I have said earlier, that nobody from outside can be interested in our strength, it is only we ourselves who are concerned.

Therefore, I plead with the Hon. Members of the Jan Sangh not to be the voice of outside reaction as well as of reaction inside the country. Today they are repeating what the enemies of India outside are saying. That is what the Jan Sangh is propagating.

I know that the House has supported the agreement and the entire world has supported it. Let us do so with grace and dignity.

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IT IS A little difficult to speak here on this occasion because almost the entire House is with us on this matter.

The Jan Sangh Member who himself started off by saying that we do not listen to the voice of the people, that it is only the Congress which is trying to promote a particular point of view, ended his speech, on the note that they stand alone and isolated. It did not begin on that note. It began on a very brave note as if the whole world was behind them and the Congress alone was trying to propagate another point of view. But he ended on this other note as was only natural.

Sir, it is the same Hon. Member who again and again advises us to listen with patience, to be quiet but he has not the courtesy or the decency to listen to a single speech patiently from us. Not one criticism can be made against them. They can use the most abusive words, they can use violence, they can make the sort of vulgar and ridiculous demonstration as they did in the other House. That is all right for them. But if anyone from here says anything about them, they bob up, not one but six or seven of them. Yesterday I noticed that when their leader was speaking, it was not enough that he was speaking, all the rest of them had to stand up and not allow even his voice to be heard. This is their idea of decency, this is their idea of decorum. It is not our idea. This is another reason, why I say it is difficult to speak. Then he spoke about Sardar Swaran Singh—I think he was trying to have a dig at him—that he cannot understand what he says. Now, our Foreign Minister has travelled to the far corners of the world. Nowhere has there been any difficulty amongst high people, Heads of State, amongst low people, ordinary people, in understanding him. So if there

From debate in Rajya Sabha on the Foreign Minister's Statement on Simla Agreement, August 2, 1972

was something wrong in the manner of his presenting our case, surely some other people would have complained, "We cannot understand him". But nowhere have we heard this before. Only this one party has objected that they do not understand him. Does the fault lie with Sardar Saheb or with those who do not understand him?

Sir, here the question is one of a basic difference. It is not concerned with words or events; it is not even a question merely of the Simla Agreement. It is a question, as I said the other day, of the manner in which this party has been born, the circumstances in which it was born. The Hon. Member made a cheap jibe at the birth of my party. No matter what the Jan Sangh says, the Congress was born more than 80 years ago. The policies which the Congress is following today, as you can see from the resolutions of the Congress—not from what I say or anybody on this side or that side might say—are the policies laid down by our great leaders. To make such a cheap jibe only demonstrates the lack of any other argument. Sir, I have not got up to answer arguments. As I have said, this is a matter of basic difference. My Hon. friend opposite also spoke about temper. He rightly remarked that those who have no arguments show anger. Now, Sir, it is true that when I spoke the other day, I spoke firmly and strongly, but I did not speak with temper in my voice or in my words. I should like this House and the public to judge whether my speech was a show of temper or the action of the Hon. Member's party was a show of temper. It is not my opinion against their opinion. The whole Parliament was witness. The records are witness to what happened.

It may be that the Member insists they are right and all others are wrong. If that be so, it would mean that not only is the Congress wrong, not only are all the other political parties of this country wrong, but all the countries of the world are also wrong. This is an issue on which the entire world seems to be united. There has been tremendous enthusiasm for this Agreement and for the new spirit that they see awakened on our sub-continent. Where is the enthusiasm less? I wonder if my Hon. friends have taken the trouble to examine this. Nobody has been quiet. But whose appreciation or enthusiasm has been muted? It is those people whose enthusiasm has been muted whenever there has been any question of the interest or strength of India—I would even say that it is those people who have been actively against our interests. These are the voices in the world today which are not so strong and enthusiastic in favour of this Agreement. Would it be wrong if we say, as some Hon. friends have said, that this party is echoing those outside voices? I have no hesitation in repeating that what the Jan Sangh wants in India is what the military regime in Pakistan had wanted in Pakistan. History has shown that this policy has failed.

When I spoke of toys, I did not mean that land was a toy. I was speaking about the conception or the attitude of demanding a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye. That is not a mature attitude nor an attitude which in today's world can be advantageous to our country. Neither is the spirit of bargaining, which another Hon. friend has advised. We are not out to bargain. We are a mature people who have only one aim before us and that is how to make our country strong. And by strength we do not mean merely military strength. I think that is a small part of a country's strength. When we talk of strength, we mean the strength of the people. And that can come only when the people have understanding, when they have maturity and when the affairs of the nation are dealt with a certain amount of sagacity and foresight. Nobody has made the claim for the Simla Agreement that all problems are solved. In fact I would say that this is simply not possible at any time anywhere in the world. Problems will always remain. Our endeavour is to take each step so as to be in a better position to face the new problems that must arise.

With the Simla Agreement India is in a better position to face the future. In fact I would say that the Simla Agreement is in pursuance of the domestic and the international policy which India has followed all these years. Since Independence and even before Independence this is what the Congress party has believed in. It believed even then in friendship with all countries. It believed even then in peace in the world and a co-operative endeavour to end the poverty and the misery of the underprivileged of the world. At a time when we had no strength in our hands or in our voices, we had no wealth, no armaments or anything, even at that time, we stood solidly by all those who were equally oppressed. We did not make the excuse that we had our own struggle and never could help the people of Africa, that we could not pay attention to what was happening in Asia. On the contrary we stated this even though we were poor, we were weak, but whatever we had, the strength of our voice, our moral support or whenever we can give more than moral support, that would be at the disposal of all those who were in similar situations. Whatever our relations with China today, India was the first and the only country which sent a medical team to China at that time. And in what conditions did this team live? I saw some of the members when they left and I saw them on their return. I could not recognise them when they came back. They looked more like skeletons. This was because of lack of food and lack of sleep. They could have refused to stay in such conditions and said: "We cannot work". But they had gone to do a job and they did it. This was the spirit. This was the spirit of our policies and it is in this spirit that we act today also.

Shri S. D. Mishra saw a change in our foreign policy because I mentioned Asia and said it was time for Asian countries to co-operate

more closely. May be I shall disappoint him. But there is no change in our policy. Why should we change when the rest of the world is coming round to our way of thinking? If it is necessary and if we find that this policy no longer serves the interests of India, then we shall not stick to it. We shall be the first to change. But what do we see today? We see that the countries which had opposed us and which had abused us are one by one coming round to our policy. I think it was Hon. Member Shri V. P. Dutt who spoke of this. They may not use the word 'non-alignment'. But what does 'non-alignment' mean? It means that regardless of the political systems of a country, you can build bridges with that country. Between no two countries was there greater enmity than the United States of America and China. In fact if there was a certain amount of tension between us and the United States it was on this ground, namely our friendship with China and the Soviet Union. What do we find now? We are left behind and they are more 'bhai-bhai' than anybody else. The best food is Chinese food and the best medical treatment is Acupuncture. In the United States and many parts of Europe many think that the best is Chinese. Soon after a journey to the Soviet Union was arranged and there were some more embracings and hand-shakes. What for? If any vindication or proof is necessary—I do not think it is necessary—this shows ours is the right policy.

On one point I agree with Dr. Bhai Mahavir and I have said in my public meetings, not only now, but from the beginning, that I stand for certain things. I am very happy if the people are with me. If they are not, yet I consider my stand to be the right, I must stand alone. We stand for particular policies. Today a great change is taking place all over the world. More and more people are accepting certain realities. May be the U.S. Administration in spite of its new found friendship with some countries, is not changing. But we cannot ignore the fact that the young people of America are giving deeper thought to these matters. So the world is changing.

We have been told by some Hon. Members that there have been other agreements with Pakistan. What has happened to them? And in spite of previous talks about peace, have there not been wars? There have been wars. We cannot deny this. But we cannot deny also that today the situation in India has changed. Today there is more political cohesion and greater unity amongst the people. In every way the country is stronger and I think that our people have better understanding of the problems of the country and are willing to sacrifice, to fight and to face the challenges of the future. There is a great change in Pakistan. It may be that the Pakistanis did not want that change. But the change is there regardless of whether they desire it or not. They cannot ignore that change. When we look at the situation, we cannot also ignore that this change has taken place. Even President Bhutto

himself has admitted that he was the father of the policy of confrontation with India. He himself now acknowledges that the situation has changed today and that the need of the times is peace. So things have changed. Some Members opposite have taken me and Sardar Saheb to task, because we have not categorically asserted that we know that there will be no war, that we know that President Bhutto is a different man. I don't do so. I am not used to making such categorical statements. I can only describe our assessment of the situation and I can also say with some assurance that so far I have not often been wrong in my assessment. So what I say is my assessment of the situation.

Some of the questions which are being put today, "How do you know that this will not happen?", "Peace will not be peace", etc. These same questions were posed at the time of Bangladesh also. It was said very categorically, "You say that the refugees will return. But we know that they will not return and we know that you will not be able to send them back." They did not think that Bangladesh could be freed. But, all those events did happen, this is obvious to all. A hundred and one events are taking place every day which are equally true, equally relevant, which are not so tangible to the Opposition or even to some of us. Nevertheless, these things are happening. There are vast forces at work in India, in Pakistan and all over the world. The question before us is this : Do we encourage these good forces or do we put a spoke in the wheel? To my mind, this is a straightforward question before us. It is possible that one makes the best effort possible and yet one fails. But is that reason to say that we should not make that effort? So, we have made an effort and I believe that we have succeeded, insofar as we can, in the first step. I do not know whether at the second step we can go very much further. But I know that a beginning has been made from which it will be difficult for anybody to go back. If something untoward does happen, as I have said in the other House and at other places, if there is war, well, we are ready. Then we cannot say, "No, we have accepted peace and, therefore we are not ready for this attack." But, we will do everything possible to see that peace succeeds and succeeds with honour. Why? Because—I have said this many times—peace is an ideal and we do believe in ideals. But, peace is also a necessity.

I have always believed and I do believe even today that India's major enemy is not Pakistan, it is not even the big powers which are interested in their spheres of influence. India's greatest enemy is the economic backwardness of the country. It is the poverty of the country. If we did not have that heavy handicap, we could have done many things in the world. But, we have the handicap and nobody is going to help us to overcome it except we ourselves and we cannot overcome it unless we have peace. Therefore, peace is essential to our country and I believe that it is essential to Pakistan. I also believe that tension

between the three countries of the sub-continent will always be a weakening factor and one which may be exploited by outside forces. So, the second question before us is this : Do we want interference by outside forces or do we want to settle our affairs ourselves however difficult they may be? We have believed that we must settle differences amongst ourselves however complex they may be and a beginning in that direction has also been made.

I am sorry, I have diverted from my point about Asian unity. I have spoken about Asia. I should like the countries of Asia to be united. But, unity for what purpose? You cannot have unity by giving up your ideals, values or your basic principles. In Asia, we follow a certain policy. Why? Not because we do not like America and so if America does something, we must be perverse and criticise America. Not at all. Personally I am not against America or any other country. But, we do disapprove of what U.S. Administration is doing in Vietnam. We believe that this U.S. action is not only against the interests of the people of Vietnam, it is against the interests of every country in Asia and every country in the world. But there are countries in Asia which are supporting this American policy. What can we do? We want to be friends with them. But we can't have that close friendship with them as we can have with countries which agree with our policy.

Just a few months back, Hon. Members opposite were very anxious that we should be friends with Taiwan. I do not know whether their enthusiasm is as great today. The enthusiasm of the Western countries in this matter is not only waning, it has completely collapsed. The situation is developing as we had always thought it would one day. We could not prophesy that it would happen in 1970, 1971 or 1972. But we knew that it would happen.

We want the countries of Asia to stand together—not against Africa or Latin America. But when we can look after our own home first, only then can we be effective in a larger circle. From that point of view, what happens in Asia is our more immediate concern. But we are equally interested in the peaceful development and progress of the under-privileged and developing countries of Africa and Latin America. But we can play a greater role in Asia, and therefore, we must at least try to solve the quarrels and tensions of Asia as soon as we can.

Hon. Members, I hope, will forgive me if I digress a little. If you look back into history, you will see that every country started with small units, gradually increasing. India is one country. We know that each of our States has some problems with neighbouring States. They can quarrel and they can go to war as did the old *rajas* on all kinds of small and big matters or they can settle these matters peacefully. One State may suffer a little or another may suffer a little. But in the process we evolve something by which we can all become much

stronger. And it is this that makes a nation. Fortunately, in our country we have that spirit in the States now. A number of long standing problems of the States are being gradually solved, because each realises that by not coming to an agreement both suffer equally and the whole country suffers.

So we have to look at problem of friendship with Pakistan from that angle—not 'Can we get something from Pakistan? Can Pakistan take something from us?' But 'Can we create an atmosphere and a situation in which we can together face the far greater outside dangers that threaten us?'

The other point raised was : How was it that at first no agreement could be reached and then suddenly at the end there was agreement? Now, nothing happens so suddenly. There is preparation for whatever happens. You can say that war was won on a particular day. But we did not arrive at it suddenly; we were working towards that end all the time. The battle is on before the war; the preparation is there. As Kesariji said, factories are working, people are working and training is going on. All that goes into the ultimate winning of the war. When you are having talks, you proceed gradually. Immediate decision does not come because naturally during the talks you make certain points and so on. But the preparation is there all the time. With every meeting you are moving. The agreement was signed at a certain time. Well, that was because of circumstances. A dinner had been arranged. It was a formal dinner; it could not be postponed. A Press Conference had been arranged; that could not be postponed. Obviously, the final thing had to wait until after all this was over. If we could have said, "Let us postpone these and finish the business," well, that business could perhaps have been completed by six o'clock. It need not have waited for so long. These are all small points.

It is not my intention to compare this agreement with the Tashkent one because as I have said, the situation, the circumstances in both the countries, the attitudes of the people, all are entirely different. But since my Hon. friend opposite has quoted President Bhutto at such length I shall also refer to a remark. President Bhutto has said that he had not accepted the Tashkent Agreement. He did not accept it while he was in Tashkent. He went back and told his country he had not accepted it and, according to him, his country also did not accept. Well, whether it was so or not I do not know. He has said this. But the Simla Agreement he has accepted and other parties in Pakistan have accepted it. Whether we like him or not, he has also got elected with a fairly big majority. His party has the majority there but even in places where he has not, other parties have accepted the agreement. President Bhutto is trying, and I think trying with success, to get the people of Pakistan to accept it. Just as there are some

voices in India against it, there are voices in Pakistan against it. So, this is also a big difference between the two agreements.

Now I do not want to go into the business of the United Nations. Quite honestly I am not bothered whether they go to the United Nations or not. I am sure of ourselves, I am sure of whatever delegation we send there. If Pakistan goes to the United Nations we can meet them there. I have no fear of their getting away with anything at the United Nations. If they want to go to war—as I said, we do not want to go to war—we should like to do everything possible not to have war. But if they attack us, we are prepared for that also. I am not afraid of that. I have full confidence in our armies; I have full confidence in our people. These are all false bogeys or red herrings to divert us from our real path.

Mention was made of opportunity. This was the very first opportunity we have had of making a new beginning towards peace and we have grasped that opportunity. If we had let this opportunity pass, I do not think it would have come our way again at least in this generation. So we have not let any opportunity go.

In his brilliant and lucid speech, the Hon. Member, Shri V. P. Dutt, said that we respond to situations. Of course we respond to situations but I hope he will concede that we also take some initiatives; we also make moves which will create new situations. We do not always wait for a situation to develop. From the beginning we have taken a number of initiatives and we do not intend to let the initiative out of our hands. As in this country so abroad also our tactics have not been the tactics of confrontation, even with the Jan Sangh much as they would like to provoke us. Occasionally some of our Members do get provoked but I do not think that this gains us anything and I have never supported this sort of thing. My way of handling situations is entirely different here or anywhere. It is to work for a situation which is conducive to certain thinking and action. Now, the Jan Sangh was very vocal against socialism; we do not hear that now. The Jan Sangh was very vocal against non-alignment; we do not hear that now. And not only the Jan Sangh you will not hear such remarks from almost anybody in public now. A situation is created, a public opinion is created in which such remarks are not acceptable. It is in our hands to create a situation where on a larger screen, even in international affairs, certain things do not happen. I cannot prophesy that all will go as we want but we do have a certain strength, a certain initiative in our hands and if we can use it to good purpose that is a much better way than to aggravate the atmosphere of confrontation. Now if I say something about the Jan Sangh they may be very upset but one thing has to be said because it is too important to let pass, otherwise I do not like provoking anyone. Shri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee drew our

attention to a valid point. During the Bangladesh struggle the Jan Sangh were not really concerned with the people of Bangladesh, they were interested in how they could exploit the situation for party ends. I am sorry that they have dealt with the present situation of some of the refugees who have come over to Rajasthan and Gujarat in the same manner. Some words have been uttered, as they were in the other House, which can bring great harm to those people. They do not affect me in any way, they do not affect our party in any way, but they can cause trouble for the people living there. This is why I asked the Hon. Member not to utter them.

I was also sorry regarding the manner in which Shri Mishra spoke about Kashmir. Here also it is not a question of what I say about the people of Kashmir or what the Hon. Member who actually comes from the valley says. What is the test of a people's loyalty? The test is that every time there was an invasion of Kashmir the people of Kashmir stood solidly by India. Does this not show that they are with us ? To doubt their loyalty and sincerity is not good—I am not saying that the Hon. Member is deliberately echoing the remarks of some foreigners, some of the enemies of India. For an Indian to say such things does not help the situation in any way. I should like to express my deep appreciation of the fact that in spite of religion being evoked —and we know that when religion is injected into any arguments people sometimes tend to lose their rationality—the people of Kashmir have been solidly with us in every crisis and I have no doubt that they will remain so. I am not afraid of any speeches. The actions which the Hon. Member considers necessary are such as we might take if we were afraid. We are not afraid. We know we can face the situation. We think that this is a better way to handle people rather than being frightened or giving the impression that we are frightened.

There was some talk about our relations with our smaller neighbours. We want to have good relations with all our neighbours and we have done everything possible to convince them of our friendship for them, of our concern for them and of our desire to help them but whether the sort of jingoistic and chauvinistic speeches which are sometimes made in the House or outside, it is for the Hon. Members themselves to consider, will inspire confidence in these small countries If the feeling is created that we are out to get what we can in a chauvinistic manner, will these countries be confident of their safety, I am just posing the question.

Somebody said—I think it was Shri D. P. Singh who said—that I have changed President Bhutto. I make no such tall claim. Events have changed him and it is in our hands to see and guide events in such a manner that he remains changed, that he remains convinced that peace and friendship are in his interest and in the interest of Pakistan.

So, Sir, the basic issue before us is, what sort of world do we want? Are we concerned with the world or are we concerned only with India and do we think that India can develop isolated from the world?

The Jan Sangh, although born much later than our party lives somewhat in the past and, if I may say so, they look further back, into the more remote past. We live in the present and we look to the future. It is only by looking towards the future and endeavouring to shape the future that the present can be made livable. And to make it livable we must have peace. We must have a constructive and creative attitude. The Simla Agreement, with all its faults, is a good step. There is no solution which does not create problems. This is part of life itself. There is no point in using the word 'perfect'. Nothing in life is perfect unless you are willing to settle for something much less and call it 'perfect', which I am not willing to do. My sights are rather higher. So, we are looking towards the future and we believe that the Simla Agreement has taken us a step in the right direction. We are in a position to go further along that road.

So far as we can make out—I have also read Mr. Bhutto's speech very carefully—on the whole the speech does not give the same impression that some isolated excerpts had conveyed even to me, when I first read the reports in our newspapers. So, it seems that President Bhutto also believes that his future and the future of Pakistan lies in peaceful neighbourly relations. This is all we can hope for. We cannot hope to convert him that peace is an ideal situation, or that he must be friends with India for the sake of friendship. That is far too much to hope and we are not hoping. We are only hoping that conditions will be such that he will realise—as he does seem to do—that this is the only way for them. Actually, even between the debate in Lok Sabha and the debate in Rajya Sabha I think there has been some slight change in Jan Sangh's attitude. Their substitute motion is an indication. So, I sincerely hope that since they have come to this a little way they will go a little further and join, they will join the whole country and prove that they also want peace, co-operation and friendship with all our neighbours so that together we can work towards a better world.

In Search of Peace

Indo-Mauritius Friendship

MAY I WELCOME you once again, Dr. Ramgoolam, not only because you are an honoured guest but because we regard you as an old and sincere friend of our country?

There are many reasons why we are happy to have you here. Not only because of our old ties or our friendship, but because you come from a great little country, a country which is well-known for its arresting natural beauty and its interesting natural history. It has been said that it is the people who make a country and a country is judged by the aspirations, the objectives and the ideals which the people place before themselves and by the extent to which its leaders exemplify these ideals. It is from this standard that I judge Mauritius to be entitled to our admiration and respect. It is building up a new nation out of diverse racial elements and on the basis of complete equality of religion and race. It has done an especially noteworthy job in the handling of its several languages. That is why I have called Mauritius a great little country. It is easy to have diversity in a country as vast as ours. But history sometimes endows even small countries with diversity and out of this diversity, unity is to be derived and fostered. I know the difficulties which such diversity brings will not daunt Mauritius as it does not daunt India.

India, as you know, is an old country. How many of her sons and daughters have left her to make new lives for themselves and to help and contribute to other civilisations. We are proud that in this way, we are linked with many lands. We have another goal in common. It is said that to plan for a year, one should plant seeds, to plan for 10 years one should plant trees, but if one wants to plan for hundred years, one must plant the right sort of men. This is the resolve which we should have to bring about the welfare of our respective peoples, and in order to do so, to use our resources to the best advantage.

You have come to India at a time when very significant changes are taking place in our social, economic and political life. A new generation of Indians has come of age since our Independence, a generation which is making its presence felt. In this climate of change, the old pace of development cannot satisfy them. The impatience of the developing countries is understandable in a period when technological advancement in the developed countries has taken man far beyond his natural environments.

Speech at dinner in honour of Prime Minister Dr. S. Ramgoolam of Mauritius, New Delhi, December 10, 1969

I should like to pay tribute to the determined efforts which your Government and your people are making to develop your economy under your inspired leadership. We are glad to know how you are re-building and re-shaping your economy to achieve progress and development. We are not a rich country. Nor can we compete with the affluent and the developed nations in giving help. But we should like to share our experience and our skills with those whom we call our friends. In the world today we are all passing through an era of great change in the thinking of the people. There has been tremendous advance in the fields of science and technology. Yet it is ironical to see that while in some directions we have taken such giant strides, differences on the basis of race, of religion, of colour, continue to divide human beings. The scourge of apartheid and pockets of colonialism stand in the way of large numbers of people shaping their political destinies on the basis of equality of opportunity for all. The countries of Africa are seeking to raise their economic standards through various joint efforts. We admire their endeavour and we hope that they will succeed in bringing about greater prosperity for their people through such united action. We are happy to know that the Government and the people of Mauritius are working in close economic co-operation with the other countries of Africa. Much can be achieved through the co-operative efforts of like-minded nations. There is, in the world, far too much confrontation. We would like to see that this should be converted to co-operation. And it is in this direction that we are trying to shape our policies and our actions.

We welcome you once again to India. We have had some talks ranging widely over a number of subjects and more specifically towards mutual co-operation. We believe that such co-operation is to our mutual benefit. We do not regard it as giving or taking but rather a partnership, a partnership which by helping each other helps the rest of the world too.

May I ask you all to drink a toast to the good health of His Excellency Dr. Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, to his Foreign Minister and the rest of their party and to the prosperity of the people of Mauritius ?



With President Nicolae Ceausseau of Rumania, New Delhi, October 14, 1969

In conversation with Prime Minister Gen. Ne Win of Burma, New Delhi, January 15, 1970



With Prime Minister Edward Heath of the U.K., New Delhi, January 9, 1971

With Prime Minister Pierre Treadeau of Canada, New Delhi, January 12, 1971





Welcoming Prime Minister Forbes Burnham of Guyana, New Delhi, January 28, 1971



With Prime Minister Ratu Kamisese Mara of Fiji, New Delhi, January 29, 1971

With the King of Bhutan, New Delhi, April 19, 1971



India and Ireland

SINCE THE OLDEN days when many Irish nationalist leaders became heroes of our own freedom fighters, we have had a special feeling for the people of Ireland.

India faces problems of old deep-rooted poverty and of technical backwardness simultaneously with the new problems created by development and change. There is the inevitable confrontation between the forces of the *status quo* and the forces of change and modernisation. Yet the country is poised for quick economic and social advance.

I appreciate *The Irish Times* gesture of goodwill in publishing a special supplement on our Republic Day. I send my good wishes to the people of Ireland on behalf of the people of India.

In a Hurry for Progress

QUESTION : Do you see any end to the war in Vietnam ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is a difficult question to answer since you ask it at the very time that you are headed in the direction of expanding conflict.

QUESTION : Do you mean the United States ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Not alone but all those who are engaged in the conflict. What is happening in Cambodia suggests an expanding war. We saw long ago that all this would happen. We feared it. Events are taking place now as we envisaged them. There is no military solution to this problem. Solutions must be found by negotiations. We in India welcomed these negotiations when they began in Paris, but there are few signs of progress there now.

QUESTION : Would another Geneva Conference bring peace to the Indo-China area ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is difficult to say that would be successful. Only one thing is certain : that the answer cannot be a military answer.

Message to The Irish Times Supplement on India on the Republic Day, January 26, 1970
Interview published in the *U.S. News and World Report*, May 25, 1970

We would support any form of negotiations that hold promise of success.

QUESTION : Are you concerned about the appearance of Soviet warships in the Indian Ocean ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We would of course like the Indian Ocean to be an area of peace and co-operation. The danger is that any presence of one power there will attract the presence of other powers. I must say that the question appears to me to be somewhat artificial.

QUESTION : Why do you say that ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Because the presence of warships is a symptom —not the cause—of the disease. The cause is that powerful countries still think that power politics override the need for co-operation. Power politics is definitely out of date—shockingly so. There are few gains to be made in this sort of thing, while so many gains could be made—by and for all of us in co-operation—for economic development of our whole world. We are not only for peace in the Indian Ocean; we should like to see progress in the whole field of disarmament.

QUESTION : Does India welcome the recent Soviet proposals for mutual security in Asia ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We do not believe in any military alliance whatsoever. Any such grouping is always against somebody and produces reaction. If the emphasis is to be economic co-operation that is quite a different matter. We ourselves have favoured regional economic co-operation. I talked of this when I went to South-east Asia in 1968. We feel very strongly that economic co-operation rather than the building of more military blocs is of major importance, second only perhaps to the need for each country to seek to develop itself as best as it can with its own resources and its own efforts. First and foremost, India is definitely not interested in building any form of military bloc under whatever name it is created.

QUESTION : Do you hope India and Red China will settle their quarrels and learn to co-exist ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is extremely difficult to judge the attitude of China. We know so little of what is taking place there, of the intent of China's leaders. Others tell us that China is moving towards more normal relations with some countries. We know that both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are not averse to making contacts with China in an effort to negotiate their respective differences with China. These may be but small steps, but we welcome them. So far as India is concerned, we do not believe in permanent hostility towards any country. But it takes two to talk—and we must keep our national interest in mind.

QUESTION : Is India's parliamentary democracy threatened by violence in many of your States ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not think there is any serious threat to parliamentary democracy in India today. By and large, democracy has taken strong and permanent roots here in the minds and hearts of Indians. This is a vast country. Different areas are in different phases of political, social and economic development. Growth is uneven. There still are many inequalities between sets of people and parts of the country. For all of that, the vast majority of the Indian people are deeply committed to parliamentary democracy. Many are impatient with the rate of progress. Today in India there is rethinking in every political party. Not only the Congress party but all parties are undergoing some sort of split, some kind of disruptive division. This really is a healthy sign. People had joined parties without too much thought. The new developments will bring us all to a great realism, a greater appreciation of the need for national unity, co-operation between the States and the peoples of India.

QUESTION : Are the various Communist movements in India a threat to your Government ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : They are an important political element mainly in Kerala and West Bengal—not elsewhere. Their challenge in these areas can be met only by correcting social and economic injustices, by development, by implementing the programmes which will benefit masses. The answer to the Communists cannot be found in the Right extremists. Any Rightist trends on the part of the upper classes may well force the poorer masses to Left extremism. The Indian way is the middle of the road which we follow—a way you would call slightly to the Left of Centre.

QUESTION : Will this approach of "slightly to the Left" lead your Government to dependence on political support by the Communists ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Not at all. We have found support sometimes from the Left and sometimes from the Right. We have not made any arrangements with any party, nor do we compromise our programme for political security. On several occasions we have faced a united opposition of Left and Right on an issue. Recently, when our budget was to be voted upon by Parliament, we were urged to give some promise that would help some of the groups to vote with us. We refused to make any such deal. We took our chances, still we got our majority—mainly from the Independents, the uncommitted, the rebels from party orders of Left and of Right. This is a healthy attitude for a democracy, in the long run.

QUESTION : If the Communists get too strong or disruption is too great, could the Indian army take over the Government, as military leaders did in Burma and Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, India is too big a country for this kind of Government, and our people are too politically conscious to give up their political rights. As I said, democracy has taken firm and deep root in this land. Also, we have examples of military rule close by which should be a warning. The character of the violence we have undergone in recent years should not be overestimated. It has been mainly what we call "communal"—that is, clashes between religious communities, only occasionally directed or inspired by political ideology. When these religious clashes have taken place, all parties ask us to put them down with the help of the army, because, unlike the police, it comes from outside. The only way to deal with this sort of thing is by education—true education. It is only when the people exercise their rights that democracy works. Violence always weakens—never strengthens—a democracy.

QUESTION : Is India nearing economic independence ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are on the threshold of self-sufficiency in food production. The technological advances in agriculture should enable us to meet our rising demands. Industrially, too, we are more self-reliant. We have our own basic industries and machine-making capacity. We are making a big export effort. Trade is beginning to give us what we formerly sought from aid. We already are exporting steel, electrical equipment, machine tools and other industrial goods. Partly because of our new industrial capacity, partly because the aid climate has changed, we depend less on foreign credits. The net aid component of our Fourth Five Year Plan is only 8 per cent of the total. The rest is our own. Actually there is some considerable misunderstanding in India, as perhaps in the United States, as to what is meant by "aid". By far the greater part of American aid to us is in the form of loans and credits, not grants. This is true of all aid we receive. We could use more aid if we can get it. Also we require aid of a refinancing nature to repay older credits and loans.

QUESTION : What are India's greatest problems today ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The biggest immediate problem is unemployment and under-employment. Three years of successive drought and recession slowed down our development and cut employment. We have 75 million in schools now and two million in colleges and universities. We are proud of those figures and they are rising rapidly, but you can see how many jobs must be created to absorb them. The answer, of course, is more development for more jobs—more job training too. Perhaps

our second most acute problem is that of the landless labourers, several millions of them. Land reform is a State problem, not a Central Government responsibility. But we must do what we can to get the States to hasten land reform, to implement the legislation they pass.

QUESTION : Are family planning programmes successful ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is our greatest long-term problem. Our high rate of growth—roughly a million a month—complicates every other problem. This is not due to a soaring birth rate but to a rapidly declining death rate which must be balanced through family planning. We are making visible progress. Births per thousand stood at 42 some 10 years ago, and now they have come down to 39. Within a decade we hope to bring them down to 25. Progress is of course uneven. Family planning is far more effective in urban areas than in the countryside. Fortunately there is no religious bias against it, though some ultra-nationalists are promoting the absurd idea that family planning is some sort of plot—perhaps an American plot to reduce the Hindu majority. Since there are but 55 million Muslims and 15 million Christians in the country, as against 450 million Hindus, this is obviously ridiculous and finds few believers. The family planning measures which we have already taken are estimated to prevent some 18 million births each year.

QUESTION : Where is India's socialism heading ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our plans do not call for socialising the entire economy, or even the greater part of it. We do want the commanding heights of the economy to be in State hands—the basic industries, the defence industries and, to a large extent, the import trade. This is essential for India. In our country, private capital if left to itself looks for quick profits and avoids the irksome but essential basic industries and infrastructure—concentrates on urban areas and ignores the countryside. State initiative thus is essential for the backward areas and poorer regions. We are a people in a hurry for progress but we have chosen a mixed economy, with plenty of room and a real need for the private sector's initiative. Our concern is for the masses, not just the more fortunate few in big business. This is one reason for our action in nationalising the banks. We want to make credit available to the new and small enterprises, not just to the already established big business. We want more risk capital too. We seek means of easing the political and social tensions which all too often divide our nation. These means are to some extent economic and involve providing the Central Government with economic powers through socialisation. We do not intend to stifle the private sector—far from it. We are very much aware of the value of enlightened private initiative.

QUESTION : How do you rate India-U.S. relations now, good, bad or indifferent ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Basically good. There are of course things you do not understand about our actions, things we do not understand about yours. The United States has helped us a great deal, and we are grateful for the help. What is more we have the friendship of the people of your country. We do understand as we know the American people understand, that we are both democracies—each, in our own way and for our own people, seeking our way in freedom towards a better life for all.

In Mauritius

IT WAS A gracious thought of the Government and the people of Mauritius to decide to establish an Institute of this kind to study the culture of various areas including that of India and to name it after one of the great men given to the world by India. Our great poet Tagore has said that "the true quality of Indianness does not consist merely in being born on the soil but in our developing and representing certain attitudes which have been associated with the country from time immemorial".

The quest of Dharma has been the keynote of Indian culture. Thousands of years ago at the very dawn of history our seers proclaimed that the duty of man was to seek the light and to fight against darkness, to seek the truth and to fight against untruth. Thus Dharma connotes not only the spiritual quest for truth in its widest sense but incessant social action. The two aspects have been fused in every great Indian. On the spiritual plane, we have never thought that truth is any one's monopoly or that reality is capable of any single particular interpretation. it has been said in our most ancient books that truth is one but the wise describe it in many ways. Indian culture is a composite culture and we believe that is the richness of it; that it finds place for the great fundamental truths of all religions and all thoughts. Mahatma Gandhi was a good representative of this basic Indian culture. He believed that we should take what is of value, what is timeless, but we should fight all that is accumulated, that is not good whether it be superstition, or tradition or customs which have no relevance to modern times. He was

Speech on the occasion of foundation-stone-laying ceremony of Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka (Mauritius), June 3, 1970

a great man and part of his greatness lay in his very ordinariness, and in his capacity to be one with the common man.

Each country must forge its own path—and here in Mauritius you have many streams of culture but I am sure that as you have already done there will be a conscious effort to create a special Mauritian personality which takes from all the streams but adapts and develops them so that the personality of this land and its people blossoms and contributes to world culture and the richness of the world community.

My father gave expression to the idea that the survival of our world depended on changing conflict into co-operation. The events of over two decades have convinced us all the more of the necessity to work for peace and friendship, understanding and co-operation. That is what we seek with Mauritius.

I extend my good wishes for the success of the Institute and hope that the Institute would follow great ideals of Mahatma Gandhi which were universal.

Foreign Policy

FOREIGN POLICY CANNOT be divorced from a country's internal policy. Any country, any Government, any political party must decide what it believes in, and all its policies must then flow fro mthis basic conviction or belief. What is our foreign policy? Some people take the word "non-alignment" and think that is the whole of our foreign policy. In a way it is not the word "non-alignment", but what "non-alignment" stands for, namely that we believe in independently judging all issues. We do not wish to be tied to any group or to any country.

We are today nearer to twenty-first century than we are to the nineteenth. But, unfortunately. we find that over large portions of the world, thinking is still very much in the nineteenth century. The world has changed; we helped to change it because of India's freedom movement, because of India becoming free, and other countries in Asia and Europe becoming free. This has been the greatest change in the world. Although it was obvious to us that we would become free and that our freedom would lead to the freedom of other countries, this process came somewhat as a shock to the colonial powers.

For some time they seemed to be stunned by that shock, but it has not taken long for them to recover. And since they have recovered.

Speech at A.I.C.C. Seminar on "Some Aspects of Our Foreign Policy", New Delhi, August 31, 1970

we see another very subtle change coming over the world, rather dangerous change, which is that colonialism—open, frank, honest colonialism—has given way to a veiled neo-colonialism. This has actually happened in some places and in other places there have been attempts that it should happen.

Therefore the difficulties before the developing countries are still very great. And we can face them not merely by idealism, not merely by sentimentalism, but by very clear thinking and hard-headed analysis of the situation. I am glad that the seminar has had the benefit of the analyses of the various people who have spoken here about different problems in different parts of the world. I am told there were certain criticisms. We are used to criticism of our foreign policy because any independent path is so much more difficult to pursue and so much more difficult for people to understand than if we follow some beaten path.

There are those who say that non-alignment has not served our purpose or that it has not been a success. What is the alternative? Obviously, that we should be aligned. If we should be aligned, then with whom should we be aligned? The two major blocs are what are commonly known as Eastern and Western Blocs. Should we be aligned with the Eastern Bloc? Before we go on to alignment, we must recognise that alignment has had many cracks in the last few years in both the Blocs. Should we join any of these cracked Blocs?

If the question is posed "Do we join the Western Bloc? Do we join their military alliances? Or do we join the Eastern Bloc and their military alliances?"

I am sure anybody who looks clearly at this picture will immediately come to the conclusion that it would not be in our interest to join any Bloc. Therefore, we come back to the third position, which is outside of the Blocs. I do not think it is an idealistic position. I think it is the only hard-headed, practical path that is open to any country which wants to keep itself independent.

Many of those who have been against non-alignment all these years and who criticised my father and myself for trying to pursue this path are today not attacking non-alignment as such, but are saying that we are not truly non-aligned. The great attack today, the greatest weapon which is used against foreign policy, is to say that in effect we are following the Soviet Line. Perhaps they think their saying so will frighten us into trying to give up our friendship with the Soviet Union. Perhaps they merely think that they will be able to blow up the image of independence which we have amongst our own people and amongst the world. Let us be very clear that, regardless of what our big newspapers say here, the image of India is very clear outside. It is not an image of a country which follows any group or country; it is an

image of a country standing or trying to stand squarely on its own feet. It does not mean that they always think we are right. Many of the countries think that we make mistakes. And on many occasions we go wrong. On all the occasions when we seem to support the Western countries, it is the Eastern group which says we have gone wrong or we have not been strong enough. On those occasions when we have supported the Soviet Union, or more likely the African-Asian countries, the Western world thinks we have gone wrong.

On one occasion, the American Ambassador complained to me that we had supported the Soviet Union on more occasions in the United Nations than we had supported other countries. I said: "Let us look at each occasion." I did not have details with me there and then, because this remark was made at a party. But I said: "If you look at the occasions on which we have seemed to side with the Soviet Union, what do you find? Were they not issues in which India and the developing countries were vitally interested? And if this was so, would it not be more true to say that the Soviet Union had supported the stand taken by the developing countries, by the African and Asian countries, and not that we had gone out of our way to support the Soviet Union?" Afterwards I put this question to the Ministry of External Affairs and actually when we counted up, we found that it was not even true to say that we had voted with the Soviet Union on more occasions than we had voted with the other countries. Even the basic point which the Ambassador had made did not turn out to be correct.

So the tendency to make sweeping generalisations is very greatly prevalent, perhaps everywhere. We can only see the situation in our country. And the tendency to see a subject or a particular issue superficially without studying the background is also rather prevalent among the oppressed and other sections of the people here. Therefore it is important to go into each subject in some depth.

Basically, what do we want from our foreign policy? What is the ideal we pursue? Is that ideal divorced from the practical interest of the country, or is it allied with it? As it happens, our ideal and practical interests are the same. No Government can afford, however idealistic it may be, to leave or neglect the practical interests of the country. We have believed—and we do believe now—that freedom is indivisible, that peace is indivisible, that economic prosperity is indivisible. And these are the fundamentals on which our foreign policy is based. We have stood for the freedom of all countries. Even when we were not free, when we were in no position to help other countries, we went out of our way to give them whatever moral and other support we could. And I know that that moral support was welcomed and it did help these countries. Today we have the same stand. We know

that joining together with the Afro-Asian group is not going to immediately strengthen any of the countries who belong to that group. But we know that there is no other way of strengthening them either. We share the common problems, common difficulties, common threats. And we can face them only by trying to stand on our own feet, by having stability within our country and by having economic progress. We think we can have stability and progress only if we take a particular economic path—the path of socialism through which we give social justice to our people. It is the same social justice in the international sphere for which we stand. We believe that while there are poor nations and rich nations, there is bound to be tension. There is not only tension between the poor and the rich, but there is tension among the rich because of their desire to control or to influence the developing nations. This is how in the past most wars took place and this is the reason for much of the tension today. Yet you find that in spite of this tension, again and again countries try to follow the path which we have advocated, namely the path of conciliation and of trying to solve problems by means of negotiation rather than by war.

In my Independence Day speech I spoke about two recent events. No two countries could have fought more bitterly than the Soviet Union and Germany. There have been many wars, but I do not think one has seen such great bitterness in any two except in the war which took place between these two countries, because the fighting was not merely nation to nation, it was not merely province to province, in Stalingrad it was a house-to-house fighting which was almost a fight for each brick of the city of Stalingrad. Perhaps you still remember that while men were fightnig, the women were picking up the bricks to show that Stalingrad could stand and fight the war. So you can understand what tremendous feeling and personal involvement there was among the people. And yet, today these two countries have been able to have an agreement to try and solve their difficulties or problems through talking them openly, forgetting that bitterness, that hatred, which was not a hatred of a few years but a hatred that went a long way into history. Yet they made this agreement. Nobody knows whether the talks will succeed—it does not matter whether they will succeed. Naturally we would like them to succeed. But even if they do not succeed, a very important step has been taken, a step which, according to our policy, we have been trying in our country and in other countries. Similarly, there has been an acceptance of the method of negotiation in what we call Western Asia and what in the Western world is called the Middle East.

Now foreign policy has to be based on one's historical and geographical background. That is, we see the world from where we are. Other countries see the world from where they are. So we cannot possibly see it from exactly the same angle. We have certain countries

for our neighbours. So it is important what relationship we have with our neighbouring countries. If we are a long way from other countries, we can look at them from different angles.

We also find that in the making of the foreign policy of any country, and perhaps especially of India, there are certain intangible elements which are just as important or decisive in forming our point of view. It is perhaps easier to pursue foreign policy and fashion our relations with other countries if one is a rich and a powerful nation. Now India is not a rich or a powerful nation, and we have to keep that in view. It is no use going as we are. But we have made up for our lack of riches and power with some other quality.

Earlier, because we were in the forefront of the freedom struggle, that gave us a certain influence. Also because we had leaders of stature who were able to give inspiration to other countries who were in similar position as we were. Today that situation has changed. All these countries have been free for a number of years; they are all trying to stand on their own feet and none of them would like to be guided by any other country. They would like to have friends, but they would not like to feel that any one country is superior to them. We ourselves perhaps would not like that position. So we can understand that other countries and especially countries which are smaller, do not like that position, and we should be very careful that at no time we give an impression that we are wanting to take a leading position. That would immediately mean that we are trying to push them towards a somewhat backward position.

So when we find ourselves in the situation which we are in, that is, in an extremely difficult economic and political situation where you do not have power, then either you have to stand firm on your convictions and try to strengthen yourself, or you strengthen yourself through alliances. As I said earlier, there are people in our country who think that we could ally ourselves with some people and perhaps that way we would be safer. I do not think that such borrowed strength can be real strength, and I think the feeling of security which one would get could be rather deceiving. It would not be real security, and it would deceive us into a feeling of complacency and really lead us into certain dangerous situations later on. I think the only security is to strengthen our own people and to be confident of ourselves.

I mentioned earlier the intangible elements. These are conviction, courage and national pride. And I would not like anybody to think that the pride which I have in view is the very chauvinistic, narrow-minded pride which is put forward sometimes by some parties in our country who think that national pride consists of getting offended or feeling insulted at the slightest thing that happens. It is only a weak nation lacking self-confidence which feels insulted by other people. As I have said in the House, nobody can be degraded except by his own

actions; no country can be degraded except by the country's own behaviour and action. And being poor or weak in the way we are poor and weak is not degrading. It is not a good thing and we must change that state of affairs. But by itself it is not a degrading thing. If because of our poverty and our economic condition and our lack of military or other strength, we were to allow ourselves to give up what is in the national interest, that would be degrading.

And what are we doing? We are trying to strengthen ourselves. We have strengthened ourselves, perhaps slowly, but step by step over the years we have strengthened ourselves not only in the military sense but also in the economic sense. Further, we have stood by what we believe in, regardless of its consequence, in all the forums of the world and that is why we are today respected. Nobody is going to think ill of us because we come to an understanding with some smaller countries if we have some difference of opinion with them. On the contrary, people will blame us for trying to throw our weight about, or trying to pressurise small countries if we have any differences with them. Of course, in all such matters the national interest and the national honour must come first, but we must not confuse this with any narrow chauvinistic attitude.

I think it was some British statesman who said that no country is a permanent foe or a permanent friend. Any country must try to be friends with as many countries as possible. As I have said in the A.I.C.C., all our policy is to strengthen our friendships, to change indifference into friendship, and to lessen the hostility where it exists. Sometimes the assertion is made that India has no friends. This is the most peculiar statement which I have heard. I would like to say that if we are counting friends, which country has got friends? I have heard from practically every power—and I include in this some of the very big super powers—the same complaint that they have no friends. It just depends on how you count. What is the measuring tape for friendship? It is possible that one of the senses in which people have understood friendship is how many countries will come and help us when we have a war. How many countries, whom we call friends, would really be able to help? The fact is that India today has about as many friends as any other country has. How we keep those friends or whether they remain friends is not dependent merely on what we do, but what happens to be their national interests at any given time. If it is in their interest to be friends with us, they will be friends and if it is not in their national interest, it does not matter what we do, they still will not be our friends. So, we must try to increase our friendship, but all the time we have to be prepared for any other situation when the same country may not be a friend or a country which is not our friend may decide for various reasons to become our friend. Our whole attitude must be flexible in all these matters.

It does not help us at any time to merely speak ill of a country. If we want to do something against a country now, let us make up our mind and take some steps. But while we are not taking such steps, or do not consider such steps desirable, it does not serve any useful purpose merely to shout about that country. Even the biggest of the super powers have found that war should be avoided. They have proceeded in such a manner that they have got into trouble and all their armies, all their power, all their influence, has not been able to help them to get out of the mess. The basic conviction and belief in certain ideas cannot change. That is constant whether it is in domestic policy or whether it is in foreign policy.

As I said earlier, courage and conviction must be allied to an astute, hard-headed analysis of international affairs and events. At all times this analysis has to be devoid of emotion and sentiment. We have found that the very growth of military power in the hands of a few countries is producing its own antithesis. There are nations with military stockpiles of unimaginable destructive potential who are today unable to use that power. One gun-boat could do much more in olden times than what very much greater arsenals are able to do today, because of the fear of the consequences of using them.

We are friends today with the United States and the USSR as well as with a lot of other countries. We are helped by many of these countries and we have tried not to be dependent on any one of these countries. We have tried to diversify even the buying of essentials from different countries and at the same time to try and become self-sufficient and to stand on our own feet. But in today's world no country can be absolutely independent of another. It is a world of interdependence. But you can be interdependent only if you are secure in your freedom. If you give up part of your freedom, that relationship changes; then it is not interdependence; it becomes something else; it becomes a form of—well, I won't say slavery, but some form of colonialism comes in. In the life of a city or anywhere else in earlier days, each person or each group was very much more self-sufficient. They produced everything they needed. They were content with what they could produce. Each community became a complete sort of unit. Today it is not so. Each city is dependent on some other cities; each State is dependent on other States to a certain extent. This is the situation in the world at large. We may get some of our necessary things from the developed countries but the developed countries can also not exist without a great deal of things from the other countries. We have to see that the relationship is such that it cannot force us into any position which is not in our interest. This is where we have to be firm, and that is why we want to be self-reliant in all the essentials so that at no time can anybody say : Well, you need this, you cannot get it until you do

such and such things. This is the position which we have avoided and which we will continue to avoid.

As I said, although we get many essential things from other countries, at no time has this forced us to change our policy in any manner at all. We have stuck to whatever we believe in and the world has respected us for it. So when United States or Soviet Union helps us either through financial credits, which are wrongly termed as "aid", or by enabling us to produce industrial and defence equipment, we presume that they do it out of their own national self-interest. But our own national interest compels us to build up our economic and defence strength with the help of whoever is prepared to help us to do so and to help us to stand on our own feet. Therefore, we will not allow ourselves to be led away either by the anti-Soviet hysteria or by the anti-American hysteria.

As you know, I am going to Lusaka next week to attend the Conference of the Non-aligned and the question has frequently been asked in the last few weeks: "What good will this Conference be and what do we hope to get out of it?" I personally think that the very fact of meeting a large number of Heads of State and sharing experience with them is a very useful event. While we try to keep in touch with people through letters and through our embassies, this does not and cannot take the place of personal contact and personal discussions, not in the forum of the Conference, but individually and informally. So this by itself would be a very important reason for holding such a conference.

It is amazing to see that when the non-aligned Asian and African nations get together, some newspapers find all kinds of words such as 'jamboree' and 'picnic', but when other nations get together, then those words are never used. They say they have a serious meeting or a common problem. We do not have common problems, of course. I think it is just amazing, and what is more amazing is that even when all predictions turn out wrong, there is no hesitation to go in the same path and make the same predictions again. But nobody now is taken in by this kind of comment or this kind of reaction. We know that many of the allied countries do not like this non-aligned group to exist, whether they are on the one side or the other. Neither of them likes it. Most of these super powers would like to have spheres of interests. Although we are very friendly with them, we do not agree with this attitude of theirs and we are certainly not going to help them to have this kind of sphere of influence. The only sphere of influence we want is one of friendship and of mutual help, and I think that in the kind of conference of non-aligned, which is being held in Lusaka, there can be mutual help especially in the economic sphere. It is not easy because, although many of the problems are the same, conditions are different and there are many pressures on all of these

countries. But if we are able to help one another even to understand the pressures to a small extent, I think this Conference will have served a useful purpose. So we meet together to reinforce our economic and political independence and to tell the world that we want to throw our weight in favour of peace. We do not want a balance of power in favour of power, but in favour of peace.

I do not want to go here into the specifics of our dealings with various nations, as Shri Sharma told us that this was done by Sardar Swaran Singh and the other people who have spoken here before me. But I would like to say that I think that it is possible through friendship to outmanoeuvre hostility. And this, indeed, if you read Indian history, is the sum total of our tradition from the days of the Buddha and the Emperor Ashoka right down to our own times of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. These great personages have showed us the essence of our tradition and Gandhiji specially brought it out from the safe-keeping of an ideal into the very business of daily living, the hurly-burly of political and economic policy. I think it would be a very great mistake to give this up for what may be considered to be a temporary gain as some of our friends of the Right and sometimes our friends of the Left keep advising us to do. Our party is the central force in Indian life. We have the responsibility whereas those who are not in power have the freedom and the right to advocate courses which may not necessarily be responsible.

We have seen that our people have risen and have stood and worked as one man in every crisis which the nation has faced and it is this knowledge that we in India shall defend our freedom, if need be with our bare fists, that has acted as a deterrent to those who may have other thoughts about it. But if we permit this will and determination to be weakened and softened by internal conflict, then no amount of arms will help us. Arms used by people without conviction cannot provide any credible backing for foreign policy. Therefore, while we must have arms to defend our country from any aggression, these arms, this military strength, must be backed by conviction in our ideals and confidence in ourselves. Both are equally great weapons and without them the other weapons can be dangerous to ourselves and can also be impotent in helping to defend ourselves. This is the essence of our foreign policy. And if we understand this essence and keep it, we have a certain amount of manoeuvrability. Why do Government of India not wish to make categorical statements sometimes? Because it is not in our interest to be known as being stuck in any given position. When we are rigid, it helps those who are against us. They will have manoeuvrability and can move about, while we are stuck. We become a good target for anybody.

Therefore, we must have a certain amount of flexibility and manoeuvrability, but, as I said, it must be consistent with national

interest and honour and we cannot manoeuvre or change where basic convictions and basic ideals, aims and objectives are concerned. If we keep this in view, then I think India will not only keep its position but will be able to enhance it in the world. I certainly hope that all of you who are present here, or all other members of our great party, will be able to give this knowledge and understanding to our country and to our people. It is not enough to reach the educated whom we can reach through seminars, but you must go to the villages and the rural areas to explain these matters to rural people, tell them how closely foreign policy is connected with domestic policy, how closely what happens in far-away countries affects things that happen in our country. It is only then that we will be able to have that united force which can make our country great.

Once again I thank you for giving me this opportunity of placing some of my thoughts before you. I congratulate you on this very good idea and on the excellent manner in which I am told you have been able to translate it into action.

Ties with Singapore

WE ARE HAPPY to have the distinguished Prime Minister of Singapore and Mrs. Lee with us once again.

The links between Singapore and India are many. As the Prime Minister himself graciously pointed out when I was there two years ago, the very name Singapore, being of Sanskrit origin, bears testimony to this link. We are glad that among those who built that dynamic nation and made it their home are people whose ancestors were from India.

Reinforcing the ties of kinship are ties of shared historical experience, of freedom lost and freedom regained, and of common aspirations. As Your Excellency said in this very hall four years ago to the day, societies in our countries are composed of many races and languages, and hence we both prize tolerance. We are secular States. We have adopted parliamentary democracy. We regard economic backwardness as our main enemy, and consider social good to be the supreme economic objective. Loyalty to democracy, secularism and socialism in domestic affairs, and to non-alignment in foreign policy, establishes a special brotherhood between us. Whenever we have had difficulties,

Speech at banquet in honour of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, New Delhi, September 1, 1970

we have been heartened by your sympathy. We are with you in your endeavour.

In India, the recession is fortunately behind us. Our economy is poised for advance. Our aim is not merely to achieve quantitative increases of production, but to push ahead with structural changes. In quick succession, we have adopted several legislative measures in the last few months which are taking us forward towards our goal of establishing a truly egalitarian, social society. Only last week, we adopted a Patents Bill which will liberate our industries and our scientific research from foreign technological domination.

We have solved some problems. But no problem ever really goes away. It returns in new garbs and guises. Our very success in proceeding towards national self-sufficiency has increased rural disparities. Progress in other fields has heightened the impatience of all those groups and sections who have not yet benefited.

A major problem today is that of unemployment, especially of the educated. This again is a problem bred by progress. In our current development plans, we aim at creating opportunities by which trained young people can set up industries and be their own masters.

So, with our challenges we have the exhilaration of living in exciting times. Like other societies the world over, in ours also, some young people have taken to violence. They decry the tradition of non-violent social change built by Gandhi and Nehru, but fortunately one has glimpses of forces of sanity and order beginning to try to contain this adventurism.

The times in which we live appear similar in some ways to the time of the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe two centuries ago—a time of flux and rapid technological change, and of the emergence of new political and economic concepts and new social patterns. Formulations seem to become old even at the moment of their birth, and the young everywhere are trying to find meaning and form out of the welter they see around. They seem to know what to reject but not yet what to accept and value.

In such a situation, we ought to redefine the very concept of development. Is it our aim only to enable our people to have the level of goods and services which people in the advanced countries do? Especially when these advanced countries have themselves begun to discover that 'progress' does not create happiness, and that, in the midst of affluence, there can be unfulfilment and restlessness of spirit.

We must endeavour to strike a new equilibrium between the material and the intangible, the needs of the spirit. It is possible that the ancient wisdom of this continent could help us to avoid and overcome the malaise brought about by the acquisitive instinct. But young

people in many places are discovering that perhaps continuous change itself is a form of equilibrium.

Milton had once called Athens the eye of Greece. Singapore can truly be called the eye of South-East Asia. I look forward to an exchange of views with Your Excellency on the changes that are occurring in our two countries and in the neighbouring countries and on the forces at work in the world. Your visit helps to strengthen our bilateral relations and will enable us to work together in the world.

We must also try to evolve a system of regional co-operation which will strengthen the countries of our region. It has been our view that true strength can come only from the building of our economies. There is great scope for helping one another in this task.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to join me in a toast to the happiness and success of His Excellency Mr. Lee Kuan Yew and his gracious wife, and to the progress and prosperity of the people of Singapore?

* * *

MAY I WELCOME you Mr. Prime Minister, and Madam Lee, here? It is a great pleasure to have you with us, a dynamic young leader of a dynamic young nation which has made tremendous progress. May I also say that we are specially delighted to have your charming daughter with us?

President Giri was your guest recently and he came back full of admiration for what he saw and what he heard about your work and your country. We have taken keen interest in the progress—not only progress of the economy and industry but also what you have done in other spheres—health and education. I had a very interesting talk with the Prime Minister about what they are doing in education and I think there is something we can learn from the experiment being carried out in Singapore. Most of our visitors who returned from there are specially impressed by your housing scheme, some of which I saw myself when I was there. All these things are admirable and notable achievements. But I think perhaps the most important is the manner in which you have integrated the various people who live there.

I think the world can be divided today into two thoughts or two ways of living. There are people who think that everybody should be put in the same mould and be uniform, and the others who think that diversity itself can lead to unity and indeed can be a source of strength. Both our countries, I think, belong to the latter. It is because our people have the opportunity of expressing themselves, should we say,

Speech at banquet in honour of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, New Delhi, November 22, 1971

in different languages or different religions, different cultures. It seems paradoxical but that is, I think, what holds them together in the same way. If we try to force them into a pattern, I have no doubt that they would wish to break away.

Having a great visitor is always an occasion for discussing many things and our talks have ranged over many subjects—politics, naturally, international affairs. You were kind enough to tell me what was happening in your country and I was specially interested in your assessment of what was happening in Asia. You have been an astute observer of the Asian scene and today this scene is changing. So it is interesting and valuable for us to know what you thought of the present situation and also how you thought it might develop and what influence it will have on the different countries.

Asia is changing. So is Europe and in a different way. In both, there is some attempt at breaking down of barriers—even long-standing hostilities and hatred. That is why I said when I was on my trip abroad recently that it was ironic that Europe which had been the scene of so many big world wars and so on should now be moving towards peace, whereas in Asia two areas of conflict remain and a third is threatening. And it is this threat from across our borders which also points to this idea, which I mentioned earlier, that every country has to consider the different cultural streams which exist within its frontiers and perhaps it was a negligence of this which is at the base of the present conflict across our borders. It also shows that you cannot make religion the basis of a nation. We had felt this from the beginning, but now the world has proof of it.

India, as you know, is too large not to have problems and I think our problems are commensurate with our size. But perhaps we also have the strength—at least we certainly think we have—to deal with these problems. Our experience shows that you deal with one kind and another kind crops up and I think it is not very much different for other countries. They have different types of problems perhaps; they nevertheless exist and will continue to exist so long as the world remains.

In this matter of fact world, ideals are often ridiculed. But we have felt here that ideals and commonness of purpose are bonds which keep a people together and which give coherence to a country and give it direction and therefore strengthen it. Of course, being human beings, we do not always live up to our ideals. But it is, I think, nice to have them to look up to as a guiding star. We believe also that every country has something to learn from the others, even though conditions may be different. We can adapt and India, throughout its long history, has been able to absorb much from other civilisations and cultures and this is what has given richness to our heritage.

We welcome you here. There is friendship between our countries. Our talks have shown that there is similarity in outlook on many matters and we share some problems in common; we share some ideals in common and I hope that our friendship will grow in strength and I am sure it will be beneficial to our peoples. So, once again, I would like to welcome you and your party and hope that you will have a pleasant stay with us and that we shall be partners—or shall I say good companions in the journey towards these ideals about which I spoke earlier.

May I ask you all to drink to the health of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Lee, to the prosperity of Singapore and to friendship between our two countries ?

The Unfinished Revolution

MR. CHAIRMAN, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, I welcome this opportunity to give the greetings of the people of India to the Government and people of Zambia, and to the Heads and Representatives of the nations who have gathered here. President Tito deserves our special thanks. But for his unremitting efforts, perhaps this meeting would not have taken place. We are glad that this Non-aligned Conference is meeting for the first time in southern Africa close to the spirit, the mood and the very heart-beat of Africa.

Here in Lusaka, we can feel the ebb and flow of the continuing battle against remnants of colonialism in Angola and Mozambique. We can feel the vibrations—of the struggle against the minority Government in Zimbabwe, and the apartheid policies of the racist regime in the Union of South Africa, and of the stirrings of the national movements in Namibia and in Guinea Bissau. These freedom fighters are engaged in the same battle as we were only recently. They are risking their lives for the same principles that we hold dear. We extend our support to these brave men and women.

As I said yesterday, the revolution of our times is unfinished, and the purpose of this conference is to draw up a clear programme of action to carry it forward. This is the challenge that the decade of the seventies places before the non-aligned countries.

Only a short while ago, the issues of war and peace, of the disposal of human beings and their destinies, were decided in a few capitals of the world. No longer is it so because millions of people in the resurgent continents of Asia, of Africa, of Latin America and the Caribbeans,

Speech at the third Non-aligned Summit Conference, Lusaka, September 9, 1970

have come into their own. Because we determined that decisions involving us—whether concerning war and peace, or the direction and pace of our social, economic and political development, could be made only by us, in our own way, and in our own countries. That is how non-alignment was born. It expressed our individual and collective sovereignty, our devotion to freedom and peace, and our urgent need to give to our people a better life and the opportunity to live in freedom, in dignity and in peace. At no time was there any intention to set up a third world.

This is our endeavour. The odds are tremendous. Each step has met with criticism and opposition. But we have carried on. Let us not be deterred by cynics and hostile propaganda of the powerful media of communications. From the beginning, there has been no lack of inquisitors, who looked upon non-alignment as heresy, and distorted its meaning. They said it would not work. But, we can answer back in the famous words of Galileo—"And yet—it moves".

The criticism of non-alignment has shifted on two counts. Those who now concede that non-alignment had some utility in the days of the cold war confrontation maintain that this is no longer so. The reviling is not any more about the basis and principle, but of its practice.

Have the non-aligned States lost their relevance ? The answer is an emphatic no. Twenty-five years after the last holocaust, the world is not yet on the brink of peace. The nuclear balance of terror still confronts us. The war in Vietnam is said to be waged with "conventional" weapons, yet these include chemical contamination of food and plant life. The only way to have a clean war is not to have a war at all. Hence India stands and works for total disarmament.

The Great Powers certainly have the major responsibility for international peace and security. We welcome all initiative towards the resolution of differences through negotiations, but even if they reach accord on their common interests, and decide upon mutually acceptable limitation of strategic arsenals, the rest of the world, of which we form a considerable part, could hardly remain mere onlookers. We have an equal stake in peace, but the quality of peace should be such as will ensure our own sovereignty and security.

Not only national honour but national interest demand that we do not mortgage our decisions in domestic and in international affairs to foreign dictates. This was one element of our policy of non-alignment. As the logical corollary, we rejected the enmities of our erstwhile rulers. As my father declared : "We are in no camp and in no military alliance. The only camp we should like to be in is the camp of peace which should include as many countries as possible." May I thank the Conference for its gracious gesture in memory of my father, and the many distinguished delegates for their kind reference to him ?

We decided that our respective territories should not be used for the subjugation of other people, for subversion, or for the carving out of spheres of influence. Indian manpower and resources had been used for imperialist purposes. Once free, we declared that this would no longer be permitted.

We have all been subjected to domination, exploitation and the humiliation of racial discrimination. How could we compromise with racialism in any form ? The pernicious theory that one man is superior to another merely on the ground of race or birth has been proved to be false, yet it continues to dominate the thinking of many.

Today's world is a single entity. We are deeply convinced that by staying out of military pacts, the non-aligned countries can use their collective wisdom and influence to tip the balance of power in favour of peace and international co-operation.

These have been the positive achievements of non-alignment. If today belief in the efficacy of military pacts has weakened, if historic animosities are giving way to essays in friendship and co-operation, if a breath of realism is influencing international policies towards detente, the nations assembled here can claim some credit. However, this should not lull us into complacency.

The big powers have never accepted the validity of non-alignment. Neither colonialism, nor racialism has vanished. The old comes back in new guise. There are subtle intrigues to undermine our self-confidence and to sow dissensions and mutual distrust amongst us. Powerful vested interests, domestic and foreign, are combining to erect new structures of neo-colonialism. These dangers can be combatted by our being united in our adherence to the basic tenets of non-alignment.

I have touched upon certain general points, but on such an occasion, one cannot ignore some of the explosive situations which confront the world.

I should like to take this opportunity to convey our admiration and best wishes to President Nasser for his statesmanship and courage in accepting the ceasefire. We disapprove of Israel's intransigence. Israel should be prevailed upon to comply fully with the U.N. Security Council Resolution of November, 1967. We cannot deny to the people of Palestine their inalienable right to the homeland from which they were exiled.

The situation in South-East Asia has further deteriorated. We are deeply concerned about the spreading of the conflict to Cambodia. All foreign forces should withdraw from the various countries of Indo-China, the lead being by the U.S.A. Our assessment, based on talks with the various parties concerned, has led us to believe that a broad-based government, comprising all elements of South Vietnam, would pave the way for the success of the Paris talks. Recent developments in Laos

indicate the possibility of talks between the two sides there. As Member and Chairman of the International Commission, we have offered our good offices to both the concerned parties for this purpose. To preserve peace and to provide for the reconstruction of this war-torn area, some kind of international convention or agreement should be signed by all the parties concerned as well as the great powers and other interested parties to ensure respect for the neutrality, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the Indo-China States.

We have been deeply disturbed by the reported intention of the United Kingdom and other Governments to supply arms to the Government of South Africa. This dangerous and retrograde step will threaten the neighbours of South Africa and also the Indian Ocean area. Any accretion to South Africa's military capability will abet its policy of apartheid and racial discrimination and may encourage it to annex other territories. The argument, that this is being done to protect the so-called security of sea routes, is untenable. We would like the Indian Ocean to be an area of peace and co-operation. Foreign military bases will create tension and great power rivalry.

The spirit of freedom goes hand in hand with the spirit of equality. Beyond the political problems of the Unfinished Revolution, there are complex and difficult economic tasks. However, a realistic appraisal of our natural resources, our capacities and our competence reveal the possibility of our working together to reduce our dependence on those who do not respect our sovereignty so that economic leverage for thinly disguised political purposes cannot be used against us. Neo-colonialism has no sympathy with our efforts to achieve self-reliance. It seeks to perpetuate our position of disadvantage. International markets are so manipulated that primary producing countries have a permanent handicap. The levers of technology also are operated against us through unequal collaboration and royalty agreements.

Hence, we have to redouble our effort to gain for each nation the opportunity to develop to its full stature. The primary responsibility rests upon each developing country, but we also owe a duty to one another. The fallacy, that there is no complementality between our economies, has so far made it difficult to realise the undoubted potential of mutual co-operation. There is greater complementality amongst our economies than between the economies of developed nations. Yet, advanced nations have been more successful in forming instruments of co-operation amongst themselves and our own effort in this direction has not even begun. The potential of trade and economic co-operation amongst us has been left virtually unexplored. By meeting each other's needs, we would diversify our trade, safeguard it against the caprices of international commerce, and reduce our dependence on middle-men and brokers.

This conference should formulate the manner in which we would strengthen one another, and give due priority in our national policies, to positive measures for mutual co-operation. Such co-operation will help each of us to find some solutions to our respective problems, and also give us the capability to induce these changes in the economic system at global level.

Through the United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development, we have tried to persuade the international community to make changes which have been overdue in the economic system. This is now well understood all over the world. But only some have been accepted in principle and even their implementation has been tardy. In a few weeks, the Second Development Decade will be launched by the U.N. General Assembly. So far, there has been little progress in evolving guidelines for international co-operation. Many nations which have the capacity, and if I may say so, the duty, to make a decisive contribution, hedge their statements with reservations. For too long has international co-operation been viewed as one way traffic from the rich to the poor nations.

As the Prime Minister of Guyana said yesterday, between ourselves, we possess the major part of the world's natural resources. Our manpower resources are no less plentiful. It should not be beyond our ingenuity to develop these resources, and employ the manpower for the production of wealth for our peoples. Because of historical circumstances, economic relations have not been developed as among ourselves, but between each of our countries and the erstwhile metropolitan powers. We can now make the first attempts to discover areas of co-operation in many fields of development—generation of power, development of agriculture, improvement of roadways, railways and tele-communications, the expansion of higher education and training in science and technology. If we decide—and I hope we shall—to make a beginning with this study, India will be glad to play her modest part.

We all recognise the malaise afflicting the development process. We know of the growing gap between developed and developing countries, between the northern and southern Hemispheres, of the indifference of the affluent, the disappointments of the First Development Decade, and the failure of the affluent countries to transfer even one per cent of their gross national product. We are painfully familiar with the pitfalls of "aid", in which the bulk of credits are tied to purchases from donor countries, and with the fact that a big portion of new credits goes to the repayment of old loans. But the question is : Must we endlessly wait in the hope that some day the developed countries will undergo a change of heart and acknowledge that disparities in the world are not in their own interest? It would be unrealistic to expect miracles of magnanimity. Even if this should happen, I am afraid that it would be of no avail, in the absence of the right conditions in our own

countries. We must determine to help ourselves, to sacrifice, to pool our resources of knowledge and initiative. We must work together on a bilateral, regional and multilateral basis.

From my own experience, I learnt that will-power, unceasing endeavour and the capacity for sacrifice, sustained and strengthened us during our struggle for political independence. These same qualities will help us towards economic freedom.

The power to question is the basis of all human progress. We are free because we questioned the right of others to rule over us. But intellectual and cultural emancipation is just beginning. We are rediscovering ourselves, and the fact that a country sees things in terms of its own geography and history. Those who dominated the world's political affairs, and manned its economic controls, also imposed a monopoly of ideas. For years we accepted their values, their image of the world and strangely enough, even of ourselves. Whether we like it or not, we have been pushed into postures of imitation. We have now to break away from borrowed models of development and evolve models of the worthwhile life, which are more relevant to our conditions—not necessarily as a group but as individual countries with distinctive personalities.

The world today is united in peril, the peril from nuclear destruction, but more insidious is the daily pollution of our environment. We should be united in prosperity, and in the blossoming of the spirit of man. The non-aligned countries must be in the vanguard of the movement to create the world of tomorrow and to enrich the content of human life.

The Unfinished Revolution can reach fulfilment if we have faith and confidence in ourselves and the assurance that, however long and arduous the journey ahead, we shall reach our destination.

Peace : A Necessity

MAY I, FIRST OF ALL, welcome you all to India and to Delhi? You have come from various parts of the world and amongst you are many valiant fighters against foreign rule, racial arrogance and international exploitation. People fighting for national freedom, equality and human justice have received sympathy and support from the Peace Movement.

That is why we welcome you all the more warmly, and I should like to thank Madame Bhum for the very kind words which she has said about my country, my father and myself.

Address to the Presidential Committee of the World Peace Council, New Delhi, October 18, 1970

What we have tried to do in India and are attempting to do is not unique for us. It is part of a world movement, the stirrings of which began long long ago. It was, in a way, the logical conclusion in the evolution of man.

'Peace' is a word used with many meanings, as many other words are today. But we know that peace in the real sense is the foundation of any work that any man wishes to do in any part of the world. It is not only the absence of war but the creation of conditions which will prevent and stop wars, which will enable man to develop his personality and his talents to live in harmony with himself and his environment. Therefore, it means resisting all that comes in the way of this development, all that causes inequality and tension.

Mahatma Gandhi assured us time and again—and we saw it in our own movement for freedom—that the man of peace is not a coward. He is not for peace because he cannot fight. In fact, sometimes he has to be an indefatigable, courageous fighter willing to sacrifice as much as any other person in any army or group would have to do.

Just as peace is not merely the absence of war, not merely conditions where there is no fighting, real peace cannot exist where there is tension of any kind. The tension may be due to economic reasons. It may be due to political reasons. India has stood for peace, and we feel that it is extremely important not merely as a slogan, not merely as a moral concept or a high ideal, but as a practical necessity for our people and all the people of the world who have been oppressed or under-privileged for centuries. This is the fight which we have to wage on the national plane and also on the international plane.

We have been speaking of the beginnings of One World, but we all know that the impediments to world unity are many. Colonialism and racialism are very much alive in spite of all the movements and all the struggles which have gone on in so many countries. Today there is also a new kind of colonialism, the economic variety, the constant pressure exercised on those of us who are weak—it is perhaps not the best word to describe it—but who are susceptible to such pressure. By 'susceptible' I do not mean that you give in, but the conditions are such that pressure can be exerted and we have to resist the constant efforts to create difficulties for people and governments who resist this type of pressure and who would like to keep their independence of action.

You have referred, Madame, to the principles and concept of non-alignment. India stands by non-alignment because she believes that that alone can give true independence to a people such as ours, independence to make our own decisions, independence of action in the international sphere. We have throughout stood for the principle that outside military presence is a danger to peace and to the freedom of people.

Our objection to military blocs is that the military presence of any one nation or group automatically attracts a counter-presence, and therefore, adds to the tension. We stand for the unqualified right of nations to choose their own form of government and for total non-interference with this right. We stand for the withdrawal of all outside military forces and we reiterate this not only in relation to the two conflicts which are so obvious today i.e., in South-East Asia and in the Middle East, but to all parts of the world.

Why have these conflicts come into being? It is because nations and peoples still pursue old attitudes of mind, of trying to achieve a balance of power, of trying to achieve a sphere of influence. That is why we oppose these ideas as well. Both during our struggle for freedom and after the attainment of Independence we have remained uncompromising champions of peace. We feel there is no alternative to peace and that this ideal reflects the realities of today's political, economic and military situations.

We fought against the cold war, and fortunately the cold war warriors realised that it was not leading the world anywhere. We are glad that attempts are being made now by the Great Powers to talk to each other and that Europe, which has been a seat of war, is today no longer so. We welcome the fact that the Soviet Union and West Germany are beginning to talk to each other and that the old barriers which had gone up between these different countries and which were expressed in political, ideological or military terms, are gradually coming down and there is an atmosphere of detente.

Two areas of conflict remain and for the first time in the world there is no section of people in any country which is not touched by these conflicts, whether it is the grown-ups, the people normally interested in such affairs, or the intelligentsia or the vast student world. These two conflicts have gone deep into the hearts and the minds of people in general, people who normally would have been concerned only with what is happening in their neighbourhood. Today they feel that whether it is Vietnam or whether it is the Middle East, it is their neighbourhood. It is affecting their lives, their thinking and perhaps their own future. That is why we have such great concern, and this concern is not only for human suffering which is tragic, but for the wider aspects of these conflicts. I do not wish to go into details. Our views have been expressed often and we stand firmly by them.

In West Asia, the real point to recognise is that in this century the frontiers of States, however they may have been determined, cannot be allowed to be changed by force of arms. That is why our position has been that the Security Council Resolution of November 1967 provides a just basis for solving the problems of this area. The starting point must be that territories taken by force of arms must be vacated. Also, that friendship cannot be purchased by imposing one's will. In the

long run the security to which every State in this area is entitled can be firmly based only on foundations of mutual understanding and neighbourliness. This is also our position in regard to our neighbour, Pakistan.

In Vietnam certain proposals have been made by the Provisional Revolutionary Government and other proposals have been made by President Nixon. We have always believed that no military solution can be found in this area and there must be some negotiated settlement. But there has to be a meeting point. We are endeavouring to find out whether there can be such a meeting point, whether some common ground can be found because no proposals can be unilateral if they are to lead to a talk or a meeting.

We have, as the members present here know, emphasised the importance of the withdrawal of foreign forces and first of all, of the American forces. This was also promised to be done, but it has not yet happened. We are just as convinced that this is a key to the problem as we were convinced that the stoppage of bombing on North Vietnam was a necessary pre-condition to talks between two sides which began in Paris.

The more these conflicts are prolonged, the greater suffering they bring to the people. I must express the deep admiration we feel for the valiant manner in which these brave people have fought for so long with so little means. They are able to do so because they are fighting for something that concerns them very deeply as individuals, as a nation, as members of the human race. This is the feeling that all nations had when they were fighting for independence, when they were fighting for something which was much greater than themselves. This is what has given them the endurance to persevere in their struggle.

We in India believe that it is important to realise that friendship is always better than hostility. My father used to say that we should always try to find some area of agreement between people or nations, and then try to enlarge that area. Because between one nation and another there is an area of agreement and an agreed area of disagreement. On which do we concentrate?

Today, I think, this thought is also gaining greater acceptance amongst large numbers of people. They may not be powerful people, but I think their voice cannot be ignored in the long run. They are concerned with these matters, as I said in the beginning, because some of them are idealistic. But many of them do realise that their own future will be affected by what their countries do, or by whatever the result is. If we continue in the old way, where powerful countries can do what they like with the weaker countries, then the world has not advanced at all, and we will not be able to make just use of the great power and knowledge which mankind has at its command today.

That is why it is so necessary that the movement for peace should not be confined to a few people who meet. I know that it does go far beyond those who are here from various countries. But it is necessary that it should permeate deeper and deeper into society, that people should realise what peace means to them and to their families, having realised it they should be willing to take the next step, which is, to fight for that ideal, as all worthwhile things have had to be fought for at all ages of human history.

Our own foreign policy has been to strengthen our existing friendships, to convert indifference into friendship if we can, to try and blunt hostility where it exists, and we are pursuing this steadily and quietly. But, obviously, it cannot be pursued at the cost of basic principles which, as I have outlined earlier, must be based on justice, equality and dignity of man everywhere, not on the basis of his rank or his wealth, not on the basis of the colour of his skin, not on the basis of any other power which he may have. This is the ideal for which we fight in our own country and which we want to pursue in our international politics.

All words today are sometimes twisted. We find different meanings being given to them. And we give the meaning which sometimes we think suits our national interest. But the dangers today of not having peace are far greater than ever before in the history of mankind. And that is the importance of this conference and similar conferences which are held all over the world. How do people combine to strengthen the ideals of peace and social justice ? How do they try to give a new and deeper meaning to these words and concepts which have been with us for long but which, with the evolution of man, are gradually meaning much more than they did before ? We all know that justice a hundred years ago meant something quite different from what it does today for the common man. And I think it is the same with peace, or the dignity of the human being. Many rightly expect much more. They need much more to survive. And every country—in fact in our country, every State—has a proverb which says that all men are equal, or all men are brothers. I think this is what the peace movement is trying to achieve. And in this great task, we wish it well and we give it our good wishes.

At U.N. Assembly

MR. PRESIDENT, Mr. Secretary-General and distinguished Representatives : I bring to you and to the United Nations the greetings of one-seventh of mankind, the people of India.

May I congratulate you, Mr. President, on being elected to preside over this historic session ? It is a tribute as much to Norway as to your own long and distinguished service as jurist and statesman to the World Community.

The first Secretary-General of the United Nations also came from Norway and he rendered it devoted service at a difficult phase of its career. I should also like to recall the contribution towards the building of the United Nations made by another Scandinavian, Mr. Dag Hammerskjoeld. Their example will inspire people in many countries to regard the world as their home.

On this occasion, may I express our esteem for you, Mr. Secretary-General, and for your untiring efforts to uphold the United Nations and the vision enshrined in its Charter ? You have had to draw upon your inner reserves of faith, wisdom and patience. Your guide is the ancient counsel to "be a lamp unto oneself". It is our earnest hope that you will continue to lead this organisation for many more years.

We welcome the admission of Fiji to the United Nations earlier this month. We have ties of kinship with these beautiful South Pacific islands, and we are glad that one more colony has attained independence.

This Jubilee Celebration is tinged with anxiety and the mood is one of self-examination. The United Nations was born out of the experience of the Second World War, and out of a desire "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," and to promote universal respect for fundamental human rights and international justice. Its founders were conscious of the attempt of a previous generation to build the League of Nations, and of the reasons for its collapse.

Franklin Roosevelt declared that the United Nations spelt "the end of the system of unilateral action and exclusive alliance, and spheres of influence, and balance of power and all the other expedients which have been used for centuries and which have failed". "We propose", he went on to say, "to substitute for these a universal organisation which all peace-loving nations will have a chance to join".

Twenty-five years later, the principle of the universality of the United Nations membership does not yet prevail. The system of unilateral action and exclusive alliances has not been disowned. Spheres of influence and balance of power continue to actuate the policies of many nations, even though they fail to produce the desired results.

Address to U.N. General Assembly, October 23, 1970

Thus, the United Nations has been afflicted by the same malady as the League of Nations, that is on the attempt to direct and control its activities and to use it as an instrument for national ends. To the extent it could be so used, it was applauded and when it did not serve such purpose it was ignored. The right of a people to choose their form of government is accepted in name only. In reality, there is considerable interference in the internal affairs of many countries. The powerful make their presence felt in many ways. They are relentless in their endeavour to enlarge their spheres of influence. The extension of their military commitments to new areas, inevitably attracts counteraction by other Powers. The limited wars which we have witnessed in the last 25 years are the consequence of such policies.

Two such conflicts have dragged on for years in the Middle East and in Vietnam. Our views have been reiterated here a few days ago. In the Middle East the relevant question is whether, in our age, we can allow the frontiers of States to be changed by force of arms. Territories occupied by force must be vacated. That is why we support the Security Council Resolution of November 1967 which provides the basis for a just solution. Peace and security can come only with neighbourliness and understanding.

Recently one set of proposals was made by President Nixon on Vietnam, and another by the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Some common ground must be found between the two proposals. We hope that they are not regarded by either side as final. Perhaps an agreement on the complete withdrawal of all foreign forces, beginning with American forces, can lead to purposeful negotiations.

The United Nations has not been able to prevent these wars or bring about a settlement. But it has been the peacemaker in several conflicts. It has provided a useful mediating agency and meeting place where agreements have been hammered out. Even those who feel that the United Nations has not fulfilled its original hopes do recognise that the world needs an international organisation which will work for peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. If the United Nations were to disintegrate, would we not find it necessary to establish some other international organisation for the same objectives? Let us therefore preserve what we have, breathe new meaning and purpose into it, so that it can create an order where the use of force would defeat its own purpose. Countries which, like us, have won freedom newly, have attachment for this organisation and a special stake in its functioning. We are aware that old attitudes persist. At the same time there is some difference, however small. Recent events have shown that military power alone does not give full control of the situation on all occasions because other national wills, even of smaller nations, are also at work.

I have come here to reiterate my country's deep commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter. Ever since India became sovereign, the United Nations has occupied a pivotal position in her foreign policy. In his very first policy statement after India attained freedom, Jawaharlal Nehru declared : "The world, in spite of its rivalries and hatred and inner conflicts, moves inevitably towards closer co-operation and the building up of a world commonwealth. It is for this one world that free India will work, a world in which there is the free co-operation of free peoples, and no class or group exploits another."

All these 25 years, we have striven to make the United Nations stronger, and to defend it from the corrosive effects of cynicism. We have borne burden on its behalf, undertaking missions of peace to Korea, the Gaza strip, and Congo. We have endeavoured to serve the cause of peace in Indo-China. We have sought to reconcile conflicting viewpoints in this forum. And we have resisted attempts to subordinate the United Nations to powerful national wills.

The recent Lusaka Conference of non-aligned countries, in which nearly half the members of the United Nations participated, reaffirmed the faith of non-aligned countries in this world organisation and resolved to work to strengthen it. We may not have technological power or nuclear arsenals, but our voice has to be heard. The United Nations should take full advantage of the support of these governments, and also of the inmost desire for peace which exists in the peoples of all nations. That is what enabled the United Nations to survive the cold war. Its influence can be enhanced by keeping it above power politics.

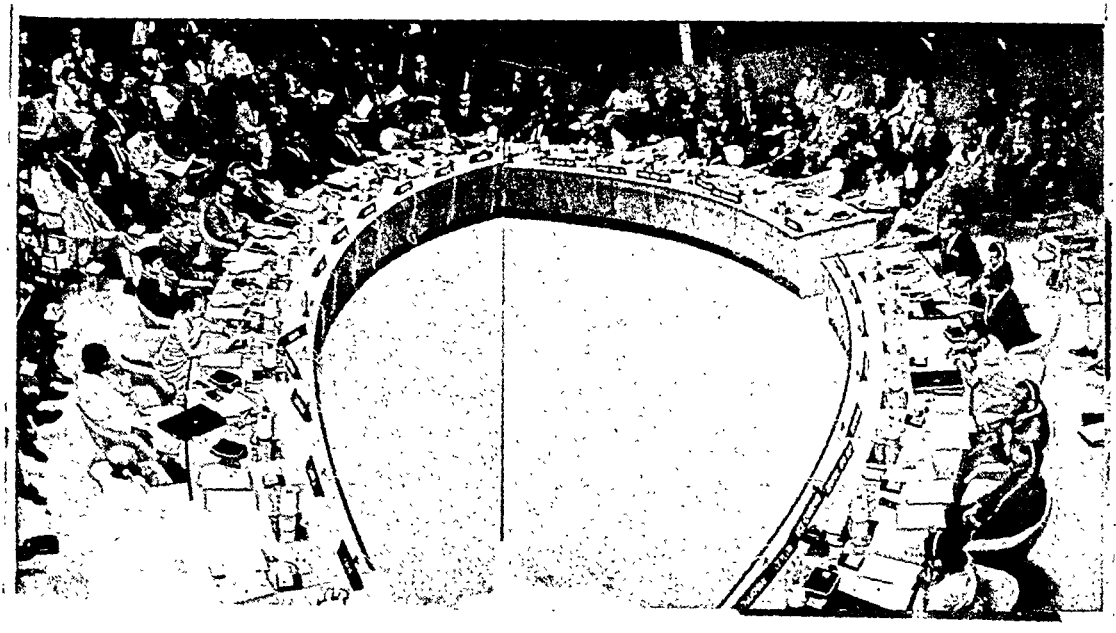
The great revolutionary cycle which was set in motion by the struggles for independence by the yearning for equality, by the search for a new meaning in life, is not yet complete. In Lusaka, we pledged ourselves to complete the unfinished revolution of our times. Rekindling faith in itself, the United Nations must concern itself with this unfinished task. Vast political changes have taken place, but some countries still find themselves under the yoke of colonialism. The world organisation must work for their liberation. Where theories of racial superiority determine governmental policies, the United Nations must work for racial equality. We cannot view with equanimity the supply of arms to South Africa. The total abolition of colonialism and racialism in every form is a prerequisite of a new world order.

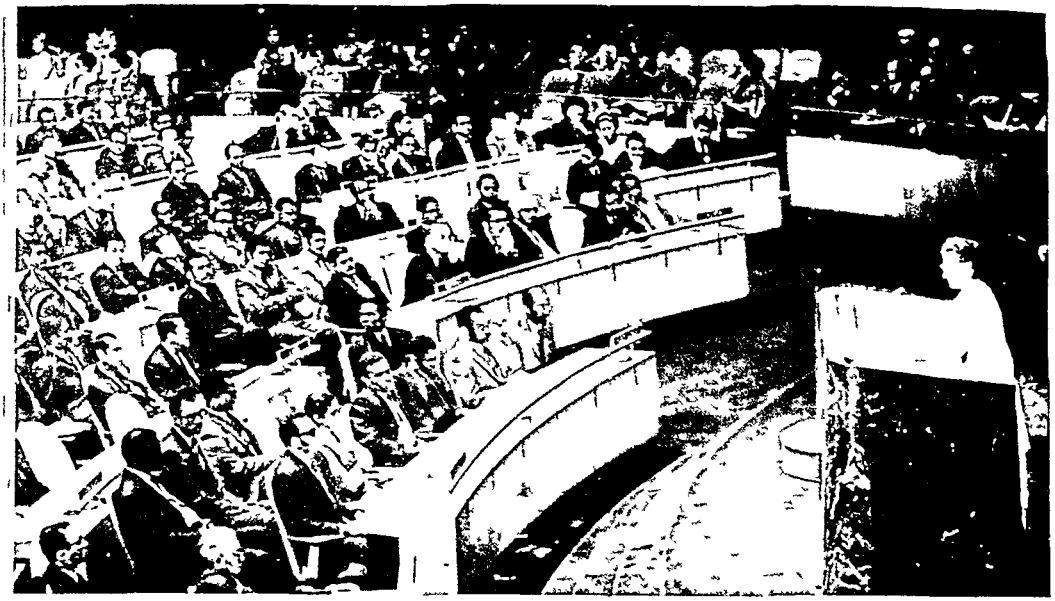
Political freedom is incomplete if it does not lead to wider horizons of economic opportunity. This is possible only with peace. Hence, apart from preventing suffering and dispelling fear and uncertainty, disarmament would make a decisive difference to development, India has always used such influence as she had to achieve the acceptance of total disarmament. Nearly 20 years ago, we were instrumental in bringing about a private meeting of the Great Powers which ultimately



Laying the foundation-stone of Mahatma Gandhi Institute at Moka (Mauritius), June 3, 1970

Addressing the non-aligned countries conference, Lusaka, September 8, 1970





Addressing the U N General Assembly session New York October 23, 1970

With Soviet leaders, during her visit to U S S R , Moscow , September 28, 1971

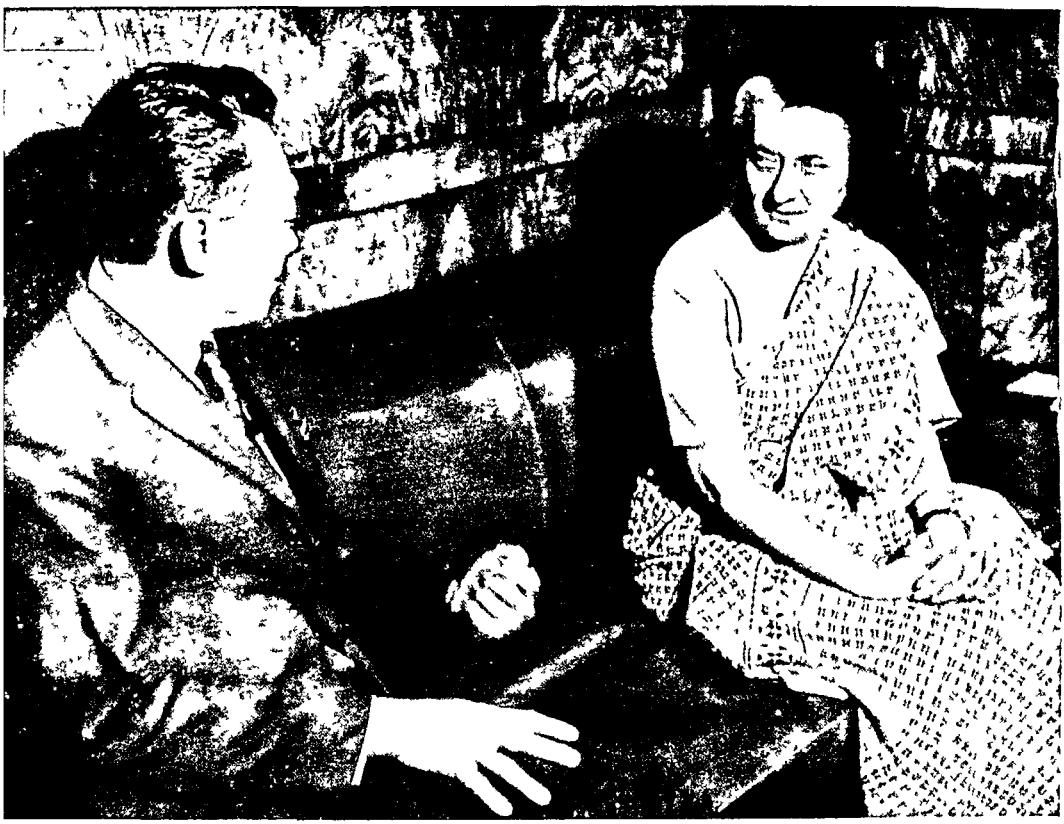




With the King of Tonga, New Delhi, October 2, 1971

With President Josep Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, New Delhi, October 17, 1971





With Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, New Delhi, November 22, 1971

led to the Test Ban Treaty. However, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was formulated later, does not stop the production of nuclear weapons or remove stockpiles, but perpetuates the division between nuclear powers and others, thus creating yet another vested interest.

The world has become accustomed to nuclear arsenals, and insensitive to their evil, perhaps even unable to comprehend the sheer magnitude of the fearsome destruction they hold. There is a helpless acceptance of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as part of our daily lives. Our preoccupation with smaller day-to-day problems clouds a careful examination of the assumptions and policies which have led to the arms race.

Ironically enough, neither those who possess the stockpiles, nor those who seek to be protected, feel secure. Power undermines itself from within and turns into impotence. As the Buddha said, "Iron turns to rust and rust devours iron."

Even a small reduction in the production of armaments would release vast material and technological resources for human welfare and would help the narrowing of economic disparities.

So far as we the independent developing nations are concerned, economic development has only just begun. We have our failings. We have allowed our growth to be inhibited by structural and other difficulties—an outmoded social system and attitudes of mind, an administrative machine which had been devised by foreign rulers for their own purposes. Many other difficulties are inherent in under-development. But our biggest impediment has been the attitudes of the strong Nations, the kind of terms which they have set for financial outflows to the developing countries and the manner in which the poor nations are shut out from their markets. We can be more effective if we remain united. But it will be difficult for our endeavour to succeed so long as technological neo-colonialism persists.

Tomorrow at our commemorative session when the Second Development Decade will be proclaimed, we shall formally adopt the international development strategy which has already been endorsed by the General Assembly and which moves forward from the archaic donor relationship between developed and developing countries to the concept of partnership. Full support to measures outlined in the strategy by all member-states of the United Nations can make a material contribution to the objectives enshrined in the Charter and revive faith in international economic co-operation.

However, whether the strategy succeeds or not, the developing countries should not remain passive spectators. It is imperative for us to intensify our own efforts vigorously to the maximum extent possible in our countries and to develop trade and economic co-operation with one another. We must plan further than one decade.

In the coming 25 years we should evolve a concept of a larger freedom for man. Let it not be thought that I consider the affluent Powers alone at fault. We are no more virtuous than they—only our weakness makes it appear so. Sometimes our own attitudes and conditions encourage their moves. I am acutely conscious that we ourselves have been content unimaginatively to follow the beaten track and have offered no alternative vision. Even movements which questioned the concept of an acquisitive society have, in the course of time, drifted into the same patterns.

International organisations tend to use as a basis for discussion and decision certain yardsticks of progress in economic functioning etc. which have been evolved in a few countries in circumstances entirely different to those in the developing countries.

Some nations use men, money and propaganda to impose their economic philosophy on others. The United Nations and its agencies should not accept such premises automatically and elevate them to universal dogmas. Each problem must be viewed in its setting. No nation should be uprooted from its special heritage, and the programmes for its progress must grow out of its own experience. In India we should like to build a distinctive design of life by re-examining the sources of our history, and by separating the perennial from the transitory in our tradition.

Our top priority is economic and social development, but we often ask ourselves : development for what and for whom? There is a growing awareness in the world that technology and intensive specialisation do not necessarily enrich the human dimension. The urgent need is for a unified view of the world's resources and the world's experience, and of man's power of invention. We are one of the species on this planet, Earth. Have we the right to squander its resources, to pollute water and air, to extinguish animal and plant life, to upset the delicate balance in Nature and mar its beauty? Cannot an organisation such as the United Nations direct our thinking in terms of the larger well-being?

Much has been said about the population increase and the advance of science and technology. But the more significant explosion of our times is the awakening of human consciousness on a global scale. Seers have for long thought of mankind as one family—*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,* as ancient sages in my country called it. Modern technology has brought all countries close, and has provided visual proof of this unity. What man saw with his inward eye, science has made possible to see with the outward eye. Science, technology and art are reaching across national frontiers. So are the yearnings of peoples. From a fragmentary interpretation of human civilisation, we are moving to the threshold of a universal history of man. The theories which have

dominated our age seem hardly relevant, for neither appears to provide true answers to our questions.

For centuries, vast numbers in the countries under colonial rule were apathetic and resigned. Their awakening is accompanied by expectation and impatience. These have sometimes led to the growth of populism, encouraging fascism on the one hand, and the destructive exuberance of the extreme left on the other, seeking short-cuts and easy ways. We see this in many countries, including my own. An addiction to violence has grown seeking by destruction to obliterate all that was and is. But history cannot be changed. It can be used. Neither for the weak nor for the strong is there an easy way. Wrong means often distort the ends, and violence for a purpose often deteriorates to violence for its own sake. Violence is evil, but what is even worse is that it breeds contempt and callousness at a time when all our senses must be especially sensitive and attuned to every nuance of the swift movements of change. Mere condemnation of discontent has led to acts of desperation. The answer is to seek to understand and remove the causes, by initiating the process of peaceful change. Rebels and non-conformists are often the pioneers and designers of change.

The unfinished revolution is not confined to the poorer, developing countries. The advanced countries also have their unfinished revolution. We find it in the movement for women's liberation, in the revolt of young people, the ferment in universities and the assertion of Black and Brown Power.

Why do these movements remain on the periphery of the nation's activities ? It is not for lack of courage or sincerity, or depth of feeling but because each group deals with only a small part of the problem and does not view it in its entirety. If these groups were to see the larger perspective, they would soon realise that it is not they alone who have been denied emancipation in a world of free man, but that the vast majority of people are themselves prisoners of old conceptions of politics, economics and of social attitudes and functioning. If their present restlessness can be harnessed to creative purposes, they can set the pace for history and give a new direction to mankind. The change we desire, the change which must come, is not of pace, quantity or manner but of basic quality of what man is and can be.

The concepts of freedom, democracy and justice have not remained fixed but have evolved and changed over the years. People rightly look for greater content in them and seek greater participation for themselves. Each individual wants his true self to be understood, his worth to be realised.

The coming 25 years in which we must lay the foundations for a larger freedom for man will make many demands on the leaders and peoples of all nations and on the administrators of the United Nations and its agencies. They have done good work in difficult conditions.

It is now to be considered whether the organisational structure and procedures, and the definition of goals and duties needs reappraisal. Many suggestions have been made for the better implementation of the Articles of the United Nations Charter and of its resolutions. It is obvious that there should be a recommitment by member-States to the ideals of the United Nations but it is equally important to draw up essential new programmes which might help to avoid the mistakes of the old world.

Our Independence coincided with a remarkable acceleration of communications. So from the very beginning, our foreign policy was based on the premise that in a shrinking world, there could be no place for war as an instrument of policy. The responsibility to help more than 500 million people to fulfil their aspirations gives us a compelling interest in peace, especially with our neighbours. We have always affirmed that the way of the world should be not power but peace, not confrontation but co-operation. The world is not for destruction, it is for development. Governments and statesmen of the world, indeed citizens of all nations, need to make earnest and well-considered efforts to submerge national ambitions and rivalries in the wider interest of the preservation of civilization and the survival of humanity.

Time, space, matter, life, all the old certainties are under question. The exploration of outer space and the research into the nature of life are placing new responsibility in man's hands. Many countries are turning their attention towards the sea-bed and its treasures.

The United Nations should ensure that the resources born of all these explorations are used not merely for the aggrandisement of individual nations but for the welfare of the family of man.

The irony of mankind is that we have the means, and we see the vision, but we lack the will and the trust to take the one big step forward. As the *Maitrayee Upanishad* says, "The mind is the source of all bondage, and also the source of liberation". It is by breaking through the cages of constraint that man can go forward.

Let the United Nations in the years to come strive to bring about a new era of international transformation by consent, a new era of justice and peace.

Indo-British Co-operation

WE ARE HERE today to welcome a distinguished statesman and through him to honour the great traditions of his country. A quarter century ago the world witnessed a great event of history here—the transfer of power from Britain to India. It was a moment when the noblest instincts and the aspirations of our two nations coincided.

Mr. Prime Minister, this is perhaps a good time for you to be here. You will see how your country has influenced many aspects of our national life. You are here on the eve of our fifth General Elections when, apart from other hectic activities, there is the usual forecasting of results in the Press, an exercise in which, I believe, you have little confidence.

The vast ocean of Indian civilisation assimilates and changes the currents which flow into it. We have adapted your political institutions to a continental nation, a pluralistic society and a developing economy. We have made our own Britain's traditions of personal liberty, the rule of law and the equality of all people irrespective of religion or colour. Someone has remarked that the last Englishman survives only in India, but when you peel off the layers of accent, dress or even ideas, underneath you will always find something basically Indian. Our English, as you have no doubt noticed, has a character specially of its own. Our relations with your country are extensive and involved and have been able to survive because they have constantly evolved and adjusted to changed circumstances. As you yourself said yesterday, our relations can be meaningful only so long as they are relevant to the contemporary situation and pass the test of public evaluation. Each nation, like each individual, must face the reality of the situation and find fulfilment in its own way. The precedents of other countries may be useful, but cannot be infallible and may even be misleading. It is not possible to have universal answers to specific problems.

Mr. Prime Minister, you were in India five years ago. In this period much has changed. The expansion of education, the growth of industry—the visible progress—have aroused expectations and hopes amongst our people. We know that better life is possible and we are impatient to achieve it. This desire for equality and for social justice is the central fact of our political life. Our concern now is to attune our institutions and our lives to the needs of our people, to reduce glaring disparities and to change archaic and unjust social and economic conditions. For this journey we must strive to have our own path. I can only say that it will always be a peaceful and a democratic one. The experiences of our people, the sufferings they have endured because of

Speech at lunch in honour of Prime Minister Edward Heath of the U.K., New Delhi, January 10, 1971

discrimination of caste or religion or economic backwardness cannot but profoundly influence our approach to international issues such as racial discrimination and the obligations of the affluent towards the poorer countries. As a people we are sensitive to certain ideas and attitudes not because of what others think or do, but essentially because of our own background, traditions and values. We believe that positive relationships between nations must be based on equality and co-operation.

Since our Independence, Indo-British co-operation has expanded significantly. In some sectors of our economy our progress has been considerably helped by Britain's enlightened assistance and understanding. I hope that our association will be even more fruitful in the years to come and will help us to progress towards our goal of technological and industrial self-reliance. This and the common institutions to which I have referred, give a distinctive quality to Indo-British relations. We should like them to prosper and expand for the mutual benefit of our people and also for the larger cause of international amity and co-operation. There is so much on which we can build. I have great pleasure in welcoming you to our country. We are glad that you and your party were able to spend some time with us. May your visit lead to greater harmony between our two nations.

New Challenges

IT IS A pleasure to have you, Mr. Prime Minister, with us this afternoon. A vast distance separates our two countries. In history and tradition, we do not have much in common. But the political objectives of our people are similar. We stand unflinchingly for the causes for which we in India have been striving like you. We seek to build a multilingual, multi-religious society, based on participatory democracy. But the people can be persuaded to keep alive their faith in democracy only if it gives a promise of results; otherwise they will feel compelled to look elsewhere. Time does not wait, nor do vast numbers who are emerging from the apathy of ages.

You have been quoted as saying that you dream all the time, dream of a society—and I quote—"where each person should be able to fulfil himself to the extent of his capabilities as human being, a society where inhibitions to equality would be eradicated". We can understand you for we share this dream. Much that has happened in India is proof that

Speech at luncheon in honour of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada, New Delhi, January 12, 1971

dreams do come true and that dreams are something that is most worthwhile in life. But dreams have to be made real.

We are here faced today with unprecedented social change. The question is not merely of fully utilising our resources, or augmenting our production, but of ensuring that the benefit from these has the widest possible distribution, so that social and economic justice reaches down to the weaker sections of our society. It is our endeavour to narrow the disparities in our society, against which you also have expressed a feeling of repugnance, and remove the discrimination which has caused so much hardship to vast numbers of our people and prevented us from sharing in man's progress towards a better world.

You know India from before. But even a brief visit is sufficient to recognise that it is not an easy task for the whole people to step out of old habits and customs which have hardened over the centuries. Everywhere, the static and the dynamic are in conflict and those who see the shape of things to come, and are willing to adjust so as to make the transition smoother, are usually in a minority. The experience of the past can at best be a preparation for new challenges. We need the capacity to ask questions; we need vision to grasp the problems of the future; we need courage to act. Answers come from those who care enough to seek for them, and often from rebels. But rebellion has to be distinguished from violence or from recalcitrance, for you know from experience that violence creates more problems than it seems to solve. Throughout history when one age is ending and another coming into being, there has been great upheaval. Violence is a part of life. But men of goodwill have always attempted to control it. If this was desirable before, today it has become imperative. Change can and must be brought about by peaceful and democratic means.

Many years ago, our poet Rabindranath Tagore sang of a world which was not divided into fragments by narrow domestic walls. We feel that every international body for co-operation is an instrument for the lowering of such barriers. That is why after we attained Independence, my father devised a formula to preserve the Commonwealth with added dignity and purpose, as an association of free and equal nations to advance the welfare of all its members.

Canada and India work together to ensure the total condemnation of *apartheid*. I am sure that we shall oppose all measures which would imply support for any form of racialism.

May I take this opportunity of expressing India's warm appreciation of Canada's enlightened approach to aid? We are touched by the care and thought you have given to our problems and difficulties. Each nation should recognise that its own interest is closely bound with that of the world around it. This is the attitude of peace. I know how deeply aware you are of the compulsions of an interdependent world which is in the painful throes of upheaval. You have shown sensitivity,

courage and vision. You have overcome the constraints of convention and given a new dynamism to your country and to its role in the world community.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to drink to the health and happiness of Mr. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada and to the friendship between India and Canada?

Friendship with Guyana

IT GIVES ME very great pleasure to welcome the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guyana, Mr. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, his wife Mrs. Viola Burnham and his party. We are happy to have them amongst us and we remember when Mr. Prime Minister was here with us last, many years ago in 1953. Much has happened in your country since then and a great deal has happened in our country also. Before Independence, your country was known as the El Dorado of European region and long long ago our country was attracting philosophers, explorers, merchants, seamen and all kinds of people from all over the world. But then we both came under colonialism and shared various experiences. We shared the experience of fighting for our independence. We shared your anxiety and we wished you well in your struggle. Now you are trying to take your country forward. You are bringing together the different races which have found their way in Guyana from different parts of the world. We know that whether a country is big or small, it always has great problems. Our own experience tells us that the more the problems you solve, the more the new problems are there to solve. And I do not think one ever comes to the end of problems or even difficulties. We can only hope that as we go along, we gain more experience and strength to face and solve them.

You have come to India at rather an exciting time because I am one of those who believe that the very fact of development and growth in a country like India is an exciting adventure. But like all adventures, it has its difficulties too. In India the growth, the development and the changes which are taking place have aroused tremendous hopes in our people and along with them great impatience also, because they say that things can be done. They wonder why they are not done faster and why they do not reach out to more people. This is what we are attempting to do to make freedom more real, more meaningful, to all of our people. Freedom can have meaning only if instead of merely

Speech in honour of Prime Minister Linden F. S. Burnham of Guyana, New Delhi, January 28, 1971

satisfying man's basic material needs it brings more welfare, more education, more opportunity and also does something for the inner man.

The world is changing fast and we are having difficulty in keeping up with all these changes. But there are certain basic things which remain the same and I hope, India will always remain wedded to the concept of tolerance, brotherhood, friendship and co-operation. This has been the foundation of our policy at home and abroad and I believe we share these ideals with you.

I am looking forward to our talks with you tomorrow. We have met recently—not very recently but some months ago—in Lusaka where we had useful discussions, and before that I have the most pleasant memories of the very warm and delightful reception you gave to me and my party when we were in Guyana. We hope that you will glimpse something of the changes which are coming about in India and how they are affecting the people as a whole.

There is a great deal in common and many differences also between our two countries. But I hope, the friendship between us will be strong and will deepen with every new contact and visit. We specially hope that during your stay in India, Mrs. Burnham, your charming and very accomplished wife, will have some time to see things other than those which the Heads of State would normally like to see. Both of you and other members of your party are very welcome. We want to tell you that India has looked forward to your visit and we are glad you are with us. We hope you will have a pleasant and enjoyable stay and get a feeling of the friendship which we have for your people. I am sure, you will take back with you pleasant memories of your very brief stay in India.

May I request you, ladies and gentlemen, to drink to the health and happiness of the Prime Minister of Guyana and Mrs. Burnham, and to the lasting friendship between our two countries?

Welcome to Fiji Prime Minister

IT GIVES ME very great pleasure to welcome the Prime Minister of Fiji, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, his charming wife Adi Lady Lala Mara and the rest of his party to Delhi. The Prime Minister is not a stranger to us. I believe this is his fourth visit to our country but even in the short time since his last visit much has happened in his country and ours too. When I was at the United Nations a few months ago I had the privilege

Speech at dinner in honour of Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara of Fiji, New Delhi, January 29, 1971

and the pleasure of welcoming Fiji as the youngest member of the United Nations.

Independence is a tremendous thing to achieve. But there is no doubt that it is only the first step. It certainly opens the doors of opportunity, but along with this, it also attracts new challenges. Each one of us who has passed through this door knows that there is tremendous satisfaction in achieving it but the road is a very long and difficult one. You have, if I may say so, started off exceedingly well by knitting together all the different people and different races who live on your islands so that you have a solid foundation of stability, peace and co-operation. This is what we are also trying to achieve here. Though quite often we have quarrels amongst us and fissiparous tendencies make themselves evident, I think, by and large, we have achieved it. As you have probably noticed, there is an underlying strong base of Indian unity and a feeling of Indianness, regardless of the religion one may belong to or the part of the country one may come from or the language one may speak.

You and we share the great problem of bringing a better life to our people. Much has to be done to make up for the lost time, because the other countries are racing very fast indeed and as one of the characters in *Alice in Wonderland* said, "Sometimes you have to run fast merely to stay in the same place." This is how we find that everything else has moved on ahead.

We wish you well in your efforts for the progress and development of your islands. We are not a rich country. We take help from others and yet we do give help to others because we believe that in this world, which we hope will one day be one world, it is necessary for people to help one another. It is particularly necessary for the countries which are developing internal strength that they should have good relations with other countries because only then can they face their difficulties and make their contribution to world peace. We have always believed that freedom, progress and peace are indivisible. That is, if there is tension in one place, it has a reaction in other places too. That is our main interest in working for peace amongst all nations. We also know that wherever there are great differences—whether within the country or elsewhere in the world—there is tension and that is why our attempt has been to support those policies and those steps which would reduce these very big differences. We did not always succeed but nevertheless we felt that we must do what is right.

We are very happy to have you amongst us. We are glad that you could see at least the concluding part of our Republic Week Celebrations and share our happiness at this great event which happened just 21 years ago. We wish you well in your endeavours and we shall be glad to help you in any way we can to bring greater happiness and greater prosperity to all sections of the people in Fiji. So, I welcome you here

on my own behalf and on behalf of the Government of India and the people of this country.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to drink to the health and happiness of the Prime Minister of Fiji, Lady Mara, and to the friendship between the two countries ?

"Great Women of the World"

QUESTION : What were the most important events of your adolescence, spent at the side of your father, that have had the greatest influence on the formation of your political outlook ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : During my adolescence I had little time with my father, for he spent many years in prison. But my home was the hub of political activity and the venue of important conferences and decisions. It was also the gathering place for peasants of our province and other oppressed people. Naturally all these events, the sufferings of the Indian people and the sacrifices of my family and other Congress leaders deeply influenced my thinking.

QUESTION : Which social conquests have been achieved by the masses in India during your five years as leader of the country ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The changing of social attitudes and habits is the most difficult, for they seem to survive even revolutionary changes. However, in the 24th year of Independence there has been a radical transformation in our society especially with regard to women : marriage laws, property rights, divorce, etc. Our peasantry no longer believes in fatalism but realises that they can change their lives and conditions. Our people as a whole are now more forward-looking and open to new ideas and methods.

QUESTION : Do you believe yourself to be the future of India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Any such thought would be highly presumptuous. No individual can arrogate to himself or herself the right to decide the future of the country. I should like people to think of me as one who worked with singleness of purpose to make life worthwhile for my fellow human-beings.

QUESTION : You are accused by various political groups of being too much in favour of the United States or too much in favour of the Soviet

Interview to Italian Television (RAI), for a documentary film in the series, "Great Women of the World", June 15-16, 1971

Union. What you mostly want is that India should continue to be 'non-aligned' and a friend of both powers. Factually speaking, in the long run, could the immense aid that India continues to receive from these two countries condition the political trends of your country?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The so-called foreign aid we get may seem large, but compared to our size and population it is far less than that received by any other country. Our thinking and our planning are all directed towards attaining self-sufficiency and we have made it clear to all countries that we would prefer to do trade rather than receive aid. We have welcomed help from other countries and have in turn helped other countries with aid and technical assistance. But we do not allow the aid we get to influence our decisions. Nor do we interfere in the decisions of the countries whom we help.

QUESTION : India keeps asserting her own determination to oppose colonialism and neo-colonialism in all their forms in favour of the newly independent nations or those in process of development. To what extent and in which fields does this political principle actually reveal itself in concrete facts in favour of those nations that have recently gained their independence or are struggling to do so?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Some positive decisions were taken at the Lusaka Conference of Non-Aligned Nations as to how developing countries could help one another to promote economic growth and to protect themselves from external pressures. We have contributed to the mutual strengthening of these nations in a variety of ways.

QUESTION : How do you think it is possible to define definitely and historically the problems of geo-political dissension between India and the bordering countries, and, in particular, Pakistan?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have many neighbours. With Burma, Ceylon, Nepal and Bhutan we really have no problems. Small difficulties arise. These have been sorted out in the past and I am sure that in the future too there will be no cause to fear dissension.

In recent years, our relations with China have not been cordial. We do not think that there is any basic conflict of interest. But perhaps the understanding which China has of India is distorted either by their ideological preoccupations or their ambitions. However, I have no doubt that sooner or later the Chinese will discover that the fundamental premises on which they operate are false.

As for Pakistan, it is difficult for me to say anything except that that country seems to find its identity only in conflict with India. We have tried hard to remove as many areas of conflict as possible. Pakistan's response to every such effort has been negative. The grim tragedy that is being enacted in East Bengal further complicates the situation. The forcible eviction of over 5 million Pakistani citizens has posed a very

heavy burden on us economically as well as politically and socially. It is incredible that the international community should shut its eyes to this brutality and negation of basic human rights and to our very real difficulties.

Pakistan is telling the world that normalcy is being restored in Bangladesh. If this is so, then it should be possible for these millions of Pakistanis to return to their homes. The safety of their lives and property should also be ensured.

QUESTION : India is beset with a series of internal struggles : Bengal does not have an autonomous government, because the leadership has been assumed directly by the Indian Government; in Kerala, to cope with the discontent of the population, the Central Government has granted greater powers to the police; political pressure from the trade union organisations is increasing more and more. Are these divergencies in the Indian Federation destined to increase, or can a settlement be reached ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Both the States you mention have popularly elected governments. India does not have greater internal tension than other countries. In a country of our size there are bound to be differences, but we have proved that there is a strong base of Indian unity. All States help one another in times of difficulty. Having President's rule temporarily in any State is no reflection on our democracy or unity. Since I have been Prime Minister, there have been Chief Ministers of different parties in different States, but I have had no difficulty in dealing with them. The main point of disagreement concerns financial assistance. This dissatisfaction is common to all States, regardless of the political affiliation of their Governments, and also to Ministries of the Central Government. Because of our limited resources, we are unable to give them all they ask for.

QUESTION : The Naxalite movement, inspired by Maoist doctrines, is trying to spread guerilla warfare in certain parts of the country. What are the aims and the limitations of this movement ? What is behind it, and in particular, do you believe that it is destined to fade out or to grow stronger ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Frustration and violence among young people are not unique to India. Every generation has its own brand of non-conformists, rebels and reformists. We see this phenomenon in every age and country, including the affluent countries. However, these Naxalites, Guverists or anarchists have much misdirected idealism but no basic framework to effect social transformation. Howsoever heroic their individual acts might appear to them, they cannot succeed.

QUESTION : India, because of her geographical position, her overpopulation problems, her historical-cultural roots, has many aspects in common with China. Do you believe, however, that the Chinese model could be applied, either entirely or partly, to the actual situation of India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : India is a complex of its own history and tradition and its social, political and economic realities. Its evolution cannot be made to conform to any imported model. We must solve our problems, as indeed we have been endeavouring to do with success, within the framework of our own realities.

QUESTION : You have asserted that, in order to start resolving the problems of present-day India, it is necessary to courageously adopt any extreme measure and radical change that might be needed to overcome the disconcerting difference between intention and action. In the first five years of government, have you already had occasion to adopt radical measures and changes, or do you think that, only from now on, at the end of these first five years of assessment and experience in government you can apply sharper political measures ?

THE PRIME MINISTER :We have been initiating action on our declared programmes. The nationalisation of banks, of General Insurance and of the export-import trade, a crash programme to create employment; land reforms and legislation to curb monopolies are some of the steps we have taken. We are thinking of imposing a ceiling on urban property and of abolishing privy purses and princely privileges.

QUESTION : Do you believe that those religious forms and prejudices that are capable of slowing down the social and cultural development of the masses in India should be abolished ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Superstition and religious fanaticism, feudalistic tendencies and all forms of reaction must be combatted. But all that is old is not bad. There is much in our culture and tradition which is timeless and which has given strength to our people.

QUESTION : Is the Indian woman conscious of the great problems besetting her country ? What contributions she is making to build a better future for her children ? Would you answer this question as a woman, and not as Prime Minister ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Indian woman is deeply conscious of the country's problems and her role in solving them. Women—in towns and villages, the educated as well as the illiterate—participated on equal terms with men during our independence struggle, fully and unhesitatingly sharing all hardships and sacrifices. It was, therefore, natural that after freedom they should continue their contribution to the development of the country. Women participate in politics at all levels. In some

villages, the elected village Council consists entirely of women. We have had women Governors, Chief Minister, Ministers and many Members of the Legislatures. A large number of women enter the Administrative Services, the professions and business. We have a woman Judge and a Chief Engineer.

QUESTION : In the year two thousand, by whom can your inheritance for the development of India be reaped ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously, the future generation of India.

QUESTION : You represent for India the ideal and practical continuation of the politics developed by Mahatma Gandhi and your father. Was your appointment to the post as Prime Minister conditioned by the fact that you are the direct heir of men who are now considered to be a myth ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : My selection as Prime Minister was not due to any myth or inheritance, but through democratic processes and because I had the support of my party.

QUESTION : Reading is one of your hobbies. Who are your favourite authors ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : For me, reading is not a hobby but a part of life. At the moment I am most interested in books on contemporary problems, such as youth unrest and conservation.

QUESTION : Can you specify two moments in your life : the most beautiful and the most dramatic ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : My life has been so full of excitement and incidents, it is difficult to highlight any special occasion. But I would say that perhaps the most wonderful moment was when I held my first child in my arms.

In 1942 during the freedom struggle, I was arrested in a public square in my home town. At this time there was a confrontation between the people of the city and the British Army. The moment was packed with tension and suspense. It would make a highly dramatic scene for the theatre.

QUESTION : Would you willingly come and spend the years of your old age in Italy ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I should love to visit Italy, but why wait for old age to do this ? However, I cannot uproot myself from India and I should not like to live elsewhere.

QUESTION : What is your opinion as a woman and mother of a man who has married an Italian of the introduction of divorce in Italy ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is a matter which concerns only the Italians. My son was married according to the Indian law.

QUESTION : Can you give your opinion of Indira Gandhi the woman ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : In spite of always living in the public glare, she has remained a very private person. Her life has been hard. This has made her self-reliant but has not hardened her. On the contrary, she has learnt to find interest in ordinary things, beauty in any surroundings and lighter moments in the harshest situations. She feels that only deep sensitivity, minute observation and a feeling of involvement can help one to perceive the subtle and changing nuances in people and situations.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty

QUESTION : Madam, the Indo-Soviet Treaty has been acclaimed by the overwhelming majority of the people of India. What would you say could be the reason for this near unanimous welcome ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Friendship between India and the Soviet Union has grown in many directions over the years. In the international arena we have both worked for peace and have opposed racialism and colonialism. The Soviet Union has helped our programmes for the achievement of self-reliance through developing heavy industry.

International relations have entered an era of rapid change, the range and direction of which is not predictable. Nations are seeking new ties and are cutting across old rigidities. This is a welcome trend. But some countries are taking advantage of these changes to embark upon opportunistic adventures.

We are convinced that the present Treaty will discourage such adventurism on the part of countries which have shown a pathological hostility towards us. Our people look upon the Soviet Union as a friend. That is why the Treaty has received such widespread acclaim in our country.

QUESTION : What would be its impact on the climate for peace in this part of the world, particularly with reference to the liberation struggle of the people of Bangladesh ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : To begin with the second part of your question, the struggle in Bangladesh is between the 75 million people on the

Interview with Shri Romesh Chandra, Secretary-General of the World Peace Council, New Delhi, August 26, 1971

one side and the vindictive, cruel and autocratic military regime of Islamabad on the other. The people of Bangladesh are united in the fight for their just demands. But we know that resentment against military rule is increasing among the people of West Pakistan also, whether they belong to Baluchistan, N.W.F.P. or even the favoured provinces of Sind and Punjab.

Our people, Parliament and Government have extended full sympathy and support to the people of Bangladesh. We have no quarrel with the people of West Pakistan. The problem is not an Indo-Pakistan one.

The military regime in Islamabad is isolated from its people and is waging war against them. That is why it seeks to divert the attention of the people of Pakistan as well as of the rest of the world from the agony of Bangladesh by attempting to give an Indo-Pakistan complexion to the problem. The threat of war might be an act of desperation but how can we fail to take note of it ? However, we feel that the Treaty will act as a deterrent against any rash adventurism on the part of Islamabad.

But peace does not mean merely the absence of hostilities, nor can there be peace while oppression and injustice prevail. Peace must be based on the fulfilment of the just aspirations of the people.

QUESTION : You have rightly said that the Treaty is not a departure from the concept of non-alignment, but that it actually strengthens the forces of non-alignment all over the world. Would you kindly elaborate this statement ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : While staying out of power blocs, we have sought the friendship of governments of different persuasions. Peaceful coexistence and conviction that war should be ruled out as a means of settling issues have been the basic guiding principles of our policy. Simultaneously we have also opposed colonialism and racialism. Many other nations of Asia and Africa have pursued a similar policy. The Soviet Union has extended unreserved respect and support to our policy of non-alignment. This has been incorporated in the Treaty itself.

The world 'non-alignment' has been misinterpreted, that is why such doubts arise. The Treaty does not compromise our non-aligned position.

The national interest of non-aligned countries has to be safeguarded from threats of military adventurism. Security must be achieved in a manner which eschews hegemony or confrontation and ensures lasting peace. This is precisely what the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Co-operation does.

QUESTION : What is your estimate of the prospects for peace in South-East Asia and the Middle East ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Peace in South-East Asia depends on the solution of the problem of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. All these three are now inter-related. However, a settlement has to be reached in South Vietnam. There is increasing recognition of the fact that there is no military solution. Recently, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam made certain proposals. The crucial point there is that of the withdrawal of foreign forces and more specially of American forces. I have no doubt that if this withdrawal is made within a certain fixed time-frame, South Vietnam could be left to work out its future without military or political interference from outside. Sooner or later, the Vietnam problem will have to be settled along these lines.

There is at present a stalemate in West Asia. However, potentially the situation is dangerous. The greater the delay in finding a solution, the more difficult the problem will become. The directions in which a solution has to be sought are laid down in the U.N. Security Council Resolution in 1967. President Anwar Sadat has made a series of proposals. In our view, they deserve careful consideration.

QUESTION : The Treaty refers to colonialism, racialism and disarmament. In what way do you think it makes a contribution to the anti-colonialism and anti-racial movement and to progress towards disarmament ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The Treaty reiterates both Governments' desire to continue the struggle against all forms of colonialism and racialism. Similarly, we shall continue to work for disarmament. The reiteration of the solemn determination of the two countries should strengthen the movement for peace and justice.

Indo-Soviet Friendship

IT IS A pleasure to be in Moscow once again at the kind invitation of the leaders and the Government of the U.S.S.R. I am especially glad that I have been able to come here so soon after the signing of the Soviet-Indian Treaty for Peace, Friendship and Co-operation.

The Treaty has been widely acclaimed throughout our country and in the Soviet Union. Even the traditional critics of Indo-Soviet friendship in various parts of the world have recognised the importance of the Treaty. Yet there are some, in India and abroad, who are trying to misinterpret its meaning and purpose. However, I am convinced that in the coming months and years they also will realise that the Treaty

Speech at Moscow luncheon, September 28, 1971

will help the evolution of a saner, more peaceful international situation.

The essence of Soviet-Indian friendship as it has developed over the years is mutual recognition of the importance of our two vast aggregates of territory and population and of the benefits that our two nations and the world will derive if our work for peace and development can be corelated and reinforced. There have of course been many and varied links in the course of our long histories. I remember seeing in the Leningrad Museum a reference to the gift of an elephant from India long ago. Tolstoy's influence on Mahatma Gandhi's thinking is well-known. After Independence, it was my father who initiated our policy of friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union and laid the foundation of India's policy of non-alignment. I am glad that both these policies have gained strength ever since.

Long before we liberated ourselves from colonial rule, we admired the great experiment of social reconstruction which you had undertaken in your country, the results of which we can see around us. The Indian people respect the vision which has inspired your achievements. In the same way, I should think that your regard for India springs from your recognition of our aims, endeavours and our potentiality.

I hope that my country, which encompasses one-seventh of humanity, will always be a factor for peace and progress in the world. It is this, I believe, that has prompted your friendship and co-operation with us. Our people have greatly benefited from Soviet economic co-operation and assistance. They realise that Indo-Soviet co-operation is not merely an arrangement between two Governments. It is a coming together of two great and friendly countries. Apart from economic co-operation and mutual understanding on many international issues, our cultural bonds have been steadily growing. In no other country are Indian languages and literature so widely studied and Indian music, dance and drama so greatly appreciated as in the Soviet Union. Your literature, music and science which have vastly enriched man's heritage are now available to our people as never before.

Indian history will remember 1971 as an eventful year. We are certainly at a momentous juncture. From March until now, there have been many important developments. At the year's beginning, our economy had just regained its elan after eight troubled years. Our General Elections, held in March, brought greater clarity to the national scene and gave a firmer direction to our political life. We were all set to launch the second phase of our national development during which the promise of equality and freedom from want could come closer to reality. Our Parliament had been in session for just a week and the representatives of the nation were still shaking one another's hands when beyond our borders there occurred events which have created incalculable difficulties for us. In East Bengal, there is a grave confrontation between the people and the Government of Pakistan, and the

actions of the Pakistan Army have compelled millions of people to leave their homes and to seek shelter in India. One cannot but be perturbed when fire breaks out in a neighbour's house. What has happened in East Bengal—or Bangladesh, as the world has begun to call it—can no longer be regarded as Pakistan's domestic affair. More than 9 million East Bengalis have come into our country. Do they not have the right to live and work in their own homeland? We cannot be expected to absorb them. We have problems enough of our own and we certainly do not need to add to our vast population. In fact, much money and effort are going into plans to control population growth.

This is not an Indo-Pakistan dispute. The problem is an international one. But the weight of it has fallen on India, stretching our resources, financial and otherwise, to the limit. The international response has fallen short of the scale which a grim tragedy of this magnitude demands. It is surely the duty of the world not to delay in creating conditions in which these refugees irrespective of their religion can return without fear.

The growing agony of the people of East Bengal does not seem to have moved many Governments. Our restraint has been appreciated only in words. The basic issues involved, and the real threat to peace and stability in Asia are being largely ignored. We are glad that the leaders of the Soviet Union have counselled Pakistan to reach a political solution which will satisfy the aspirations of the people of East Bengal. We hope that these efforts will bear fruit.

The Soviet Union has initiated many moves for world peace. We welcome the understanding which has been reached with the Federal Republic of Germany, and we sincerely hope that further relaxation of other tensions will follow. While Europe is coming nearer to enduring peace, it is tragic that a new threat to peace has emerged in Asia, a continent already tortured by prolonged conflicts in the Middle East and the South East. I will support the inalienable rights of all peoples, especially those of the brave Vietnamese people, to national independence and freedom.

The search for peace calls for determined effort. Peace cannot be attained by waiting and hoping, but through action and perseverance. Even for an individual, there cannot be a private quest for peace, nor for a nation can it be merely a national effort. It must be an international imperative. A day before he was assassinated, Mahatma Gandhi said that the way to peace was to live amidst strife and to struggle with all one's might to overcome it. This applies to nations no less than it does to individuals. Dreams must be accompanied by endeavour. As Pushkin said :

"I crave more life, more dreams, more agony
Midmost the care, the panic, the distress,
I know that I shall taste of happiness."

I am glad to have had this opportunity of meeting and exchanging views with the leaders of the Soviet Union. Our discussions have been useful and there has been a similarity of views which reflects the closeness of our relationship. I am confident that our understanding will result in further strengthening peace, security and progress not only in the Indian sub-continent but in Asia and throughout the world.

I thank you for your gracious hospitality and the people of this great country for their friendship and understanding which we value so much. May it strengthen us and contribute to the peace and welfare of all people.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to joint me in drinking a toast to ever growing friendship between our two great countries and peoples and to peace and progress ?

* * *

I AM VERY happy to have come to your country and talked with your leaders. I am especially happy that the General Secretary, Mr. Brezhnev, was able to join the talks. I believe that our talks have been useful and that they will certainly lead to better understanding between us.

The recently signed Indo-Soviet Treaty for Peace, Friendship and Co-operation has been widely welcomed by the peoples of India and the U.S.S.R. We have had a long tradition of friendship between our two Governments and, if I may say so, between the peoples of the Soviet Union and India, but this Treaty has certainly brought us closer and has improved the prospects of our co-operation.

As you remarked this morning, Mr. Prime Minister, our friendship is not based on a passing whim but on certain fundamental policies.

The close relationship between the Soviet Union and India has been a long and memorable one. Our friendship has grown with each passing year. In the international field we have a close identity of views on major world problems. We have stood together in the councils of the world in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism and the exploitation of man by man. We share a common belief in peaceful co-existence and co-operation of States with differing social systems. We agree that the policy of non-alignment pursued by India is a dynamic force which can help to reduce tension in the world. We believe in the right of a people to shape their own destiny according to their own national genius. And both our countries have a deep abhorrence of war, and believe in general and complete disarmament.

Bilaterally the co-operation between the Soviet Union and India has been of immense mutual benefit. It has greatly strengthened the public sector of our economy in vital branches like steel, petroleum and other

Speech at dinner in honour of Soviet Leaders, Moscow, September 28, 1971

basic and heavy industries. Our trade turnover has increased phenomenally over the years, particularly after the agreement on the rupee payment system. What is perhaps of great significance than the increase in the volume of our trade has been its changing pattern. The Soviet Union is now supplying India with larger quantities of industrial raw materials, sophisticated machinery and technical know-how, while at the same time importing more of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods from India. There are also good possibilities of multilateral co-operation in many spheres. I regard all these as signs of a healthy and dynamic relationship, and I am confident that in the years to come our co-operation will grow stronger.

During our struggle for independence we thought that once we were free we would pursue uninterruptedly the path of progress. But from time to time thereafter we found that the freedom we had won was never secure, that one had to fight and struggle for it year after year. We have faced enormous difficulties on our path of securing for our people the rights which they should have.

Recently, the people of India gave their support to our policies in a very clear-cut manner. They turned the General Elections from merely a party election to a "People's Election".

But before we could begin to fulfil the promises which we had made to them during the elections, events took place in a neighbouring country, which, for no fault of ours, placed a tremendous burden on our Government and on the people of India.

The burden is a financial one; it is a political one; it is one connected with security problems.

The events which were an "internal problem" of a neighbouring country have become very much "our problem", in fact "an international problem".

We have today in our country foreign nationals in numbers large enough to constitute the population of New Zealand and Sweden combined.

We are treating them as guests—but we have no doubt that these people must go back to their homes in peace and safety. Otherwise peace cannot be secured in our part of the world.

Even before this, our people have faced many difficulties with courage and unity and I have no doubt that they will face this situation also in that spirit.

I have been to Moscow and other parts of the Soviet Union several times, and on every occasion I have been received with great friendship and warmth. I should like to take this opportunity once more to thank you, and through you all the Soviet people for their friendship which I regard as the friendship for India and for Indian people.

We have had the pleasure and the privilege of having Chairman Kosygin and many other Soviet friends in India in the past. And now

in the next few days we will have the privilege of receiving President Podgorny in India for a short while.

I sincerely hope that Mr. Brezhnev will also pay us a visit one of these days.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to rise and drink a toast to the health of Chairman Kosygin and leaders of the Soviet Union, to the happiness of the people of the Soviet Union, to the friendship of our two countries and, if I may add, to the Indo-Soviet Treaty for Peace, Friendship and Co-operation ?

* * *

FOUR YEARS AGO I had the privilege of participating in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the historic October Revolution. Today, you have accorded me another high honour. I value it greatly knowing that through this gesture you are demonstrating your esteem and affection for India and her people. I accept this honour on behalf of the 550 million people of India whose good wishes I bring to you and to the people of the Soviet Union.

Moscow has been the symbol of the history and spirit of your country even as Delhi is the symbol of India's endurance and continuity. Moscow is a great city, not merely because of its size, not merely because it is the capital of the world's largest country, but because it has been the home of scholars and artists, many of whom have come from this great University, and who fulfilling the hopes of your great founder, Lomonosov, have enriched the world's treasure of knowledge. Specially in the last fifty years, the Moscow State University has played a notable role in the great educational processes by which the arts and the sciences have become the common possession of the whole people. When I was a teenager, my father wrote to me of the significance of this planned extension of knowledge to all classes. Twenty years later, when I first visited the Soviet Union I was deeply impressed by the vigour and sweep of your educational system.

We achieved independence a little over 24 years ago. These two-and-a-half decades have seen major gains : the doubling of food production and the trebling of industrial output. The foundations of basic industry have been firmly laid. The economy has become more diversified and the absorption of modern technology has made it more resilient.

Eighty million children are now in schools, and every year 75,000 engineers are trained. In simple human terms, an index of the improvement which has taken place is that the life expectation figure, which was around 30 in 1947, has now gone up to 54. But we have still to make up for the ground we lost when under colonial rule progress by-

Address to Moscow University, September 29, 1971

passed us. Even if the progress had been faster, India would still have a long and hard road to travel before being able to provide basic needs to all her people.

The struggle which was led by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru released us from colonial rule and ushered in an era of peaceful endeavour devoted towards transforming our society. We now have political freedom, but vestiges of the old order—of feudalism and the tyranny of traditional social custom—still persist, and our struggle against them must continue. But the forces of progress are decisively stronger and they must prevail.

Our path has been strewn with formidable obstructions but we have struggled and toiled and we move forward. The effort has largely been our own, as indeed it should be. But help in crucial areas has come from friendly nations to enable us to acquire modern technology. The Soviet Union is among the nations which have shown understanding of our problems. The Soviet Union has given us co-operation and has helped in the building of our industrial structure. Our people are appreciative of this fraternal help.

A few weeks ago, the Soviet Union and India signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation. The people of both countries have widely acclaimed it as an act of political sagacity. Our friendship is rooted in shared and unshakable faith in peace and progress.

The efforts of the Indian people are often thwarted by forces beyond our control. Earlier this year in our General Elections, the people of India gave us a mandate for progress. We were about to embark upon a new programme of economic advance, when from across our frontiers we had a new kind of invasion : not of armed men, but of a vast influx of helpless terror-stricken men, women and children from East Bengal—some wounded, some ill and all hungry. More than 9 million people have come in the last six months, and they continue to pour in. Has there been a greater migration in history ?

When millions of people are pushed into another's territory, jeopardizing its normal life, its plans for the future, and its very security, it is obvious that peace is in peril. We have shown the greatest forbearance, but it is essential that the basic cause of the crisis be immediately removed by a political solution acceptable to the people concerned. Unfortunately, there is no sign that this is being attempted. It is the world's responsibility to create without further delay conditions to enable the refugees to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

While there is hardly any area of the earth yet undiscovered, each year reveals some new aspects of knowledge and the need for deeper exploration. The journey of your valiant cosmonauts into space opened the way to new worlds—not to conquer but to comprehend.

How much has knowledge grown and man's capacity to do ! What seems wonderful to us is taken for granted by today's children. The

young, far more knowledgeable and competent than before, are also more restless. For, each generation tends to be bound by its own experience, and the young are impatient of all that constricts them. There is a groping in the realm of ideas whose shapes have not yet emerged in all clarity, but whose outlines are vaguely perceived. These are the ideas which will grow in the tomorrows to come. More and more people feel that narrow or dogmatic formulations cannot help much. We need the capacity to discover new concepts and to amend, to enlarge and to discard them, if necessary, in the light of new experience and growing knowledge.

The conviction that we can and must shape the future has been the motive force of political revolutions and of scientific breakthroughs. We can best prepare for the future by developing minds which are free of prejudice and which override divisive bounds of creed, of race and of nation; minds, capable of understanding the forces which affect man as an individual and as a social being. No man should feel alienated from nature or from his fellowmen.

May I thank you again for the honour which you have done to me and to the people of India by conferring upon me a degree at this great centre of learning?

Indo-Belgian Friendship

It is indeed a privilege to address the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and this gives me the opportunity to tell you something about my country and the thinking of the one-seventh of mankind who live there. Each country is so involved in its own problems that it can seldom keep up with trends and events thousands of miles away.

The world is one but each of us sees it from a different angle. There is the national point of view, which depends upon its geographical position and its historical evolution. There is the personal point of view, largely determined by one's political philosophy and economic status. For two centuries or more, Europe dominated the world. In the present century, the United States and later the Soviet Union came to share this influence. Only after World War II did Asia become a factor in European thinking. Africa appeared on the world scene a little later.

Until the countries of Asia and Africa had struggled for and won their freedom, their problems and even their rich treasure of civilisa-

Speech at Royal Institute of International Affairs, Brussels, October 25, 1971

tion and culture were of concern to only a few scholars and specialists. Now there is better communication and little more knowledge, but developments in Asia are still measured by the standards and way of living of the affluent countries.

It is 24 years since our Independence. Until then we could have no foreign, or for that matter, any other policy since decisions were taken for us, not by us.

My father's interest in freedom and justice was not limited to our own struggle. He came to the meeting of the League Against Imperialism here in Brussels in 1926 and met the leaders of other Independence movements. Thus he had personal contacts with what was happening in other countries and he was a true citizen of the world. He gave our nationalist movement clear ideas about the kind of political institutions we wanted in the future and the manner in which we would conduct our relations with other countries. It is this that enabled us to see our problems not as exclusive Indian ones but in the perspective of the world's problems.

An organic world view unites our internal and external policies. Politically, we have established institutions which, in the words of our own Constitution, are informed by a passion "for political, economic and social justice". Our democratic impulse owes its origin not so much to the legislative institutions, introduced during colonial rule, as to the entire spirit of people's sovereignty which our nationalist movement had evoked. Economically, our endeavour is to overcome, as early as possible, our crippling poverty and to lessen the inequalities which were bred by colonialism, feudalism and the delay in adopting modern technology. We are modernising our agriculture and expanding and diversifying our industrial base so as to become self-reliant.

Since Independence the economic and social transformation of the country represents a vast qualitative advance during the first half of this century. Under colonial subjugation, India's per capita income remained stagnant. The availability of goods, and services per person in the middle 1940's was roughly the same as at the turn of the century. Our sustained efforts in the years after Independence have enabled the growth of national income to be maintained at a rate of about 3.5 per cent per annum. In recent years the economy has tended to grow at an even faster pace. The country is now self-sufficient in food. With increasing expansion in irrigation facilities and fertiliser output, major breakthroughs are expected in other farm products as well. Starting from a flimsy base of consumer goods, industrial production has attained a range of depth and sophistication during the last two decades; the dramatic decline in the death rate and the perceptible increase in the longevity of our people reflects the state of progress. Disparities do remain but the standard of living has risen substantially for all sections of the community, even for those who continue to be

under diverse social disabilities. The rigidity of traditional Indian society is weakening. Education and the political system have given confidence to our people. Women are participating actively in all fields of life.

India lags behind the industrially advanced countries of the West in terms of material comforts, but it has a pervasive social coherence which provides a firm foundation for accelerated economic growth in the coming years. During the nationalist movement our greatest emphasis was on non-violence, tolerance and on diversity within unity. The leadership of Mahatma Gandhi conditioned us to choose the path of settling disputes through peaceful methods. This explains why, from the very moment of our freedom, we have stood for world peace, for non-alignment with military blocs, and for friendship with all nations, irrespective of their political systems.

We have never equated 'non-alignment' with neutrality or unconcern with world problems or disassociation with countries belonging to power blocs. To us, the word has meant independence of judgment and action in international affairs, according to the merits of particular issues as they affect our own national interests and world peace. In the bipolar world of the early fifties, the very word 'non-alignment' irritated some. But the years have seen a blurring of the rigidity of alignment. Those who swore by alliances are making overtures to members of the opposite camp and to the non-aligned. In the conditions of India, the principal problem of mankind is not the contest for power but the stark facts of poverty. The majority of the world's peoples are poor. They could be helped to a better life if their energy and resources which are today directed towards war were invested in their welfare. Problems on our own doorstep naturally tend to loom large.

A new crisis which has arisen surpasses in its magnitude all the earlier crises which have confronted us. Over nine million people of East Bengal—practically equal to the population of Belgium—have been terrorised and persecuted by the military rulers of Pakistan, and have been pushed inside our territory, jeopardising our normal life and our plans for the future. Should the world not take note of this new kind of aggression? This is not a civil war in the conventional sense. It is a genocidal pogrom of civilians merely because they voted democratically. It is cynical use of helpless human beings as a weapon against a neighbour nation. We in India have shown the greatest self-restraint but there is no doubt that our stability and security are gravely threatened. Indeed, we feel the threat is to the peace of the entire region. The basic cause of this crisis must be remedied. A political solution must be found to this problem and to be effective it must be acceptable to the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh. To hold elections for seats which are not vacant in the

present conditions of repression and chaos has no meaning or purpose. It is the responsibility of all those who are interested in peace to create conditions to stop the further influx of refugees and to enable those who are already in India to return to their homes in safety and dignity and without further delay.

Belgium has been the centre-piece of West European unity, which is rightly the most cherished and urgent of your present objectives. Europe, so long rent by discord, is now pooling its resources for the solution of common problems. The European Economic Community is a great experiment in the voluntary co-ordination of national policies for larger regional purposes—not of war but of peace and development. An alliance for war provokes counteraction. But an alliance for peace has deeper ramifications. We welcome the relaxation of tension in Europe and the treaties signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and U.S.S.R. and Poland. We hope that steps to further reduce tension will be taken. We welcome European unity but we hope that it will not be aimed against any region, and that ecoonmic arrangements amongst advanced countries will not impose new hardships on those who, like us, are making super-human efforts to stand on their feet. Belgium has adopted enlightened policies of international aid to developing countries. However, the terms of international trade have been steadily worsening for the supplies of primary materials. A positive trade policy designed to help and not frustrate the efforts of developing countries would be worthy of the vision for which Belgium has been known.

India and Austria

IT WAS A happy coincidence that I arrived here on your national day and was thus enabled to see a large number of your people in a happy mood. I have had the pleasure of being in Vienna several times and once in 1955 with my father. You had just signed the historic State Treaty and the last of the foreign troops were due to leave your territory. You were also giving final touches to the Opera House which was built with the help and the goodwill of all the people of your country. It was a memorable insight into the rebirth of a people after a dark period of suffering. I think it was a good time to be here and so is this for we were all delighted at your return to this high office. May I take this opportunity of offering once again my personal congratulations and those of the Government and the people of India?

Speech at Vienna banquet, October 27, 1971

Vienna is beautiful in any season. Its ethos vibrates with the music of great masters and the thought impulses of authors and philosophers. It is a city of the mind in a special sense, for here it was that men at the frontiers of knowledge delved deep into the human mind to discover insights that were to revolutionise the patterns of modern thought.

Mr. Chancellor, you have referred to my father. We in India have grown up under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and my father whose ideas raised us above the pettiness of the daily grind and the manoeuvring associated with politics. Our aim was liberation not only from foreign rule but equally from all that was evil within our own society. Even at the height of our struggle we did not allow bitterness or hatred to creep in. We made a distinction between colonialism and the British people. My father had always taken an active interest in international affairs and contemporary thinking on economic and other matters. He wanted India to be rational and self-reliant. He laid the foundations of modern industrial India and of an independent foreign policy. It is my endeavour to follow the path laid down by him and to translate his dreams into reality and this is not because he happened to be my father but because that direction and those policies were based on a realistic assessment of the Indian scene and formulated in the perspective of our long-term progress.

India's journey has not been easy but step by difficult step we have gone ahead, belying the prophets of doom. Today our other and not inconsiderable problems are overshadowed by events on our borders. In Austria you have the experience of dealing with refugees. So you can perhaps imagine the burden of looking after an influx which is of the size of Austria's own population. But the problem of refugees is an incidental one. It can be solved only by going into the reasons which have compelled these helpless millions to leave their homes, to seek inadequate shelter and live in the greatest discomfort in over-crowded camps on our territory. Many of them, even during the heavy rains of the monsoon, were forced to sit under trees for days. The Indian tradition has always been to offer 'shelter to the persecuted'. However, we cannot accept this charge as a permanent one.

At this moment our main concern is not merely looking after a large number of people but the very real threat to our security and stability which this holds, which these developments have imposed on us. The people of India value the sympathy and understanding which we have received from Austria and are grateful for the support which you have extended to us. It is our sincere wish that Austro-Indian friendship will grow steadily over the coming years. Whether in international affairs or in domestic affairs, there are bound to be problems. Our own experience has been that no sooner do we solve one problem than ten new ones come to take its place. But we think this

is part of life and we think that solving each problem itself gives us the strength to face the others.

There is something written in an old Sanskrit book, "The History of Kashmir", which I should like to quote to you. It really talks about life but of course it is as true of the life of the individual as the life of the nation. "Shadow is itself unrestrained in its path while sunshine as an incidence of its very nature is pursued a hundredfold by nuances. Thus is sorrow from happiness a thing apart. The scope of happiness, however, is hampered by the aches and hurts of endless sorrow."

I thank you once again for your gracious invitation to me, for the wonderful hospitality and friendship that you and the people of Austria have given to me and my party and for the welcome which you mentioned and, if I may add, which extended even to the very good weather which you have provided for us. May I ask you all to drink to the health of the Chancellor and Madame Kreisky, to the welfare and prosperity of the people of Austria and to the lasting friendship between our two countries?

* * *

MAY I SAY first that I regard this as a great privilege to be allowed to come here and say a few words before such a very distinguished audience?

Usually, when people think of India they either think of the bejewelled fabulous maharajas, or of the abject poverty of the people. Or they think that we are idealists whose philosophy has not much relevance to the realities of the day. Perhaps all this is true but it is only a very small part of the picture of a very vast country. It is a country which has its problems, but it is not all problems. It is a country which along with the problems has music and dancing. It has its art and culture and even amongst the poorest people you will find laughter and joy in life.

I did not really want to go into the details of Indian problems, but I think it is important that people in Austria should know something about my country, because it is of importance what happens there. It is of importance not only to Asia, but, I think, to Europe as well.

India is a land of many contradictions, existing in different centuries, people strongly asserting themselves yet fearful of any fundamental change. There is a constant clash between tolerance and dogma, between the basic Indian values and the superficial habits of dress or ritual. To all this has been added the new clash which perhaps all countries face which is the struggle between the *status quo* and the forces of change.

Speech at the Austrian Society for Foreign Policy and International Relations, Vienna, October 28, 1971

It is customary for people to think of diversity as a disadvantage and therefore to seek to impose uniformity in the search for unity and strength. In India we have found that diversity is a source of strength, that the continuity of the Indian civilisation for thirty centuries is itself due to its diversity, to its talent for absorbing new elements and tolerating differences. This is how India can have 16 major languages and seven major religions and yet function effectively as one nation. Our religious minorities are not minorities in the sense in which the conventional nation-states of Europe have understood the word. Our minority groups are equal under the law. Our Constitution says that all religions are entitled to equal respect and equal protection. The 60 million Muslim who live in India, the 15 million Christians, the 10 million Sikhs and a much smaller number of Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, and so on, are equal to the 450 million Hindus. Sometimes there is tension, but Government and public opinion always assert themselves to restore harmony. It is not the mere constitutional provision of equality which has made these people equal so much as the fact that in the last 24 years we have built a system in which people can truly participate. Our democratic structure functions not merely at the level of a national Parliament but goes down to the grass-root level in the form of effective rural self-governing councils.

In our fifth General Elections last March, 152 million people went to cast their votes, in spite of the fact that at least in one of our States there was grave threat to violence and all over the country there was a great deal of mischievous and false propaganda about our policies and programmes.

I would like to say that it is natural perhaps that the European should look at Indian problems from the European point of view. But we have to see the problems of Asia and Africa from the point of view of the conditions which had existed in these countries and which exist today. For instance take literacy. We are all for literacy. We are trying to expand adult literacy and we believe it is a very necessary programme. But I personally think that literacy should not be equated with the capacity to judge, or with understanding of what one wants. In our General Elections, as I said just now, a great deal of effort and money were spent to divert the people's attention. But in every election the people have grown more mature, and if some have been misled by propaganda, or by factors which are irrelevant to the situation, their number is certainly not larger than happens in fully literate affluent countries.

I would like to tell a small story about democracy. In the very first elections, I visited my father's constituency. I was stopped on the road for an unscheduled meeting and I made a short speech. An old farmer got up and said, "Only yesterday we had another gentleman and he said the opposite of what you are saying. Which of you was

telling the truth?" I said, "Well, obviously I cannot say that I am telling the untruth, but I am also not willing to say that the other gentleman told the untruth. We are trying to bring democracy to our country and this means that everybody says what he has to say, but you, the people, must judge who is saying what is in your interest, who is going to do what is in your interest." But the farmer said, "Do you belong to the Congress Party?" I said, "Yes". "Then you have no business to let this man speak to us and tell us lies". This was in 1950-51. But even in the next elections, one did not hear such a question or such a demand. Our people have got used to the fact that different parties put different points of view. So step by step they learn. Every election is not merely the opportunity to vote, it is an opportunity to be educated in the ways of democracy and in the policies of the different parties.

Some people say that the political unity of India is a gift of the British. In reality today's political unity is primarily the result of our movement for freedom from the British and equally the result of our subsequent success in holding together and consolidating that unity through the full functioning of democracy.

The break-up of the feudal order in Europe was accompanied by much violence and bloodshed, but in India we have been able to achieve this peacefully. There were two aspects. Firstly, there were the very big landowners who had oppressed the people in the rural areas for many years, taken their land and so on. We abolished absentee landlordship and gave about 20 million more families the right to land-ownership. But I must confess that our land reforms legislation is not adequate yet in all the States, because this is not a central, federal subject, it is a state subject. And I myself am exasperated by the slow implementation of even the land legislation which has been passed in some of the States. Nevertheless, every year we see some improvement in the situation.

The second part of the feudal order was represented by the princes. When the British withdrew, there was not only British India consisting of a dozen provinces, there were more than 500 native states where maharajas ruled with varying degrees of autocracy. In theory each could become an independent state and one or two of them did try to do so. But our leaders were able to persuade them all to merge into Indian polity without the use of force.

In order to enable the princes to get used to the new order of equality, certain transitional arrangements were made in the shape of annual payments, special privileges and so on. Recently we have decided to abolish these also, so that the disparities and unearned privileges can be further diminished.

The reorganisation of the constituent states in India provides a good insight into our endeavour of converting diversity into an element of

political strength. Even in small countries we see the hold of smaller regional loyalties. In a vast country these loyalties could become explosive, if the system had not taken adequate note of the legitimacy of state rights and fitted them into a pattern of the larger loyalty to the nation.

As you all know, we adopted the British parliamentary system, but with this difference, that we have a more or less federal set up. Each voter has two votes. He gives one vote for Parliament, one vote for the State Assembly. The elections are not necessarily held together. The majority party elects its leader and in the centre the leader becomes the Prime Minister and in these States what we call the Chief Minister.

In several States we have had either coalition governments or governments entirely of an opposition party. But we have maintained good relationship with these governments and we have discussed problems and programmes with each of the people concerned.

The written word of the Constitution has been strengthened through the evolution of many political conventions and institutional forums, such as the Finance Commission, the National Development Council and so on.

Of course, where there are men (and of course also women) there are bound to be tensions, and now and then they become so evident that we have to set up organisations such as the National Integration Council. But this is all a part of life and in no way do these disagreements weaken our unity or interfere with our progress. We have steadily grown stronger by responding positively to genuine local demands and grievances, whether of linguistic groups or tribes wanting to retain their special identity, or demands to redress imbalances caused by the uneven economic development of a region. The political importance of tolerance is borne out by the history of the constituent states of India. Tolerance does not mean adopting the line of least resistance but the resolution of tensions and rivalries in such a way that violence is prevented. This positive concept of change includes an increasing effort to cleanse society of old inequalities and injustices.

Much has been spoken and written about our caste system. Some castes were regarded as low and the people belonging to them gradually became economically very backward. Our Constitution gives them equality. And because these backward sections form one-sixth of our population, we have provided that they should have a sixth of the membership of all our legislatures, national and states, to enable them to catch up with the rest of the community until such time as this transitional provision becomes unnecessary. In these twenty years these classes have thrown up very vocal leadership and old attitudes of inferiority are gradually going.

You know that women have made great advance. We did have a movement for women's emancipation. Its leaders were interested in

education, women's health and so on. But it was our national leaders' foresight that really opened the door for women. Because they recognised that in a non-violent movement, such as ours, without half the population taking an active interest and showing their sympathy, the movement could not succeed. Mahatma Gandhi's gentle voice was strong enough to persuade our women to come out of their homes and to share the hardship, the suffering and the sacrifices of the freedom movement. And this is what today has enabled them to participate equally in the work for development. We therefore did not have to fight for our rights from or with our menfolk. We fought for freedom alongside our men and this is the spirit in India today. Where women are working, it is not to get anything from the men or in rivalry with them, but in partnership with them to create a better India for us all.

Our development plans have these simultaneous objectives : to augment production, to achieve economic self-reliance, and to ensure that no section or part of India is left out in the cold, to reallocate the effective control over the means of production so that there is no concentration of economic power in private hands, which would distort our political democracy, to increase modern technology so that there is minimum economic and social dislocation; and to build a social infrastructure of a new society in terms of public health, education, vocational training and scientific research.

But our planning is not regimented. We are trying to lessen the inequalities by giving greater opportunity to the small man through special programmes. And although our aim is a socialist society, we recognise the part the private sector can play in industrial production.

Perhaps in a regimented society we could have made quicker economic progress. But at the same time we believe that democracy strengthens the people and therefore the results of what is achieved are more stable and have more lasting effect on society.

In order to give you some idea of what has been achieved through the experiment of democratic planning I would like to give you some figures. In 1951 our production of foodgrains was 55 million tonnes. This year it has been 108 million tonnes and we are today fully self-sufficient in foodgrains. We do not have to import them, except now for this very large question of the refugees. Similarly in steel and other industrial sectors, production has trebled and has become greatly diversified. In 1951 the number of school-going children was 23.5 million. Today it is 83 million.

In foreign policy we have adopted what is known as non-alignment. This policy is not identical with Austria's policy of neutralism. Non-alignment to us did not mean being neutral or unconcerned with what was happening or even not having relationships with countries of the military blocs. It merely meant that we would not join a military bloc and we would not be guided by any other country. That is, we reserve

the right to judge each international issue on its merits and keeping in view our national interests and interest of world peace. And we feel that this policy has served us well and we feel that in the context of our recent history it continues to be necessary and beneficial and that it will give us strength to meet the challenges that confront us internationally.

Naturally the question arises whether our signing a treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union has affected this policy. Many people are saying in the newspapers that it has affected that policy. But we do not think so. In fact one of the clauses of the treaty specifically mentions that the Soviet Union acknowledges India's policy of non-alignment and that the treaty will not interfere with it. And President Tito, who is one of the co-founders of the non-aligned group and who feels most personally concerned with non-alignment, has also said that he understands the situation and that he agrees that it does not touch our non-alignment. Although we have had friendship with the Soviet Union before and continue to do so, we also have friendship with other countries. Whatever decision we take on different issues will be, as I said earlier, according to how we see the situation from our national point of view.

We feel that the fundamental premises of non-alignment stand vindicated by events in other parts of the world in recent years. Compared to the situation prevailing in the last decade there is much greater mobility between the military blocs and also between the blocs and the non-aligned. In Europe the processes of detente have moved faster.

India welcomes the present steps to a detente as an indication of our own conviction that the realities of the world today are basically different and that the world can survive and prosper not through confrontation but through co-operation.

During my visit to Austria I have been reminded by several people of the part which my father played in the signing of the Austrian State Treaty. At that time he happened to be first in Austria and then in Switzerland and the then Foreign Minister—I think it was Mr. Gruber—sent a message to him asking him whether he could send a message to Mr. Khruschev to say that Austria was ready for such a Treaty and I believe that what he did then did help in a small measure to make the Treaty possible.

All of you here are aware of the serious situation which has developed in the last seven months on our borders. Perhaps you know that the two parts of Pakistan are divided by a thousand miles of Indian territory. But that is no reason for the two parts not to get on. Why the situation arose was because the legitimate grievances of the people of East Bengal were not attended to in time. When the election took place, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was the leader of the Awami Party, had a six-point programme. It included greater autonomy for East

Bengal but it did not ask for independence or secession. They wanted to have better relations with India but not at the cost of Pakistan. All that they wanted was trade with India because the economy of East Pakistan has suffered greatly since this trade was stopped.

This programme was public and the election was fought on the basis of this programme and under the present regime. So one cannot say that anything underhand or hidden was done. But when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won the elections with the biggest majority that any election has given a national leader, there seems to have been some rethinking on the part of the Government.

One more thing I would like to point out. This is not a question of a minority wanting something from a majority. When you take the whole of Pakistan together, the people of East Bengal are in the majority. So, instead of democracy following its normal course, the period of negotiations saw the bringing over of more troops and the unleashing of a reign of terror such as has seldom been seen in the world. This is what has led to about 13 per cent of the entire population of East Bengal leaving their homes and trying to take shelter in India. The size of the refugee population is about the size of your own country here. Among the victims are Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists. In the beginning the special victims of the persecution were scholars, authors and university men. We are told by people who have come from the other side that on the night of March 25, which was a Thursday, a special attack was made on Dacca University and over 300 people—students, faculty members and others—were killed.

Through the centuries India has offered refuge to the persecuted but this time the problem is different in size and character. The tensions created in our country are political and social no less than economic but you can imagine what the economic burden is of looking after such a vast number of people. The threat to our security and stability is also very real.

Our progress has sharpened our people's impatience. It is not true to say that the poor are poorer, because even the poor have advanced a bit. But it is true that they see their poverty with much sharper eyes. It is true that they are not prepared to wait any longer. We have taken the path of socialism because we feel there cannot be real democracy if there is a very great economic inequality. Even though the Constitution gives equal rights, if a very large part of the population is not able to benefit from what the Constitution gives them, then democracy cannot be complete. So if India cannot maintain its stability, I think it does threaten Asia and it does threaten world peace as well. Governmental and parliamentary leaders from many countries have shown understanding of the issues involved, but many others are acting, may I say, with somewhat lack of insight.

I am thankful for the understanding and sympathy which I have found in Austria. Many ordinary people, a woman who sells vegetables, children, different groups like this, have come to me to express their sympathy and even to give small donations. I am grateful for this sympathy, and appreciate the fact that people should extend a hand of friendship at this difficult time. This is the basis of peace in the world : when we can regard the trouble of others as our own and try to help.

The first evening I was here I saw a very beautiful opera, "Fidelio". The music, the words, and the entire opera, were suffused with the urge for freedom, the urge to right injustice. Now we in India are also afire with this urge. The freedom struggle is very close to us. All of us who are in Government are people who have spent their years fighting for freedom. We believe that freedom, like peace, is indivisible. If freedom is crushed anywhere, it does diminish the freedom of all others. So today we feel that since for the first time man has the power and the knowledge to help those who are hungry and in need of their basic amenities, it is tragic that so much effort should go into weapons of war, into confrontation, when united effort could so easily make this a better world. There was a time when perhaps fighting was necessary. We thought that there was not enough land, we thought that there were not enough resources, but today nobody can say that. If there is not one kind of material, we are in a position to make it synthetically, and to have some alternative. So there is no reason to fight over scarce goods. There is every possibility of having enough for the world's needs. Especially when we are trying to conquer other world, let us all try to have peace in our own, and make this a much better place for all who live in it.

I am very grateful for this opportunity of saying a few words.

The Role of India League

IT IS A GREAT pleasure for me to address the India League which has played such a big role in bringing together Indians and British during the very critical and difficult days of our struggle for freedom. The Chairman has rightly reminded us that most of us here were workers of the India League because that was the only organisation then functioning in Britain where we could offer our time and our energy. I should like to join in the tribute paid by our Chairman to two very old friends of India and of the India League, Lord Sorensen and Miss

Address to India League Meet, London, October 31, 1971

Bridget Tunnard. Lord Sorensen was to have presided over this meeting actually I think and we all miss him and think of his work. To the very last he remained interested in a number of causes and was constantly writing letters about the Bangladesh situation or other problems in different parts of the world.

Times have changed greatly since the India League came into being. India is free but there are many places in the world where battles for freedom are still being waged and I sincerely hope that wherever there is such a struggle for freedom, the India League will be active in its support and that it will be able to enthuse the young people and the old to work as we did in the olden days. All of you here probably know Mr. Krishna Menon and what a tyrant he was to all of us who worked with him. We didn't grudge that because it was by his demanding attitude that we gave more and I think the India League was able to achieve so much. But I hope that today also there will be benevolent tyrants who will expect work and, therefore, get it from an ever-increasing number of people—Indians, Britons and whoever else is living in this country—and feel deeply concerned with the basic problems of humanity.

I am in a bit of a spot here because I had thought this was a meeting primarily for Indian organisations. I shall, therefore, speak to them in Hindi, not because they do not understand English but because it is our language and it is proper that I address them in it. I trust, therefore, that those of you who do not understand Hindi will forgive me if after a while I switch over to Hindi.

I have addressed the Indians here on previous occasions, though in a different part of the city, and I thought of telling them of all that has happened in India since I was last here. All of you are well informed about India and perhaps you have followed in detail the many revolutions which are taking place there peacefully. Things are changing. You know of the difficulties which we face in our party, the Congress party. The situation which arose two years ago was not really a new one. It was a situation which had existed even before Independence. That is, while everybody was united in the struggle for freedom, there were different points of view with regard to what should be done after we had attained freedom—whether we should follow the path of socialism or another path, whether we should remain non-aligned or align ourselves with one bloc or another. These were questions which were perhaps not very hotly debated, nevertheless, many of us had even then committed ourselves to a particular direction because we felt that in the circumstances prevailing in India there could be no other way.

There is no doubt that the Indian people agreed with us, or rather the large majority of them, and whenever there was any resolution passed with regard to socialism, there was a tremendous response from the people. This was a good thing though it has its disadvantages.

Those who disagreed did not come out in the open to say so, and a very strange situation developed where we kept on passing resolutions but we gave the impression to the public that we were not really serious about them and not much was done to take us forward in that direction. There were people who did not approve of my father, or his policy, and towards the end of his life their voices became louder and more insistent. So this was the situation developing in the party and in the country. Perhaps because of this situation and because the Congress was not proceeding along its programme, gradually we were losing ground with the people and in the elections we lost several States.

Two years ago, a situation arose in which decisive action could be taken. When the action was taken, we had no idea what the public response would be—indeed, what the party response would be. It was a personal assessment of what the Indian people wanted and what was good for the future of the party. I have no doubt in my mind that had the party gone on as it was doing, it was doomed to failure and it would just die a lingering and a slow death. But because action could be taken, since the opportunity was given for action, we were able to put new life into the party with the result—as you have all seen—that in the next elections we evoked tremendous enthusiasm amongst all sections of the people and more specially amongst the young people, amongst the minorities and the large majority who are the poorer people of India. We had no doubt that we would win a majority but we certainly were very pleasantly surprised when we saw that the campaign was not a party campaign but became a people's campaign.

As I have said on occasions in India, people, whether they were taxi-drivers and truck-drivers, or whether they were people who make roads—these were the people who came forward and said, "We will look after our area. Your workers need not bother. We will find the finances and we will give the time." Many young people worked all day in their offices or their factories and they gave their nights to us. For a whole month there was a very large number of young people who could hardly have slept more than a couple of hours or so every night. It was purely voluntary work and not even a Mr. Menon was there to see that they sat at their job. This was the atmosphere before the elections and during the elections and, as you all know, we had a rather wonderful victory.

Now, why were these people enthused? First, they were convinced that the Congress was on the move in the right direction. Secondly, they wanted to support the programmes of the Congress which was trying to tackle the problems of poverty on a much more urgent basis. This is not to say that we were not tackling this problem earlier or that in the years since Independence nothing had been done. A great deal had been done. India has achieved quite spectacular results in many of her programmes. But it was true that as we made this econo-

mic progress, disparities were growing in many areas. The programmes brought benefit to the country but quite often the better off in any particular section were able to take better advantage of the programmes. So the time came when we should focus our attention on the poorest and weakest in every section of the people. This is what we began to do and this is why the enthusiasm was aroused amongst the people.

You all know that just before the elections, before the split in the party even, India had gone through a very bad period of drought. It was a period when foreign newspapers started printing headlines such as, "Will India survive? Will democracy survive in India?" We in India are used to a great deal of misunderstanding and criticism. When we were fighting for freedom, the question raised was: "Can freedom be won with non-violence?" We stuck to our path and we proved it could be won by non-violence. Then the question was raised: "Can such a large country with so much illiteracy be democratic?" We proved in our five elections that democracy can work and that democracy has taken deep root in India. Democracy has been an educative process because with every election we see a greater maturity amongst the Indian people. I can't say that everybody votes wisely but if there are people who are misled by propaganda or who consider irrelevant factors in their choice, their number is certainly not larger than similar people in countries where there is much more education and much more affluence.

So this was the situation in India when we gathered together for our new Parliament. We came with high hopes and having raised the hopes of the entire people of India, we had hardly begun thinking of all the programmes that had to be initiated when, after a week, a very big burden fell on us and a very big event took place across our borders. It has disrupted our lives but it is something very much more than that. I find that here in England and in other countries which I have visited, this border situation tends to be considered as a very limited problem, as a problem of refugees. I do not want to say that the refugee problem is a small one—9,000,000 people can never be small, no matter where they are—and certainly to have 9,000,000 extra people at a time when you can ill-afford to look after your own people is not an easy task. But the problem of Bangladesh is not merely the problem of the refugees in India. It is a far deeper problem and one which affects us in many ways. The refugees have highlighted the problem for us in India because they have posed not only a tremendous economic burden, they have created social problems, political problems and, above all, the question of the security, the stability and the integrity of India. We are equally concerned with the tragedy which is taking place outside of our country. Rarely has the world

witnessed the sort of atrocities and barbarities which we hear described by the refugees who are daily pouring in.

At the time when I was working for the India League, our main concern was freedom for India but we were no less concerned about what was happening in Europe, because that was the time when there was the Spanish Civil War, it was a time when Fascism and Nazism were gaining strength in Europe and the India League was rightly concerned with all these movements and all these troubles because we believed that if man's spirit is crushed anywhere that is a defeat for all of mankind.

Today, the problem of Bangladesh is the same. It should be of concern to every human being who believes in freedom, who believes in basic human rights, who believes in democracy. Of course, there can be no democracy unless there are basic human rights. I would not like any of you to think that either I myself, or the Government of India or even the people of India, are in any way against Pakistan or the people of Pakistan. Far from it. We have always wished them well because we believe it is in our interests that in our neighbouring country also there should be peace, stability and progress. We know that just as our major problem is the problem of poverty and disparities, this is also the problem of Pakistan. We are deeply concerned about the welfare of the people there. But we know also that peace and stability, prosperity and progress, can only come when you pay attention to the wants of all your people. In India also, we have areas which are backward, areas which have been neglected, but we are trying our very best to see that the neglect of ages is wiped out now. We know that it cannot be done by magic and neither do the people expect us to do this, but we are taking steps in every area to see that the legitimate grievances of the people should be removed and that the people themselves should be involved in planning and in working out their development programmes. This is what democracy has meant for us—not merely that people have a vote but that they should participate in all the programmes to make democracy work and bring a better life to the people.

Just before we had our elections, there were elections all over Pakistan. We had no contact with any political party there but we had heard from many people that there was a likelihood of the Awami League winning the elections. We had no idea that they would win with such a tremendous majority. I think it was perhaps the biggest majority that any free election has given. But while in our country the result of the election was an automatic one, that a party won and the leader of the party became Prime Minister, across the border the event took a very different, a very tragic and grim turn. I am told that the leaders of Bangladesh were on March 24 given the impression that something was coming out of the talks being held. There was a

possibility of understanding. Later on, of course, it seemed that this type of negotiation was used to bring more troops across the seas and when they were ready with the troops on March 25, the great massacre began. As is perhaps usual in all such conflicts, the brunt of it was borne by the intellectuals. One of the very first attacks was on the University and a large number, I believe over 300 people, were killed on that very first day in the University area—students, professors, etc.

To India came an avalanche or a flood of people such as, I think, the world has not known. India is used to refugees. It is not a new phenomenon for us. We have had people from many different countries over the centuries and it has been our tradition to open our doors to help them to find a new life. But you just cannot keep on doing this all the time. To have millions of people in a few weeks is more than even such a big country like India can manage. We do not have the place, we do not have the money, we do not have the materials. We welcome help from outside but, as I said, if giving help means that people are going to think only of the refugees and forget the main problem, then it will not help the refugees and it will not help India. Of course, it will not help Bangladesh either, because we want the refugees to return and we are fully aware that they cannot possibly return unless first more refugees stop coming. Today they number more than 9,000,000 but every single day we have 30,000 or 40,000 new refugees coming in. The stream has not ended by any means, and each group comes with new stories of horror which are hair-raising.

So the first step is that conditions should be created within East Bengal so that more people do not want to leave their homes and their homeland. Then comes the second step of asking these people to go back. The question is whether this is possible in the conditions which exist today and, obviously, it is not possible, because otherwise they would have stopped. We are told in India that we should accept observers from the United Nations. It does not really make very much difference. Perhaps some of you are not aware that we already have ten of them. We have ten observers from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and they have been there since the very beginning. We have nothing to hide and the border, as well as the camps, are open to all the diplomats who are there in New Delhi, or the consulates in Calcutta. They are open to all the foreign correspondents who visit us time and again. You who are living in England have seen the reports being published in the British newspapers and perhaps you know that similar reports are being published by the American newspapers, by many countries in Europe and other parts of the world. So the version that is coming out is not an Indian version. It is the version of eye-witnesses who have seen these things for themselves. As a matter of fact, most of our information comes from these people. We hardly

have any way of having our own information except from the refugees and those people who come from there.

This is a very grave problem for us. It does not concern merely India—it concerns Asia and it concerns the world. Everybody today is busy telling us that we must show restraint. I do not think that any people or any Government could have shown greater restraint than we have in the face of such tremendous provocation and threat to our safety and to our stability. But where has the restraint taken us? With all our restraint we are not getting any nearer to a solution. On the contrary, the military confrontation, as the other confrontations which I mentioned, political, economic, social, administrative, are steadily getting worse.

People have asked me how long can India manage. Actually that date has long since been passed. I feel that I am sitting on the top of a volcano and I honestly do not know when it is going to erupt. So the question is not of how restrained we are today, but of what will happen across the border. We think this is the responsibility of the international community to see that a way out is found. Obviously, the best way, the most humane way, is to have a political settlement and that political settlement can only be with the elected leader of the people of Bangladesh, and with the elected and accepted representatives of that country.

It seems very strange to us how the situation can be normalised by suddenly declaring that some elected people are no longer there when they are very much in the world. You suddenly say that you are going to have new elections and that new elections are going to solve the problem. They cannot possibly solve the problem. The elections were not considered illegal when they were held, the programme put before the people was well known to the Government and the elections were presided over by the same governmental authority. They had a six-point programme on which they fought the elections and which was supported by the vast majority of the people of both sides of Pakistan. Nobody objected to it. The time to raise an objection was before the elections were fought. They could have said, "Well, we don't approve of this programme, we are not going to accept the six points and, therefore, if you want to fight the elections you will have to re-think." I do not know if it would have been proper, but certainly if any objection had to be raised, that was the time to raise it, not when the programme was accepted. The people thought it was accepted and they voted accordingly.

Today India is faced with a very grave situation. Honestly, I cannot prophesy what will happen or how we can deal with it. I can only see that from day to day the situation is worsening. The crisis is becoming more acute. India is a country which has always stood against war. We have always believed that problems and disputes can

be solved by negotiation and by discussions. But there is such a thing as national interest and we cannot allow our national interest, the interest of the people, of their security and their stability, to suffer. This is the situation. But, as I have said to my people in India, which I would like to repeat to all Indians here, the graver the situation becomes the greater the necessity to be calm and collected and think things out with a cool head. Whatever happens, we must look not only at the near future but at the distant future. We in India will naturally take all those steps which are necessary to secure the sort of future which we have hoped for and worked for before Independence and after Independence.

I want only to say that living at this distance, people see only our faults, our shortcomings, our weaknesses, our quarrels. All these things do exist. We do not want to hide them. We do not hide them. But if you think this is the whole of India, you will be very sadly mistaken. We may have sixteen languages or we may have more languages, that is not important. Each one of those languages serves a population as large as any country in Europe. We do not want regimentation, we do not want uniformity. But the fact remains that under all these fissiparous tendencies, demands, divisions, agitations which are constantly taking place, there is a very strong base of Indian unity. There is also a strong base of self-confidence. Time and again we were told that we could not do something and we have shown that we could do it and we did do it. I spoke to you about our freedom struggle. I spoke to you about democracy. I see that there is a question in 'India Weekly' that India will never be able to feed its growing population. Well, this year 1971, we are fully self-sufficient in food, even though we have paid attention only to wheat and rice. We still have to do a lot of research, we still have to increase production in all kinds of other fields. We were told that planning would not work, and planning certainly has its ups and downs, but it has given us direction. In the last elections, the confidence of the people has given a new coherence and a new strength to the country. Today, it is true that we are facing tremendous problems, tremendous burdens,-but do not think that we are disheartened, do not think that we are discouraged. We are full of courage, full of self-confidence, and we know that we have the endurance to bear the burden however heavy. We welcome help, we want your support and your sympathy, but we are not dependent on anybody's help or sympathy.

There is another question asked about why we turn to Russians and not to Americans. Quite honestly, we have not turned to anybody. If help is offered, we are not going to say we do not want it. We shall take it from wherever it is offered provided that it is in our national interest. The overriding consideration is what is in the national interest. Economic progress and growth, the lessening of poverty and disparity are important. But, there is something which is more important, and

that is our freedom. We are taking only that help which does not cast any shadow on our freedom. We have always believed in being friends with countries and we shall continue to believe in that and work for it, but, as I said, the overriding consideration must be what is in our national interest, and we shall always work for that.

Of course, we believe that our national interest is not confined to India. As I said, we believe that freedom is indivisible, peace is indivisible, prosperity and progress are indivisible. Therefore, we are concerned with the freedom struggles all over the world. We have spoken out always against any kind of oppression and any action which has diminished the human spirit. The India League has stood for certain high ideals. So does India stand for the same ideals and we shall fight for them, we shall work for them, and I have no doubt that we shall win through, because we all know from experience that in any struggle men are killed, hurt, wounded, crushed but the spirit or the idea of freedom, of equality, has never been crushed. The spark has always been there and it has always won through in the end.

This is the hope, this is the faith which keeps mankind alive and progressive. If we once lose faith, I think man will not be man as we know him. I hope that day will never come.

May I thank you all for your kind attention and the India League for giving me this opportunity of saying a few words? Through our long history, Britain and India have faced many difficulties under different situations but today is a time for reassessment, to have a more rational approach towards each other. I think the days of colonialism are long since dead. We might have had some relationship before, but today we have to see each other as two countries which stand for the ideals of freedom and democracy and the rights of man—and of woman.

Seeking Deeper Understanding

IT IS A PLEASURE to be in Washington and to meet you, Mr. President and Mrs. Nixon, once again. I am grateful for your invitation which has made this visit possible.

It has not been easy to get away at a time when India is beleaguered. To the natural calamities of drought, flood and cyclone has been added a man-made tragedy of vast proportions. I am haunted by the tormented faces in our over-crowded refugee camps reflecting the grim events which have compelled the exodus of these millions from East Bengal.

Reply to U. S. welcome, Washington, November 1971

I have come here looking for a deeper understanding of the situation in our part of the world, in search of some wise impulse which, as history tells us, has sometimes worked to save humanity from despair.

I look forward to our discussions. I have no doubt that they will lead to strengthening of friendship and understanding between our two nations and to a lighting of our path as we work together for peace in Asia and the world.

We share a community of ideals and there is no real conflict of interests between us. Our people value your friendship. They have great admiration for the spirit of quest of the American people and for their desire to reach beyond the immediate. I bring the greetings of India to you and to the warm-hearted people of the United States.

And I fully and sincerely reciprocate the desire which you expressed that the sun may always shine on our friendship and that we may always work for those ideals which our people and countries have cherished through these years.

* * *

THIS ROOM IS indeed full of history, as indeed is this house in which we are today. This house has been the home of many great men whose ideas and actions have influenced events far beyond the boundaries of the United States.

I remember how thrilled I felt as a small girl, when my father first introduced me to the stirring words of Jefferson and Lincoln. Much has happened in the world since those days. There have been many ups and many downs. But certain ideas and certain ideals have held people together.

I think, although there is so much difference between your country and mine, although many miles of land and ocean separate us, there is also much in common between our two peoples. We are both large societies, composed of diverse ethnic elements, proud of our regional diversity, resentful of imposed uniformity. Our peoples are friendly and generous, wanting to be liked, quick to give expression to their feelings, and equally ready to forgive.

Naturally, there have been differences of assessment and emphasis. And since our people and our legislatures live by speaking out, there have been moments of awkward candour. But let us also remember that in both our societies the most forthright critics are within ourselves.

I think that a functioning democracy converts this weakness into strength. During our Fifth General Election last March, to which you referred so generously, Mr. President, our people demonstrated the

Speech at Washington banquet, November 4, 1971

ability of the democratic process to find answers to national problems. They gave the nation a clear and coherent sense of direction, of renewed self-confidence in and a fresh impetus to our long struggle against poverty.

The instability of the 1960's which had enervated our growth was overcome. Our plans have benefited by the long range capital assistance and food aid so generously given by your country. Foreign aid is important because of its direct economic contribution and also as a symbol of the involvement of advanced nations, and more specially of the United States, in the developing world. But the effort in the progress of our country is overwhelmingly and increasingly that of the labour and sacrifice of our own people.

Today we are self-sufficient in foodgrains. Net foreign credits constitute a small but useful part of our resources. All this was achieved not easily. And though we have smiled through these years, you know, Mr. President, how very difficult they were for India.

There was the drought during which many people thought we just would not survive. But it was that very time that we utilised to introduce our new agricultural strategy which today has made us self-sufficient.

You spoke of our elections. They were not easily won. I was telling Mrs. Nixon just now that we had a very short time at our disposal because we decided to hold the elections a year and a quarter earlier than we need have because we were just tired of people telling us : "You are the minority government. You have no right to do this and you have no right to do that." We said : "All right, let's have elections." In 43 days I travelled 36,000 miles. I had 375 meetings, all with over 100,000 people, some with 200,000 or 250,000. This was one person's effort, but it also naturally needed the efforts of hundreds of thousands of other people. Why we won the election was not merely because of our effort, but because we were able to convince the people who are in a majority, the poor people, the smaller business men, the smaller farmers, those who had been under-privileged, the minorities, and, above all, the young people of all classes, that we had something to offer which others did not.

So, the campaign became not a campaign of a political party, but a campaign of the people. I don't know what happens in the United States, but not all of our workers were equally enthusiastic about all our candidates. (President Nixon : "It is the same"). In some places naturally we thought we had the best candidate. In some places we sometimes didn't, for various reasons. But there were many places where we thought we would not win because there was no co-operation between the candidate and those who were supposed to make him win. But this is where the people came to the fore and said : "If this is a candidate belonging to Mrs. Gandhi's party, we will make him win,

whether the party wants him or not, or anybody else wants him or not." This is how we won these elections.

We had met in the new Parliament for only a week and like all politicians we were still busy patting each other on the back and congratulating one another, when suddenly our entire world changed. What seemed to be a part of sunlight, just waiting for us to go ahead and solve the problems which remained, was covered with a very large dark shadow. And without warning, a major crisis erupted across our frontiers and well nigh engulfed us, seriously threatening our hard-earned stability.

What has happened is now part of contemporary history. I shall not dwell on it, but may I recall the sheer magnitude of the problem? Can you think of the entire population of Michigan State suddenly converging on to New York State? Imagine the strain on space, on the administration, on services such as health and communications, on resources such as food and money and this not in condition of affluence, but in a country already battling with problems of poverty and population.

We are paying the price of our traditions of an open society. Of all peoples, surely those of the United States should understand this. Has not your own society been built of people who have fled from social and economic injustices? Have not your doors always been open?

Every nation must bear its own cross. Our people have faced this challenge with exemplary unity, self-reliance, and self-restraint. But from neighbours far and near, and from others who value and uphold democratic principles, we expect understanding and, may I add, a certain measure of support.

None of our friends, and especially not those who share common ideals, would expect us to abandon our long cherished democratic principles. If today we are best with economic uncertainly and faced with the grave threat to our stability and security, it is because our democratic code and geographic proximity have made us the inevitable refuge of millions of helpless victims of medieval tyranny.

The circumstances did not allow an analysis of the consequences to our own economy and our society. Our administration, already strained to meet the rising demands of our vast population, is stretched to the limit in looking after nine million refugees, all citizens of another country. Food stocks built against drought are being used up. Limited resources scraped together for sorely needed development works are being depleted.

The occasion is too serious for the scoring of propaganda points. Our people cannot understand how it is that we who are the victims, we who are bearing the brunt and have restrained ourselves with such fortitude, should be equated with those whose actions have caused the tragedy.

There is no foretelling how far-reaching will be its consequences. It is for the international community to try to remove the root cause of the trouble. India will not be found wanting in generous responses.

In the meantime, I cannot avoid the responsibility or my duty to safeguard the future of our people.

Mr. President, we are with you in your faith in freedom and democracy. The size of my country and the complex situations which confront us have led to many prophesies of despair. But India, like the United States, has the great resilience which is born of a free society, and out of the very crisis emerge solutions and new resources of energy.

Mr. President you have evoked admiration all over the world for the imaginative manner in which you have taken bold decisions. I am sure that having a First Lady of such grace and charm is a source of strength to you.

This morning you spoke of sunshine, and indeed it was a very beautiful day. I don't know whether you were responsible for it or whether I was, because in India I do have the reputation of bringing the weather the people want. Usually, of course, it is rain, it is not sunshine at all, because our crops need rain, and even in the driest of the drought days, when I went somewhere it always rained, not enough to make any difference to anybody, but just two or three drops to say : "Well, I was there :" So, perhaps I had something do with the sunshine !

But while that sunshine naturally added to the beauty of your very lovely garden and house and the view we have from here, you referred to another sunshine, a deeper kind, which you hoped would light our friendship and give it a greater meaning and purpose.

So, when you mentioned sunlight, something rang a bell in my mind but I could not think of the words immediately. Then it did come back to me later on. In one of our Vedas, which is the earliest existing literature in the world, I found this little quotation : "As the lotus gets its radiance with the rise of the sun, in the same way the thoughts of friends are auspicious and bring prosperity."

So let us hope the words of friends which have been spoken in this room will bring prosperity. Of course your country is already very prosperous, but we hope that this prosperity will be shared with those who have not got it, and that you will also move to another kind of prosperity, shall I say, receptivity which enables people to enjoy prosperity. You have the material prosperity. We find in many countries there is prosperity, but somehow people are not enjoying it. They are looking for something else, but they don't know what they are looking for.

I sincerely share that wish, not only as a person, but on behalf of the Government and, indeed, the entire people of India who have very great admiration and friendship for the people of the United States.

I have said how much our people were inspired during our freedom struggle by the words of great Americans, and afterwards also by the many deeds of your scientists and others to add to the world's knowledge and progress.

In India, although many of us think forward into the future, when we want something to say, we invariably look back into the past. There is always some word or sentence written thousands of years ago that could very well have been written today. There are some timeless parts of our history (as I am sure you have in America) and some great ideals, which we would like to keep no matter what other progress there is, what other advances mankind makes.

So it is important to have things, but just as important to know how to enjoy them, and how, through them, to share the enjoyment with others.

I would like to thank you once again for your invitation which has made my visit possible and given me the opportunity of having very useful and interesting talks with you, Mr. President, and tomorrow, I hope, with some others, and of being present at this very gracious function in this lovely room with so many distinguished people.

May I ask you all to join me in a toast to the health of the President and the gracious First Lady, to the future of the great people of the United States, and to friendship between our two countries?

Situation in Bangladesh

QUESTION : When you went to Washington you said you were searching for deeper understanding of the situation in your part of the world. Did you find that deeper understanding, particularly among American officials?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I would say there is a greater understanding since I have come than there was perhaps before I came about the situation which exists in India, which as you know is a pretty serious one.

Text of "Meet the Press" programme on NBC-TV, New York, November 7, 1971

QUESTION : You speak of a greater understanding which does not quite extend to deeper, I gather. What was it specifically you wanted from the United States to demonstrate that deeper understanding that you sought ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The situation is so complex that it is very difficult to say what any particular country or Government or person can do. We can only say that we can give our assessment of what is happening and we see it as a real threat to Indian democracy and Indian stability. And we in India feel that if what we have gained over the years in order to make this ancient country a modern one and make it stronger in every way, if that is jeopardised even to a small extent the consequences to world peace will be grave.

QUESTION : You speak of this threat to Indian democracy, 'consequences to world peace', 'the situation is very serious', which emphasises what we have been reading about in the press. Do you mean to say the United States offered you nothing to try to avert such a catastrophe, which could only rebound to this country ? Or did the United States suggest some plan of action which you felt you could not accept ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No plan of action has been suggested to us. I think that there is a sincere attempt to try and solve it but I don't know whether there is, you know, full understanding of the situation in the sense that in the Western countries—not only in the U.S. but the entire West—there is an effort always to equate.

QUESTION : I think the biggest question on anybody's mind is the danger of war between India and Pakistan. What is your assessment about how close the danger is now ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is very difficult to say. We have been drawing the world's attention to this question because we knew that it might escalate to this when the refugees started pouring in and very chaotic conditions began in East Bengal. Now of course the threat is not merely in the East, but the armies are drawn up facing each other on our Western borders as well.

India has always been against war and we feel deeply on the subject of world peace. We have stood for total disarmament in all the world forums. But we just do not know what to do in these circumstances. The Pakistani army was brought on the Western border a full week or ten days before we made any move. But we found that this did not agitate the world conscience, and the reply the Pakistanis gave to the U.N. observer who drew their attention to this move was that they were merely doing exercises for training purposes. Now obviously this was not a very believable reply, and therefore, we were forced to move up our troops also, and this is where the situation is today.

QUESTION : Well, if you have troops on either side in such power, very often there's danger of an accidental war, a war the people don't really plan. There are some people who feel it would be beneficial in avoiding an accidental war, to have more U.N. observers of some kind on either side. I know you haven't been enthusiastic about this and I wonder if you would tell us why.

THE PRIME MINISTER : There are two parts to the question, because there are U.N. observers on the Western border under the ceasefire agreement with Pakistan over Kashmir, as you know. So, I don't think the proposal today is to have more U.N. observers on that frontier. The proposal is to have them on the Eastern border. There also we have about ten observers or representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Mr. Sadruddin Khan, who is the Commissioner, has either arrived in India or is due to arrive in a day or two.

We don't object to more people, because you know we have a very open society : some people think too open. You press correspondents, radio people, television people, have been on the border, in the camps, across the border; so have newspaper people, parliamentary delegations, diplomats from many different countries of Asia, Europe and America been to this area. So we are not hiding anything. But we do feel strongly that at this moment no useful purpose will be served by more people going than are already there, as I told you.

The first step is to have more peaceful conditions within East Bengal, which would prevent a further influx of refugees, because more refugees are coming in every single day. So that is the first step.

Now to say that they are going to watch the situation from our side of the border, we honestly don't see what purpose can be served, and the harm that is done is that the world's attention is diverted from the real basic issues involved and an attempt to show that it is an Indo-Pak dispute, which it is not. The dispute is between the military regime of West Pakistan and the people and elected representatives of East Bengal. India comes in because of the influx of the refugees, the acts of sabotage which are taking place on our side by people who have come in either disguised as refugees or in some other way. And, as I said, we believe there is real danger to us.

QUESTION : Last April in our interview in New Delhi you made the statement that the demand for independence currently being made by the East Pakistan movement would not have arisen if President Yahya Khan of Pakistan had made more concessions in the negotiations before the fighting started there. You seem to have the idea that some sort of a loose connection between the two wings of Pakistan might still be possible, and some political settlement based on autonomy for East Bengal might be possible. Do you feel that now a political settlement

is still possible or is full independence achieved through guerilla war the only answer ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Anything is possible which is accepted by the people of East Bengal. I don't think we have a right to say that they should accept something or not. It is their country, it is their movement and they must take the final decision.

QUESTION : How long do you think it would take them to win their independence militarily if the United States were not to give further military or economic aid to West Pakistan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think it is possible to give a date, but from the news we get the guerilla activities are being stepped up, and not at all near our borders but in the heart of the most fortified, the most strongly guarded of the cities in East Bengal such as the capital city, Dacca, for instance.

QUESTION : There is a lingering suspicion in this country and elsewhere that India is engaged in a diabolical scheme to weaken and ultimately decimate Pakistan. Now apart from the assistance and the shelter that has been given to the refugees can you cite some specific gestures or actions taken by your Government to dispel that suspicion ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : This is something which the Government of Pakistan has been saying from the very beginning, all these 24 years. But what has been the actual experience ? It is that it is Pakistan who is training our tribal people, whether the Mizos or the Nagas, arming them; it was Pakistan who sent thousands of infiltrators into Kashmir, which provoked the conflict in 1965. And you have only to see the speeches now made on radio and other means, which are very threatening and provocative. India has made no such declaration, and I can assure you that the Government of India, and I would say the majority of the people of India, have no such desire. We are not against Pakistan and we have only the friendliest of feelings for the people of Pakistan. And we think it is tragic that Pakistan should feel it necessary for their unity and survival to imagine a constant confrontation with India.

QUESTION : You have just said that you think there is a greater understanding now within the Nixon Administration about the situation in the sub-continent. But what would be the reaction in India if this greater understanding is not translated into some concrete, meaningful action as has been suggested by you ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are a very balanced people. You have noticed that we have had conflicts—for instance, with China. But we have remained very restrained and balanced, and we have stuck to our

basic policy. We shall be unhappy if the U.S. does anything which is what we consider against Indian interests, but we shall not lose our heads over it.

QUESTION : Obviously you think there is a solution to this very serious problem, and we seem unable to find the solution, and the U.N. seems unable to find the solution. What is the solution that you propose ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The solution which we had proposed earlier, and I think the only valid one today, is that some talks should be held with the acknowledged leader of the people of East Bengal, who is Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. While I have been here reference has been made to the tremendous victory, the majority that I won in the last elections in India, but if I may say so, Sheikh Mujibur's majority was even greater than mine. His elections were held in far more adverse conditions, that is, under the present military regime. His programme for the elections, his campaign, was put squarely and honestly before the Government and the people. It is on the basis of that that he won this tremendous victory.

Now you suddenly say that, well, he is a traitor. He did not ask for independence, by the way, it was just a limited autonomy, trade with India, and some points like that. The Government of Pakistan in its wisdom, or unwisdom, whichever you would like to call it, arrested him and declared him a traitor. They are trying to hold re-elections for the seats where the members still exist. They are there. And what has shocked us is that I think about 55 people have been declared elected, unopposed, to these very seats where a fair and free election was held, and it seems a strange thing to have an election and then send out, force people who have been elected against you, out of the country. It is a diabolical, the word which one of your colleagues used, way of solving one's problems, of just sending those who are opposed to one out of the country.

QUESTION : And are we to understand from what you say that you consider that the only solution to the problem ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Yes, because how else will you know what they will accept ? And if they do not accept a solution, whether I think it is right or you think it is right, the conflict will continue, because the conflict is theirs, the movement, the struggle is theirs.

QUESTION : Isn't that an internal problem, though ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is. We have said it is an internal problem, but it is overflowing into India. It is affecting our country—not is, but has. It is creating political-social tension and, as I said, the most serious of all is we think our security is threatened.

QUESTION : Many people wonder why, when the situation is so tense and there's threat of a major war there, India has not been willing to accept the good offices of someone like U Thant or anybody else, or negotiate directly with President Yahya Khan ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are not negotiating directly for the very simple reason that the problem is not one between India and Pakistan. It is between the military regime of Pakistan and the people of East Bengal, the elected leaders, representatives of those people. So far as U Thant is concerned, he is always welcome, but we should be clear as to what can be achieved, what the U.N. wants to achieve. It was we who drew his attention to this question first, and we were not able to move anybody here. Now they want to come on what seems to us President Yahya Khan's terms.

QUESTION : Well, if the situation continues there is some fear, and perhaps you even share it, that the big powers could become involved. India has made its first defence pact with the Soviet Union; the political leader of Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto, has just gone to Peking, obviously to get some help, because President Yahya Khan has said that he can turn to Peking. Now what is going to happen here ? Are the big powers going to become involved or is there some way to avoid a clash among the big powers ? Did President Nixon say that he would take this up in Peking and Moscow when he visits those two capitals ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think that such a definite statement was made. But he did say that he was very anxious that a conflict should be avoided and that other people should not be involved. We, as I said earlier, are against the whole concept of war, and we would not like to do anything which would provoke a war. But to any country something is always more important. We have fought for many years for our freedom, and we are not going to see that freedom threatened by no matter who. We have not signed a defence pact with the Soviet Union, it is merely a Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace. We can have discussions with them but it is not a military treaty in any sense of the word.

QUESTION : How do you then account for Article 9, which says that in the event of threat to either country there would be consultation on the kind of measures to be taken ? Is not that a defence treaty ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : It is not a defence treaty in the sense that, well, immediately it is decided that we will have military help from them or not; I mean, whatever we now have got from them is all in the normal course which we would have taken from any country, and which had been agreed to earlier. We certainly hope that should we be in trouble not only the Soviet Union but other countries also will like to help us.

QUESTION : You made a reference to China a moment ago. Although your country does not want war, the fact is that about ten years ago you had a war with China and suffered, I believe, a rather bad defeat. Are you still concerned about the Chinese military presence ? Do you feel that this represents a continuing threat to India ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think the Chinese attitude towards the world has changed, and I personally feel that they may not want now to be involved in any such conflict. But of course it is very difficult to prophesy so far as they are concerned.

QUESTION : Has that lessened your military problems ? Do you feel that you have to keep a lesser or less powerful watch in some areas ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, I think we have to keep a very vigilant attitude on all our frontiers.

QUESTION : You have been accused of applying a double standard towards the West Pakistan problem and the problem of Kashmir. On the one hand you—that accusation has been made by the Kashmir political leader, Sheikh Abdullah—criticise Pakistan for keeping the Bengali leaders in prison, such as Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; on the other hand, you have restricted the movements of Sheikh Abdullah. He has not been permitted to go to Kashmir for the past nine months, and he was not permitted to take part in the elections in Kashmir. Why are you restricting his movements ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Firstly, I wonder whether you see no difference between the sort of massacre, the suppression of democratic rights, the rape of women, the killing of the students of University faculty, the driving out of millions of citizens of East Bengal onto our territory; do you see no difference between that and a very peaceful Kashmir where today there is free education, there is progress in every field, and there is an elected Government ? It is true that we have some restriction on Sheikh Abdullah, but he is a free man. He can go anywhere he likes except to Kashmir. And that is because it is peaceful there and naturally at such moment which is politically so sensitive now with the present security problem, at Centre, we can't risk any kind of trouble there.

QUESTION : If the U.S. does halt all military supplies and economic assistance to Pakistan what would be the immediate consequences in the context of the political solution that you believe might be helpful ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : You mean if they don't urge talks with Sheikh Mujibur or some elected representative ?

QUESTION : Well, no. What I mean is if there is no military aid given to Pakistan what would be the situation in terms of the solution ? Do

you think it would force President Yahya Khan to move into talks with Sheikh Mujibur ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, I certainly think that the U.S. and some of the other big powers are in a position to persuade with this problem in the East.

QUESTION : Madam Prime Minister, the charge has been made in this country, by our press at least, that India gives sanctuary and arms and training to the liberation forces, and has even provided artillery and mortar fire for the Bengali guerillas. What is your answer to that charge ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, quite frankly, we do support the people of East Bengal in their struggle. As I have said earlier, they did not ask for independence or secession. They function in a democratic way as they were asked to function. They were asked to vote honestly and openly and this is what they did, and now they are being punished for that.

Even then we did not interfere until this movement of guerillas grew on its own. Perhaps you know that it is based on the para-military forces belonging to East Bengal; that is, the East Bengal Rifles and the East Pakistan Regiment. This is the basis of the movement. It is they who are training the young people, etc. They may be coming into Indian territory. I think they do sometimes. But they are not entirely based in India. The guerilla activities are all over East Bengal, quite far from the Indian borders; so obviously they have the most tremendous and single-minded support of the entire people of East Bengal, in spite of the retaliation on their villages by the army.

India and France

I AM TOUCHED by your kind words and I thank you—and through you France—for the hospitality and friendliness. A year ago, I came in haste and in sorrow to attend the memorial service for General de Gaulle. He was a man of great stature, who embodied the honour of France at a time of trial. We in India respect and salute him.

We all have deep feelings for France. France, like India, is more than a country—it is an idea. Throughout history, your nation and mine have known triumphs and tragedies but have always tried to maintain certain values of civilisation. In the last few centuries, the world owes much to the creative spirit of the French people—in art

Speech at Paris luncheon, November 8, 1971

and science, philosophy and literature and politics. France has taught us that liberty is the goal and condition of man's life, and law and logic the means to progress. Nowhere are the issues of man's fate more poignantly and passionately discussed than in your country. France has not been content to seek its glory at the cost of the good of man.

The achievement of Indian civilisation is its persistence over thirty centuries. This survival has been possible because of tolerance, the power of assimilation and the belief that the values of life are more important than power and position.

After many vicissitudes we are once again in the mainstream of history. We are engaged in overcoming the stagnancy perpetuated by years of feudalism and colonial rule when we were deprived of industrial, technological and social change. The results achieved in a democratic society may appear less impressive than those of a controlled society because of voices of dissent and discontent, and the absence of organised propaganda. Yet we believe that democracy is the surer and more effective method, for it gives strength to the people.

Freedom arouses expectations, and democracy encourages competition. The first gains in development have produced new tensions. People sometimes take advantage of smaller loyalties to region and religion which abound in a vast and varied country such as ours. We are trying to lessen the disparities between different sections and to give greater opportunities to the small man. We have many minorities. They enjoy full rights as minorities and as citizens.

We would certainly like our society to benefit from technology, but we do not want to be imprisoned by technological structures. We have no wish to re-enact the experiences of the West. Our national personality must evolve in its own way. Increasing material affluence does not seem to have satisfied man's deepest yearnings. Society must be imbued with the values which will enable man to find fulfilment and to enjoy his world.

This is the principle which has been guiding our endeavours. It is not easy to transform the old order without revolution, or to mould a diverse people into a modern nation on a rational basis without recourse to compulsion. The task is too vast to attempt superficial unity which comes of fanatic appeal to religion or dogma. In this quarter of a century, a rational democratic process has been established.

We have always viewed Indian problems in the larger perspective of international peace. To us, the Cold War seemed to be distracting attention from the major problems of the world and encouraging confrontation rather than co-operation. It was inevitable that the assumptions of the Cold War could not pass the test of time. We welcome the detente in Europe. We are glad that China has at long last

been admitted into the U.N. and that the United States and China are beginning a dialogue. In this period, France has displayed foresight and statesmanship of the highest order.

Thus, there was every reason to expect evolution towards a peaceful world and, naturally, of India. Our last General Election created the conditions of political stability which would enable more rapid economic advance.

However, within a week of the formation of the new government, without warning and without volition on our part, a tremendous new burden fell upon us. Over 9 million people of East Bengal—more or less equal to the population of Belgium or Austria—terrorised and persecuted by the military rulers of Pakistan, have been pushed inside our territory, jeopardising our normal life and our plans for the future. Should the world not take note of this new kind of aggression? This is not a civil war in the normal sense of the word. It is genocidal punishment of civilians for having voted democratically. It is cynical use of helpless human beings as a weapon against a neighbour nation. Loyalty cannot be commanded by force. The spirit of man, his yearning for freedom and human dignity, cannot be extinguished by repression.

We in India have shown the greatest self-restraint. But there is no doubt that our stability and security are threatened. Indeed we feel the threat is to the peace of the entire region. The basic cause of this crisis must be remedied. A political solution must be found and to be effective it must be acceptable to the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh.

Permettez moi M. le Preésident de dire quelques mots en francais Le monde est aujourd 'hui conscient de la nécessité de préserver la beauté de l'environnement, qu'il soit naturel ou créé par 1 'homme. Mais n'est-il pas plus nécessaire de préserver les nobles valeurs et les idéáux qui ont inspiré la 1 'humanité et qui ont permis á 1 'homme de monter vers les sommets.

Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs, Je léve mon verre á la santé de Monsieur le Président de la République et de Madame Pompidou, et á l' amitie' entire la France-et l' Inde.

Indo-German Friendship

MAY I THANK you first of all for inviting me to Germany, giving me the opportunity of meeting so many interesting people and having valu-

Speech at Bonn banquet, November 10, 1971

able talks with you and, last but not least, for the kind words you have said just now?

In the last few days the world has showered good wishes and praise upon you. We in India have always had high admiration for your courage and your vision. We have welcomed your efforts to erase old prejudices and suspicions amongst nations and to usher in a forward-looking period in which nations could think and work together for peace. The award of the Nobel Prize to you is a symbol of the value which people of all countries attach to the success of your mission. May I once again give you the greetings of the people of India?

Between Germany and India there is an old bond of friendship and goodwill, which was fashioned first by poets and scholars; in recent years, it has widened into friendship between the two peoples. We have always admired Germany's tremendous energy and in the last two-and-a-half decades we have watched the miraculous manner in which the Federal Republic has recovered from the ravages of war and has been working for the establishment of a new temper in Europe and in the world.

In the midst of your preoccupations you have not forgotten the struggles of the peoples of Asia and Africa to build a better life. India is dotted with projects which bear testimony to your sympathy and support to the great task of our development. You have helped us in steel, you have helped us in giving technological training to our people and, perhaps most important, you have helped us through your agricultural projects in India. Many Indians have become more efficient workers because of the training they have received in Germany or in institutions aided by Germany.

The changes taking place in this part of the world have aroused interest. It is important for us to keep in touch with these developments. This was one of the reasons why I was anxious to undertake this visit in spite of the present difficulties which we face in India; and also because I felt that had I not gone away, perhaps the difficulties would have increased, for people would have thought the situation was far more serious.

It does seem a little ironic to us in India that Europe, which was a scene of conflict not so long ago, should have an easing of tensions while in Asia two conflicts are continuing and a third is threatening. Our former President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, used to say that to be an Indian is not merely to have an Indian nationality, but it is in the way you think, in the things in which you believe that the quality of Indianness consists. And one of the things about which we have thought through the ages is peace. And we have defined peace not merely as the absence of conflict, but a positive approach and effort to promote co-operation. How well the lemon-groves grow depends upon how well the gardeners work. Peace is a call for never-ending exertion to achieve

the good, not of a limited area but of all human beings, indeed of all that is in creation.

You were telling me just now, Mr. Chancellor, that when you were recently not very well, you did a great deal of reading. I had thought when I became Prime Minister that the things that I would miss most would be books. But strangely enough I find that the busier I am, the more time there is; and, I think, perhaps I read more during the elections than I have for some years before—mostly, of course, in planes, helicopters, trains and cars.

And one of the books I read during this period was a book on philosophy by one of our known philosopher speakers, Swami Ranganathananda. He sent me one of his books, just as I was leaving my house to preside over a function for the book's release. I opened the book and by chance it opened on a page which has a quotation from Schopenhauer. It is something that could have been written today : "All men who are secure from want and care, now that at last they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves."

I do not think this is entirely true yet: but many people think that it may be so. They feel that the great affluence of the world is not leading to greater satisfaction; and, in fact, I have found in my travels that although at no time has there been greater security and opportunity for young people, perhaps at no time has there been greater restlessness among the young. And this is a problem, which we as a developing country seem to share with the affluent and developed countries. So the question naturally arises in our minds and in theirs as to what the answer is—whether we can contribute to finding an answer.

We in India have always believed that these things can be found by searching together in partnership and in co-operation. And this is part of my search as Prime Minister and also as just a very small part of the human race.

In the same book and in fact on the same page there was another quotation, an older one still, from one of our ancient scriptures, the *Upanishads,* and that is on the same lines, but in totally different 'Indian' words perhaps. But it is interesting to see the words that were used so very long ago and yet again are so apt today. And this says that "Man may through his skill roll up the sky like a piece of leather, yet there will be no end to his suffering unless he finds the Luminous One within." This is a private quest. It is also, I think, today a public quest. I think that all those who are working for peace are leading the way to this goal. It is only by taking the first steps, deciding what is in common—on what we can agree as a beginning, that I think we shall find that the area of agreement can grow, and, therefore, the area of peace and understanding and friendship can also grow.

I think, Mr. Chancellor, that you have made a beginning in this direction and that is what all of us have welcomed and we wish you all success in it.

May I ask you all to drink to the health of the Chancellor, to the happiness of the people of Germany, and to the friendship between our two countries, Germany and India?

* * *

IT IS INDEED a privilege for me to have this opportunity of saying a few words to you on my country.

When one talks about India, it is difficult to know where to start, where to end and what to say in the middle, because it is a very large country, not merely by its size or population or area but because it is a land of many contradictions. We find that foreign newspapers are more anxious to pick up something that may seem strange to their own people than trying to give a picture in perspective. How every country develops, how it makes its plans, how it thinks is dependent on its geography and also on its history. These are the influences which shape any country and any people.

There are some ideas which are held in the West to which we do not subscribe. For instance, most people think that unity can only be based on uniformity. We do not subscribe to this. We find that our diversity strengthens our unity, because within the unity people have far greater room for their local loyalties, their local customs and so on, whereas if everybody is under one cultural pattern, I think, there always will be some strain within it.

Similarly, people are apt to say that stability is synonymous with the *status quo.* Now we all know that the world has been changing all along. Natural landscape has changed and human beings have changed, because of various technological and other developments. These changes are much faster today, not just in technology or science but in the human minds and the attitude of human beings. If we hang on to the *status quo,* it will give way and it will break perhaps violently. Whereas if we ask ourselves how to meet the changes, then there is greater possibility of stability.

There are two basic principles with which our democracy functions; socialism on the one hand and what we call secularism on the other. Secularism does not mean that we do not believe in religion. It means that the state does not have a religion. The state gives equal honour and respect to all the religions of India. Each person is free to practise his or her religion but we try to see that religion does not come into politics or the economics of the country. Because we have many religions, it is very important that there should be this view, otherwise

Speech at German Society for Foreign Policy, Bonn, November 11, 1971

there would be tensions. While the vast majority of the population are Hindus, we have very sizable minorities. For instance, the Muslims form 60 million. We have about 15 million Christians—Catholics and Protestants—and then there are smaller numbers of Buddhists, Sikhs and various other religions, followers of Zoroastrianism and so on. Without this kind of approach we would not be able to give these large minorities a feeling that they have a place in the country and opportunity to live and to work.

This does not mean that we never have troubles. We have had troubles. But the Government has always taken very firm action whenever any such tension has erupted, and when it has erupted it is not primarily because of religion. Strange though this may sound, it is because some people are trying to take political advantage of various situations which arise. For instance, suppose you say to the Hindus : "Well, you are a majority, but why should this Muslim have a big job here ?" The people get a little unsettled, and this is how we have some of these troubles. But we have been able to control them, and I have no doubt that as the economy advances and strengthens, this situation will also be much more stable.

As for socialism, we do not have any kind of dogma. Socialism is the word which is nearest to what we want to do. And what we want to do is to lessen the disparities which exist between the different sections of the people. This is an ideal but it is also extremely practical and necessary for the stability and for the progress of the country. When there is such a very deep, very wide-ranging poverty, unless the poor people feel that the future is being planned with them in mind, why should they subscribe to the democratic process or why should they want to participate in what is happening? We have been able to give them the impression. I say very honestly : "The problem of poverty is far too deep and wide for it to be removed by magic. I cannot do it, my party cannot do it, nor can anybody else or any other party do it. We can solve it if we go step by step in the right direction and if we have the support of the people in the measures which we take." Many of the steps, even though they are in the interest of the people, cause hardships. Because any change, even if it is a good change, dislocates somebody or the other, some industry or local customs or something and, therefore, there will always be some groups against it. Even though they may support the policy as a whole, they are against the practical steps that are being taken to implement the policy.

We see this in regard to land reforms, for instance. As a general rule our party supports land reforms, but we do find that when it come to implementing it and when important people are touched, well, there is difficulty in that area. So with all our problems. But today, the Indian people will not support any policy or any programme which is not going towards a lessening of disparities and helping the poorer

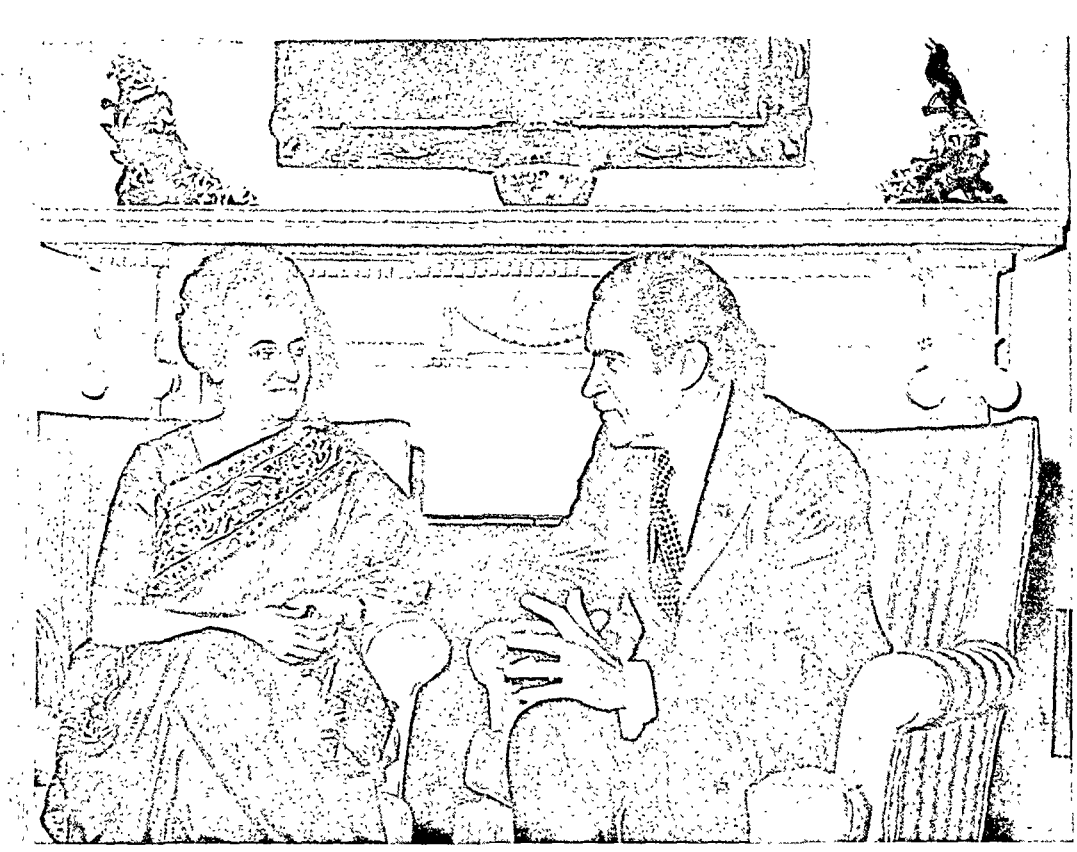
people. We do not want to be violent with those who are better off or even take away what they have. We merely say that in future we will curb their further development. For instance, there are a few families who have all the economic wealth of India. Now if we say that they can continue—and obviously they are in the best position to expand their industries or their economic influence—then there is that much less for other people. So we have certain controls. We have a certain licensing policy, which does not take away from them but prevents their further growth. We are trying to get more and more of the younger people interested in industry. We are trying to see that new industry is spread out into areas which so far have been very backward and which do not have these opportunities.

Democracy at one time meant merely people voting once in five years. We have voting not only for Parliament but we have voting for the state assemblies which have their own governments. There are certain subjects which are state subjects and a few subjects which are federal subjects, as you would say. Besides this we have elected village councils which decide about development programmes or other problems relating to the village or the district area. And perhaps some of the ladies who are present here will be interested to know that even in these village councils where the people are largely uneducated and even, I would say, a majority of them illiterate, even there we have women taking an active part. They are elected to these councils and they are chairmen of these councils. And there are at least three councils to my knowledge in which there is not a single man member. They are all women.

This gives you a bird's eye-view of our democracy. But our people are not content to vote. They want to participate. They want to have a say in what is happening. And we are trying to give them a bigger say in every sphere of activity. Naturally it cannot be done all at once. But I think that they feel that we are now going in the right direction.

There is a fear in Germany and in some of the other countries which I visited that perhaps we want to nationalise everything. We do not wish to nationalise industry merely for the sake of nationalisation. We nationalised the banks, but we did not nationalise the foreign banks. And we only nationalised fourteen of the bigger banks because in spite of our efforts we were not able to get them to change their policy. Most of these banks in India were family affairs. So they gave money to their friends and relatives, and with all our efforts we could not help other people to get loans. Within our Government, within our party, there were people who were against nationalisation of banks. I myself thought that we should avoid a split and we tried out something called social control. It did not work at all. The old policy remained although the management changed. After nationalisation there has

At the Oxford Convocation, receiving the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, honoris causa, London, November 2, 1971



With President Nixon, du ing her visit to, the U.S.A., Washington, November 4, 1971

With President Geo ge Pompidou of France, Paris, November 8, 1971





With Andre Malraux, the renowned French intellectual, during her visit to France, Paris, November 9, 1971



With her teacher in Paris, November 10, 1971



With Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany, Bonn, November 12, 1971

Signing the agreement of friendship and cooperation with Bangladesh, Dacca, March 17, 1972



been a very big change. We have not stopped giving money to those who need it for industry, but we have opened up the opportunity for the smaller man, whether it is a new entrepreneur in the industry, whether it is the smaller farmer, whether it is a young person out of job wanting to set up something, or whether it is a taxi driver or a truck driver. Obviously the banks do not have enough money to give to all the people who need loans. Therefore there is a discontent. But on the whole there is an understanding that this can only happen step by step and that it is a good and small beginning.

This is how our domestic policy works. But our domestic and our foreign policy are closely linked. Just as in the domestic area we believe in doing things through negotiations—even though I have a two-thirds majority in Parliament, I have always consulted the leaders and others of the opposition parties on every single occasion—so we try to keep a kind of co-existence in the international sphere also.

There has been a lot of talk about whether we are non-aligned or not. I would like to say that non-alignment to India has never meant neutrality. It has meant that we do not belong to any military bloc, that we judge each issue on its merits, according to the national interest and according to what seems to be in the interest of world peace. So this policy of ours remains, and the treaty with the Soviet Union in no way casts a shadow on it or changes it. In fact the treaty itself has a clause which makes a special reference to Soviet appreciation of our policy and our intention to continue with it.

Our foreign policy is one where we are trying to strengthen existing friendships, to make new friendships where they do not exist, and where there is hostility, to make every attempt to blunt it. We have strong belief in peace. We have always worked for peace, for total disarmament and we believe in universal membership of the United Nations.

I do not want to say very much on the new crisis which has arisen across our border, because I have spoken about it on various occasions. I would only like to say that we have no quarrel with Pakistan and especially not with the people of Pakistan. We feel that they have had a rough deal since they became a separate country, and their leaders have thought that Pakistan's unity can only be built on a confrontation with India. Obviously this hurts Pakistan much more than it hurts us, because we are a much larger country and because of our type of democracy we have much more cohesion in our country than there is in Pakistan. When a country has a military government, from the top it looks as if things are peaceful until suddenly they blow up, as they have in East Bengal.

The East Bengal problem is not a new one; it has been developing all these 24 years. There are similar problems in West Pakistan which are going to blow up unless the Government of Pakistan recognises the reality and tries to see how it can get on with its own people and give

them a feeling that they as citizens have a say in running the country. So far as East Bengal is concerned, nobody can suppress or kill off 75 million people. This is the basic reality of the situation. If those people have made up their mind that they want something, well, either they will have to be killed off or they will consistently fight for it and work for it.

We are very greatly concerned with the economic burden, the administrative problems, the social problems and the political problems which have cropped up because of the influx of such a large number of refugees. But we are much more worried about the threat to our stability and to our very freedom and integrity. Amongst this large number of people are many people who may not be real refugees. For us it is a very explosive problem.

So, while we believe in co-existence and while we do not want to interfere with whatever system of government the Pakistani people want or get, whether they want it or not, we cannot tolerate the sort of interference that has been taking place in our country by Pakistan. Unfortunately, all these years Pakistan has had very strong Western support and this is what has encouraged them to continue in this manner and leading to disruption and the weakness of Pakistan. Otherwise by now, it could have been a strong and unified country such as we are.

One other question I am always asked is about China. We have had relations which were not so friendly but we think that China wants now to create a new image, an image not of the cultural revolution but to erase the image that had been built up by the cultural revolution, and to show herself as a moderate, responsible country working for international peace and goodwill. And we certainly hope that we shall form part of this planned goodwill of theirs and we have no reason to feel that they want to keep aside.

QUESTION : Madam Prime Minister, may I ask three questions ? The first : You just mentioned about China. Has the recognition of China by the U N. changed the European realities, and the problems with which your country is faced ?

The second question obviously is one in relation to our country. For many years it has been under your consideration that the status of the German Democratic Republic representative in your country would be elevated to full diplomatic level. Would you care to comment on this ?

And the last question is a more pleasant one. From the point of view of your Government and your country, has the co-operation in joint ventures by foreign capital and companies been a success, especially in regard to German capital ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : So far as China is concerned, perhaps you know that India has consistently supported China's entry into the U.N. and this proves that our policy is not made with an eye to having any temporary gain or opportunist attitude but what we consider to be necessary in the larger perspective.

So far as G.D.R. is concerned, we have very close relations with them. We have trade, and other exchanges and they have helped us economically and in other ways and, I think, these relations will continue to grow and strengthen. We also have very friendly relations with your country and with many countries of Europe.

So far as the joint ventures are concerned, we have only just started on them. We have not had many joint ventures and there is no reason why these should not be a success. But I think there is still a certain amount of misunderstanding about them; because everywhere we go, we have to explain what it is and some people are worried about our industrial licensing policy. Up to now, some of our business men did not help very much by the sort of things they said when they went abroad. But I am happy to note that of late they have changed and since our last elections they are being far more co-operative. I sincerely hope that now that we have this co-operation from our own business men, we shall be able to encourage joint ventures and that they will be more successful and be implemented.

QUESTION : Why has the U.N. Committee on Refugees not been approached by India, especially when doubts are being expressed about the real number of refugees ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : First of all the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is in India right now. We have had ten representatives of his right from the month of April on the spot. Nobody has prevented them from doing anything or going anywhere. We have also had parliamentary delegations from nearly every country in the world, Latin America, the U.S.A., Sweden, various countries of East Europe, New Zealand, Japan, some of the Arab countries; and I think from Germany also. We also had somebody from the G.D.R. Ours is a very open society. The newspapers are freer—I say this without any hesitation—than any single country in the world, than even the U.S.A. Journalists have also been going there from all countries. Most of the news we have of what is happening inside East Pakistan is through the conservative as well as other papers of England, of America, of France and so on. There is no question of hiding things. President Yahya Khan first said that there were no refugees. Nobody will surely think it is true. He first said that the situation was absolutely under control, and there was no trouble at all except what was being made by Indians. This has not been supported by any single international person who has been to Dacca or to Islamabad. There is a certain problem of credibility.

Whose word do you take? We are entitled to ask this question. We have been twice invaded by Pakistan. Every time Pakistan has first said : "No, we are not doing anything." Their own Foreign Minister is then on record in the United Nations as saying : "Yes, we did go in." You have to see what a person has been saying and doing.

With regard to the number of refugees, our officials say these are 9,700,000. It may be that they are 200,000 or 300,000 fewer. But I do not think anybody can doubt the basic figure. Anybody who wants to see them is free to see them. Every refugee whom we can reach, (there are a large number who are not in the camps, and who live with people whom they know) and who is in a camp has a ration card. They cannot get their food without a ration card. So we have a very fair idea of how many they are. According to us, there are nearly 3 million Muslim refugees. The import of Pakistan's figure is that they are not willing to admit the people of other religions who are refugees. They are counting only 3 million Muslim refugees; they are leaving out the Hindus, Christians and Buddhists. We cannot leave them out. Whatever the international opinion says, I very authoritatively say that I will not tolerate these refugees living in India. I am very definite, and so is our entire country. We have borne a very big burden with hardly any help from outside and when we drew the attention of the U.N., we were given the answer : "It is an internal problem of Pakistan. We cannot interfere in it." They are nearly 10 million people and the U.N. just says : "We are very sorry, we do not mind if million people have been killed in Pakistan; it is an internal matter of Pakistan." This may be a way of looking at things. But surely you cannot expect us to accept that way of looking at things or to have respect for this kind of thought-process. I personally have no objection if the entire U.N. comes and sees what is happening. But I will not tolerate their saying : "We will come and see what is happening in India, but we will not prevent the genocide, the mass murder, the raping of women that is taking place in East Bengal." This is what we object to and which we will continue to object to. (Applause). I might add that the U.N. Commissioner for Refugees and the consortium have accepted our figure.

QUESTION : Madam, there are five states in the world at present who do own and develop and produce nuclear weapons. Three of these states have signed the non-proliferation treaty, but there are other two states, France and China, who have not. France's nuclear force is in no way bothering us nor is China's nuclear force bothering us. But I can imagine that the Chinese nuclear development is bothering others. I would like to ask you about the Indian nuclear policy.

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our policy is to use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. It is true that we have not signed the non-proliferation treaty because we believe that it is not a realistic one. It makes

a distinction between those who have nuclear power and those who do not have. We have a very recent example of an explosion which took place under the sea. It is said that it had no effect anywhere because there has been no tidal wave or typhoon or anything like that; but nobody knows what the future effect will be. You do not find the effect within one day or two days or one month or even a year. We think that this treaty is very unfair and that it gives advantage to those who go on having it and trying to stop others. Not that we want other people to have nuclear weapons; we don't. So far as India is concerned we are merely interested in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and it has already made a difference to us in the fields of medicine and agriculture and, of course, we hope now irrigation and power also.

QUESTION : Some people are very irritated at the warlike speeches made by your Defence Minister, especially his statement that the fighting would be on Pakistan territory if India was attacked. Would you comment on it, and also say what you would like Germany to do ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As I told you, we have twice been attacked by Pakistan. The first time in 1965, we took some vantage points in what is now Pakistani-occupied Kashmir, and which makes it very easy for them to come down into Indian territory. Under the Tashkent Agreement we gave those up, and this created a very bad feeling all over India. There is one thing that everybody says in India : "Whatever happens, we hope that the Government of India will not go in for another Tashkent." So you have to take into view the historic experiences we had in the last 24 years. Please note that the Defence Minister used the words, which you yourself quoted, "if we are attacked". I do not think that any person would say that if we are attacked we just go backwards. Certainly not. If we are attacked we also go forward. We have to, even if for defence. I do not think that the Defence Minister meant anything more than that, nor that the Indian public take it as anything more than that. And should we be attacked, I might say here that although there has been some talk of truce or withdrawal and so on, on the eve of my departure, the President of Pakistan made an exceedingly bellicose speech asking for a religious war against India. There can be nothing more serious than that. There can be nothing more threatening or more provocative.

And if after that cannot our Defence Minister even say that we will defend ourselves or we will keep what territory we take ? If people are irritated, well, we are sorry, but I think that Indian security is more important than other people's irritation.

The other question is what Germany can do to help in the situation. When we approached the United Nations, had any country taken up this question then, this very unhappy situation would not have arisen. Unfortunately, because of the attitude of the United Nations, because

of the attitude of some of the big powers, the President of Pakistan openly—to his people and over the radio, to newspaper correspondents and so on—said that Pakistan was supported by the U.S.A., by China, by the U.S.S.R., by Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and so on. This is what urged them to continue with what they were doing in East Bengal. Had they been told that genocide will not be tolerated, I am sure that they would have come to some understanding. There is so much bitterness now in the hearts of the East Bengalis, that I just really do not know what can be done. The one thing that can soften the situation or blunt it is if Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was to be released. Pakistan is trying to convert this into an Indo-Pakistan dispute, which it is not. The dispute is between Pakistan and the majority of their people; it is not a minority trying to be separate, or a minority having a disagreement with the majority. It is the majority which is saying that it has not had a fair deal; it is the majority which took part in an election run by the present military Government of Pakistan, run on a programme of six points which were clearly before the Government of Pakistan and the people of West and East Pakistan. That programme got a huge majority. I thought I had a very big majority—but Sheikh Mujib's is bigger than mine. Whereas I could form the government in my country, he is arrested as a traitor. He did not declare independence. It is when they said : "We shall not agree to your forming the government", that they said : "We have no other way out." All that I can say is that the German Government, along with other international governments, could try and make the Pakistan Government see the reality and talk with the people who can answer for East Bengal. I have no authority to speak for them and if I were to say something, their leaders will resent it very much. It is only the accepted and elected representatives of East Bengal who can talk with the President of Pakistan or anybody else who wants to reach a solution. I think the governments can help in this.

The War and its Aftermath

QUESTION : Madam Prime Minister, your country has paid a heavy price in this war. What do you think India has gained out of it?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The price of freedom is never light and we have to see what would have been the price of not doing what we did do. To the people of Bangladesh, it has meant their survival. Is any price too great for survival or for life? That is the question. Had

Television Interview to the NBC of the U.S.A., New Delhi, December 27, 1971

the entire people of Bangladesh been annihilated, which was what was happening, according to your own news media, it would have had a disastrous effect on India. There is no price too great for us to keep the country's stability, unity and ultimately freedom and security.

QUESTION : Because of the U.S. position in this conflict, do you think relations between India and the United States have been permanently scarred ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We have always valued friendship with the U.S. and I am happy to say that we have received great understanding from the people of the United States. When I had gone there, I had seen this sympathy, and I am now getting hundreds of letters from people of all sections. Not only I, but all our officials or anybody who knows people in the United States, is being inundated with letters, even from school children, sympathising with the situation and supporting us in what we are doing. The United States—I do not know for what reasons of its own—has viewed this situation more as an inconvenience to the plans already drawn up by the Administration. They have never tried to go into the depth of the situation and they have not even tried to see the future; what would happen should a country like India be weakened ? What would be the effect on Asia ? All these things must be seen.

Earlier you asked about the price. When I saw your questions, the first thing that came into my mind was a poem which I was very fond of as a child especially when our people were going in and out of prison. It is a poem by Ralph Chaplin, which runs somewhat :

Mourn not the dead,
But rather mourn the pathetic throng
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong,
But dare not speak.

We feel that in this, India has spoken up not just for the people of Bangladesh, not just for the cause of India but against oppression of people all over the world. We have always stood for this cause and I sincerely hope that we shall always stand for it. Now that the situation is changed and I think more and more countries and people and administrations are accepting the change, I hope that the Administration in the United States will get over its anger and look at things afresh. We have always valued their friendship and we continue to do so.

QUESTION : Have you had any hint that there might be a change in the policy ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know.

QUESTION : Some critics say that because of Russia's support to India in this conflict and because of the new Indo-Soviet Treaty, India is

now too close to the Soviet Union to have any credibility as a non-aligned nation. How would you reply to these critics ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I am amused, if I may put it that way. Who are the people who say this ? Has the United States ever accepted non-alignment ? So what right have they today to judge who is or who is not non-aligned ? They have not approved of it ever. To us, if I may say, with all humility, what is important or what matters is not what the United States thinks about what we are but what the reality is. We are firmly committed to non-alginment and we intend to remain so. What does non-alignment mean ? It does not mean that you are not friends or you are friends with somebody. What it means is that you reserve your right to judge things absolutely independently. We have fought for our independence not so long ago. The memories are very vivid in my mind. I was very closely involved. I simply cannot think that I would let the merest shadow to be cast on our independence of decision or action for anything in the world. To me that is the most important thing, certainly more important than my life. I am sure the Indian nation feels like that. We have been friends with the Soviet Union and the Treaty has been a continuance of that friendship. May I say from what we see in the newspapers it seems that your Government is far more hampered by its new-found friendship with China than we are in any way by our friendship with the Soviet Union ?

QUESTION : Has the Soviet Union attempted to put any pressure of any kind on your Government ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : No, we would not be friends if they had.

QUESTION : Non-Bengalis in Bangladesh right now are very much afraid of reprisals because of the war that took place before. Your army right now is protecting them. When your army leaves, there is worry that there will be more killings. What is your thinking on this question ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think that Mukti Bahini and the Bangladesh Government are as committed to the Geneva Convention as the Indian Army or the Indian Government. If you remember the terrible things that have happened in Bangladesh and the ordeal which the people have gone through—the civilians as well as those who were fighting—it is remarkable how much tolerance there is. And also, I would like to say that we did not hear any protest from world governments when these people were being killed. Nobody said a word when a million people were killed in Bangladesh, over 10 million were driven out of their homes, many of them maimed, wounded, starving, or when such a large number of women were dishonoured.

QUESTION : What do you see as the major issues now that remain to be settled between India and Pakistan ? For example, you said many times that India wants no territory. At the same time there is talk about redrawing the cease-fire line in Kashmir. Also there is much talk that repatriation of the Prisoners of War would be linked to the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. How are these issues to be solved ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Bilaterally. I don't think there is any place for a third country in this matter. It is too early to go into the details of any negotiations, but India has always been willing to talk things over and we have made this offer to Pakistan. In spite of all the insinuations of the Western press, we have never been against Pakistan and we have taken every possible step, sometimes unilaterally, to try to evoke a response of friendship and normal functioning, but it is true that the Hate India campaign in Pakistan does have some reaction here. However, so far as this question you have raised is concerned, it is a matter to go into.

QUESTION : Do you personally see much chance of a viable peace treaty with all the bitterness and hatred in the background ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Obviously before negotiations take place, the atmosphere has to be calmer.

QUESTION : How long might it take ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not know. That is not up to us. We are perfectly calm and we have remained calm from the beginning.

QUESTION : Do you think that Bangladesh can avoid the scramble for influence by the major powers, can avoid being dominated by one or the other ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I think they have got the talent and the capacity to stand up for true independence because this is what they fought for, to be liberated and to express their own identity. So I doubt very much whether they would like themselves to be overshadowed by any other country or power. Also don't you think that if you look at the world situation, not just this situation but other situations, there are several limitations to super powers in what they tried to do and what they achieved ? Here in the Indian sub-continent they have always tried to have a balance. What has it meant ? It has meant that they wanted to keep India weak. There is no other balance. And they wanted to keep the sub-continent divided. I do not blame the leaders of Pakistan, or their people. I do blame those who created a situation where Pakistan was unable to stand on its own feet, where it was getting superficial strength—a feeling of strength which was not real strength at all.

QUESTION : When will the Indian Army pull out of Bangladesh?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Soon I hope.

QUESTION : Is there any chance that it will remain there indefinitely?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Oh, certainly not.

QUESTION : If the Bangladesh Government should prove unstable, will the Indian Army stay?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I don't think that it will be unstable. In every country which has been through a terrible ordeal, there are bound to be certain differences between the various elements, but I have no doubt that they will settle down. They are all deeply committed people and they have a tremendous task before them.

QUESTION : The people of India appear to be more united now than they have ever been since Independence. Your popularity has attained a new high. Would you try to channel this enthusiasm and these high spirits towards some new direction?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Surely it is my job to keep the people united and to try and channel the energies of the people in a creative and positive direction. It is one continuous process. This is what I have been trying to do ever since I am in office and I am glad that I am having some little success. But my major desire is not to channel other people's thinking or doing, but to give them a basis on which they can function in the right direction themselves. It is for them to really choose and today we have this great unity because the Government and the people are walking in step. That is why each reacts to the other in such a healthy way.

QUESTION : India is now at the crossroads. It has passed into a new phase because of this war and the new feeling of unity coming out of it.

THE PRIME MINISTER : A war has helped, but don't think we would not have had it without the war, because ever since the last parliamentary elections, we have had great political coherence and unity and every step forward has increased and strengthened it.

QUESTION : Do you see a new era opening?

THE PRIME MINISTER : The new era opened long ago. It is just that we are moving a little faster now.

Closer Ties with Nepal

THE VISIT OF a close friend and neighbour is a special occasion. We are glad that you have been able to accept our invitation and to spend a few days with us. On behalf of the Government and the people of India and on my own behalf, I extend a hearty welcome to you, to Shrimati Bista and to your colleagues.

Nepal and India have lived and grown under the shadow of the Himalayas. From ancient times the wisdom of great sages has inspired our two countries. Being close neighbours, it is but natural that we should be intensely attentive to each other.

Our talks have brought out the similarity in our views at a time when great changes are taking place in the world. They have highlighted the desire on the part of both countries to work closely together at a time when we are both on the threshold of rapid advance.

His Majesty King Birendra Bikram Shah has just ascended the throne in your country. Through you we extend our warm greetings to the King. It is our earnest hope that his reign will be a long one, during which Nepal will grow strong and prosperous. For our part we want our two countries and peoples to come closer in trust and co-operation.

This August, our country will complete twenty-five years of its existence as an independent sovereign nation. Freedom to us has always connoted not only liberation from colonial rule but release from the social and economic forces that constrain the human personality. The vast programmes of social and economic regeneration which we have undertaken are a part of our continuing struggle. Through two decades of endeavour we have laid the foundation of self-reliant growth of our agriculture, industry and science and technology.

Self-reliance does not mean isolating ourselves from others. It is a prelude to more fruitful economic exchanges with others on a basis of equality. In political matters as well as economic, true interdependence can be built only on the foundations of full independence. We have sought friendship with all countries in a spirit of brotherhood and peace. We have stayed away from blocs and alliances, not only to admit no limitation to our independence of action but because we are convinced that the politics of confrontation imperils the desire of the bulk of the world's peoples to lead a better life in conditions of freedom, justice and equality.

Free translation of speech in Hindi at banquet in honour of Prime Minister Kirthinidhi Bista of Nepal. New Delhi, April 18, 1972

The map of mankind has changed considerably in the last 25 years when nation after nation has emerged into freedom. Freedom is inseparable from equality. But many big powers seem to go about in the belief that they could still dominate the world through covenants and spheres of influence. Repeatedly, the small nations have demonstrated that the big powers are not omnipotent, but the elementary lessons of living in the New Age do not seem to have been learnt.

Countries should regard one another as equal, irrespective of size, stage of economic development or extent of military power. No small or weak nation should feel threatened, and no large nation should imagine in arrogance that it has a right to dictate to others.

The best way of withstanding pressures is by developing internal strength. Economic co-operation on a basis of equality and mutual benefit helps the process of developing inner strength. It is out of this spirit that we are ready to share our skills and resources with neighbours although we are by no means an affluent country. Our countries are developing countries, and our resources can be put to more purposeful use if we co-operate with one another.

The welfare of the people of India is closely interlinked with that of the people of Nepal. The object of Indo-Nepal co-operation is that Nepal should develop rapidly on the path of self-reliant economic progress and India in its turn will have a prosperous and contented neighbour. I want to assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, of India's desire to be a reliable neighbour and good friend to you. The border between us is a border of peace and friendly feeling.

You and Shrimati Bista are no strangers. I hope that your tour of the country will give you a glimpse of our progress and also enable you to discover for yourself the deep regard and affection that our people have for your country.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to join me in a toast to the health of His Majesty the King of Nepal, to the health of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Nepal and Shrimati Bista, and to the everlasting and unbreakable friendship between the peoples of India and Nepal?

The Struggle must Go On

THIS IS AN occasion when we declare our solidarity, our friendship and our support for the people of Africa. As you know we are about to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Indian Independence and our

Address at 'Africa Day' meeting, New Delhi, May 25, 1972

minds are very much on our own freedom struggle and naturally when we think of that we think also of all the other peoples of the world who are still struggling for freedom. We think also that all of us, some who are free and some who are not, still are subject to one type of colonialism or another. It may succeed or it may not succeed but the effort to have this sort of pressure whether through economic means or other threats and so on is a constant one for those who live in Asia, for those who live in Africa and for those who live in Latin America.

We think that the ills of the world today are not just for a mistake made in the manner in which science was used or that technology is being exploited. The basic sickness of the world is this that in the mind of man there is still this feeling that some are better than others; that some are higher than others and that some are more capable than others. We have heard the story. For many years in my time when we were fighting for Independence it was very prudently put as the 'white-man's burden'. Today that phrase is no longer used but it is expressed in many different words and the meaning to us who live in Asia and Africa is clear enough. And what we learn from it? Only this that the struggle must go on. That even those of us who have attained our Independence have a duty to those who have not.

Political independence has no meaning unless there is economic stability and economic strength. And we know that this cannot be attained unless all of us get together. We cannot get this each by ourselves because forces which are against us are so powerful and so entrenched, not only because of their strength but because of our own weaknesses. We have been so long under colonial rule that many of us still are unable to assert ourselves and see through the blandishment, if I can put it that way, which we sometimes receive in different forms.

The world today is facing a crisis or perhaps it always has faced one crisis or another but I think today it is a deeper crisis. But I do not think anyone of us here is depressed or cowed down by this because we know when there is a flame of freedom or desire of freedom in any people that is bound to prevail. It does not matter how much you have to struggle, how much you have to suffer, how much you have to sacrifice but if you really have a wish for freedom there is no power on earth which can deny it. We have seen it in countless ways in many countries—the most recent was the example of Bangladesh only last year. We have before us the example of Vietnam—a small country, a country which nobody would have called strong. The people there are delicate, gentle-looking; yet they have faced the world's strongest and mightiest army for years and years and they are still fighting with the same courage and same determination. So, our sympathies, our good wishes and over greetings

go out to all the people of Africa. I would like to pay homage to all those who have sacrificed their lives in a long struggle, to all those who are today still suffering whether in prison or in other conditions and tell them that our prayers are with them and more than our prayers all the support which we can give.

We, in India, have a special debt to South Africa because it was in South Africa that our great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was inspired and found a new way of struggle or of facing tyranny and power. Many a thing has happened in our world and is happening today about which no thinking, sensitive and right-minded person can keep quiet. It is not enough merely to speak. We must speak when the occasion for speaking comes but we must also act, because the occasion for acting is here and now.

Visit to Sweden

NO COUNTRIES COULD be farther apart than Sweden and India, not only in distance in miles but in every other respect. Yet tonight your perceptivity, Mr. Prime Minister, has brought them together. It is also a measure of the deep humanity which moves you and enables you to see other people and their problems unencumbered by differences in history, geography, tradition and other circumstances of social existence. Perhaps you were helped towards this understanding of India and her people during your tour in our country when you went out of your way to be with the people and shared the discomforts of a train journey in what you call Gandhi class when most others would have preferred to go by air. You must have seen the faces of our people. I see them in their millions. They are real people, not statistics, and quite different from the abstractions drawn by scholars or journalists. They are poor but they have pride and self-respect.

We are told that our people are bound by tradition and resist change. This is so only in a limited sense. Every people need an anchorage. But this does not prevent them from journeying into the future. I may be partial but I believe that the people of India have wisdom, a sense of discrimination and a shrewdness derived from the centuries old civilisation of which they are the inheritors. They do change when they are convinced that the change is to their advantage. Although rooted in tradition, they can and have adapted themselves to the needs of modern agriculture and industry. So far as ideas and values are concerned, the transformation is even more striking. When

Speech at banquet, Stokholm, June 14, 1972

you visit us, Mr. Prime Minister, which I hope you will do soon, you will see the vast changes—social, economic and cultural—which are taking place in India. We have been accused of being soft. But I think there are examples enough in history to show that ruthlessness or coercion generates its own reaction. This may take time to build up, but in the end there is danger of its exploding and nullifying the gains. A slower change with the consent of the people is often more thorough and longer-lasting.

Like you, we are not bound to any set dogma for the transformation of our social, economic and political system. We also are inspired by a vision of society organised around the humanist core of socialism. We admire the achievements of your country and the sense of equality which forms your social polity. We both realise that the change in the material conditions of the people is only one aspect of the problems we have to solve. The deeper and more fundamental problem is to give our people that indefinable something which can best be described as spiritual well-being, a sense of belonging and participation rather than higher standards resulting in alienation.

Through the vicissitudes of our long history, India's cultural processes have been based on the recognition that diversity is the essence and the substance of our lives. Any imposition of a single mould of thought and pattern of living would weaken our fabric. Mahatma Gandhi said that he did not want his house to be walled in. He wanted the winds to blow in from all sides but refused to be swept off his feet.

We have much to learn from Sweden. It is a land of statesmen and scholars. Through their work and their thought they have demonstrated that abundance does not mean an insular closing in. Swedish thinkers and organisations—and your Government—are deeply involved in the issues which affect the future of man, issues such as peace and disarmament, the elimination of poverty, and the subject which is currently looming over the horizon—the ecological crisis. It is natural that the land of Swedenborg and Linnaeus should have a special feeling for the animal kingdom and the plant world. Your work in this another field has given the world new insight.

Although your country achieved mastery over modern technology quite early, it has stood outside the struggle of the big technological powers. We in India, who have recently cast off the colonial yoke, have adopted a policy of non-alignment, refusing to be involved in the confrontation between the powers. Non-partisanship has been somewhat more difficult for developing countries because of their economic weakness. They have been regarded as stalking grounds for the dominant countries. Theories of power vacuum are propounded to justify intervention and the carving of spheres of influence.

No nation which has struggled and sacrificed for freedom will ever wish to lose that freedom. We have not fought imperialism in order

to accept anyother's protective umbrella. However backward our economies and weak our military strength, we have resisted temptation and threats and have preserved our independence of judgment and action. That is why our two countries found themselves involved in Korea, in West Asia and in the Congo for the promotion of peace. The struggle for peace based on the acceptance of the sovereign equality of all nations has not ended.

Time and again the weak have shown that they frustrate the designs of the strong. In a part of Asia a small nation of seemingly fragile men and women for years has withstood the onslaught of the mightiest power. The resilience of the poor proves that far more enduring than the economic and military strength is the inner spirit that can make or mar a nation.

Sweden's help in our development has been understanding and imaginative. We are grateful for your support to our programmes of industrialisation and education.

Not affluent by any means, we have in turn assisted our neighbours and other developing countries. Last year we were called upon to shelter ten million people from Bangladesh. They converged on areas which were already over-populated and afflicted by many kinds of deprivation. Yet the poorest of our poor cheerfully bore that extra burden out of a feeling of brotherhood. How pointless was this tragedy caused by the short-sightedness of those who attempted to fit events into their neat calculations of self-interest.

Contrived balances of power or parities of terror cannot bring peace. Nor can the world survive except on the basis of equality among nations whether they are large or small, rich or poor. In the search for ways to strengthen the inner defences of mankind, Sweden and India should continue to work together.

I thank you once again for your invitation which has given me the opportunity to glimpse the thinking of Swedish statesmen on world problems. I hope I have helped to give you a better appreciation of our endeavours and aspirations in India.

May I request you, ladies and gentlemen, to join me in a toast to the health of His Excellency Mr. Olaf Palme, and to the continued prosperity of the Swedish people ?

Indo-Czech Friendship

IT IS INDEED a pleasure to come once again to this historical and beautiful city and to this country which is justly celebrated for its cultural achievements and its industrial progress.

You have already referred to my previous visits to Prague. To come here is to revive old memories. I had the privilege of accompanying my father to Czechoslovakia in 1938. The visit was a milestone in his lifelong battle against tyranny and injustice. And for me it was an experience which did much to mould my thinking and left a lasting impact. The tribulations of the people of Czechoslovakia in the thirties at a time when we ourselves were fighting imperialism stirred us deeply. My father had deep admiration for the great fortitude of the people of Czechoslovakia which I share. In 1955 we came again and this time my father was the Prime Minister of Free India.

In the 25 years since we achieved Independence we have built a distinctive political system and have undertaken a vast programme of social transformation. We have sought friendship with countries near and far irrespective of their systems. It is natural that our relations should be specially close with some countries and Czechoslovakia is one of them.

You have viewed our problems with consistent understanding and sympathy. The prompt support which you gave to our cause last year and to the people of Bangladesh has been greatly appreciated in my country.

Over years our development projects have benefited greatly from Czechoslovak assistance. The growth of our machine-tool and electrical equipment industries is partly due to your enlightened policies of economic co-operation with countries of Asia and Africa. We welcome the increasing trade between our two countries.

Humanity can live and prosper only through friendship and co-operation. The world can no longer afford confrontation. Our friendship has strengthened the international climate for peace to which we both remain dedicated.

I am very happy to be amongst you and hope that my visit will be yet another step in the consolidation of our good relations. I bring to the Government and the people of Czechoslovakia warm greetings of the Government and the people of India.

Reply to address of welcome on arrival in Prague, June 17, 1972

Friendship with Hungary

I AM TOUCHED by the warmth and friendliness of your words of welcome. I thank you and the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic for your gracious invitation. I bring to the Government and the people of Hungary the warm greetings of the Government and the people of India.

My visit to Hungary fulfils a long-standing wish, and I hope it will strengthen the bonds that have been forged over the years. Our exchange of views has enabled me to glimpse the thinking which guides your policies. I shall also have the occasion to witness how this is translated at the practical level in farm and factory.

There are no problems between India and Hungary. Our first trade agreement was signed in 1954. Our first cultural agreement was signed in 1962. The years that followed have shown fruitful activity in many areas. There has been sustained effort on both sides to build up trade and economic collaboration in the technical, scientific and cultural fields. We value your friendship and goodwill towards us.

The sacrifice and hardship of our struggle for liberation is still a vivid personal experience for many of us. We cannot think of compromising our freedom of judgment or action. That is why we are determined to strengthen our country in every way. The first and the most urgent task is to eradicate poverty; to eliminate disparities between different sections of the people and to modernise our economy and our society. Our industry is growing and has been diversified. It is the consistent effort of the people and the Government of India over the last years which has enabled India to achieve self-sufficiency in cereals and has laid the basis for more rapid economic progress. There is a new sense of self-confidence amongst our people. It is our aim to be as self-reliant as possible. This does not mean isolation. But it does mean that co-operation should be accepted on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Conditions—political, economic and social—in our two countries differ greatly. Yet I am sure that your experience in industry as well as in agriculture holds lessons for us.

Indo-Hungarian economic relations can help the development programme of both countries. Our experts should undertake a careful study of each other's changing requirements, keeping in mind our own pace of industrialisation and the implications of Hungary's membership of the *Comecon* for its trade, industry and technology.

Equally valuable is the political understanding which you have consistently shown towards us. Last year, when events in Bangladesh confronted us with an unprecedented challenge, you stood by us. The

Speech at reception given in her honour by the Hungarian President, Budapest, June 20, 1972

emergence of a free and sovereign Bangladesh proves that wishful thinking or politics based on an unrealistic assessment of a situation cannot succeed. We had hope that the obvious failure of the calculated confrontation with India would result in re-thinking and the opportunity for a new era of understanding, leading to friendship and co-operation between the countries of our sub-continent. It is this for which we have worked these 25 years and we shall continue to do so. If today there is no fighting on the sub-continent it is because in consonance with our long-standing principles, we offered a unilateral cease-fire and have initiated the proposal for talks. Recent public statements and events raise doubts whether our neighbour is once again being drawn into the vortex of alignment and military blocs. Will the welfare of the people of the region once again become subservient to foreign interests ? India has stood and continues to stand for friendship and peace. But no country can tolerate inteference with its principles, its policies, its way of life or a threat to its security. The forthcoming talks with the President of Pakistan can succeed only if Pakistan also is genuinely concerned with securing a durable peace in the area—a peace which will enable us both to work for the masses of our people with singleness of purpose.

The scars left on Europe by the last world war are far from healed. India welcomes the spirit of reconciliation which is now in evidence and appreciates the significance of the treaties which have been signed. We welcome such moves and exchanges. We are deeply interested in peace in Europe.

I come from Asia and I cannot but draw attention to the fact that this spirit of peace is not being extended to the conflicts in Asia. The valiant people of Vietnam have been fighting for their very survival for several long years. West Asia remains a boiling cauldron. On the Indian sub-continent also, there is only an uneasy truce. It is tragic that Asia should still be an outlet for armaments and a testing ground for new and diabolical weapons.

Such policies are undoubtedly based on the assumption that nations which command huge military and economic resources can dictate the course of world history. Events have proved otherwise. In our complex and interdependent modern world, the force of arms cannot achieve what it might have done in the colonial period. Conflict cannot be limited, nor its course or effects pre-determined. Our poet-philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, was my teacher. He had visited Hungary and was an admirer of the Hungarian people. He wrote : "Power has to be made secure not only against power but also against weakness.... The people who grow accustomed to wield absolute power over others are apt to forget that by so doing they generate an unseen force which some day rends that power into pieces."

It is for thinking people to consider whether today's world can remain divided into categories of the strong and the weak, the rich and

the poor, the white and the coloured. The affluent and militarily powerful nations tend to accord a lower priority to the problems of others.

The majority of mankind cannot for long be compelled to live in conditions of poverty and misery. Indifference towards under-privileged nations is as unjustifiable as the indifference of the rich to the poor within a country.

We in India have endeavoured for co-operation among nations, irrespective of their political systems or their economic status. Our policy of non-alignment is based on the belief that as inhabitants of a common planet we should avoid mutual destruction. A joint effort by the world community is necessary to evolve a constructive way of life which is dominated not by conflict but by the arts of peace. The predatory nationalism of power politics is out of date. Even nationalism that sees its interests as separate from the interests of other people is no longer valid. We must find positive and effective ways of ending racism, exploitation and power politics.

In our policies, we seek the support of all progressive and enlightened peoples and governments. We are concerned with the substance of peace. We look for co-operation in trade and industry, in science and technology. We hope that the great economic powers, the countries of North America and Europe, and Japan, will not function as a rich nations' club but will adopt outward-looking and farsighted policies. In the contemporary world, it is necessary to have a world-wide co-operative approach which aims at ensuring faster and more stable economic growth in the developing countries. The various attempts made in forums like the United Nations or in affiliated organisations like the UNCTAD have had only limited success. Neither the proposal that the affluent nations should set aside one per cent of their gross national product to help developing nations nor the proposal for non-reciprocal trade concessions has been fully implemented. International bodies such as the World Bank are hampered by the national policies of individual countries on whose support they depend.

My people, like other under-privileged peoples, have an urgent need for greater production and equitable distribution of national income. We need more industries, better agriculture, more hospitals, schools, housing. We know that in Hungary striking success has been achieved. We admire the enlightened laws which enable women workers here to fulfil their dual responsibilities as workers and mothers of families.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Prime Minister, for giving me this opportunity of sharing with you some of the ideas which are of concern to my people and my Government. I thank His Excellency the President of Hungary for honouring me with his presence this evening. I know that this warmth and friendship is not for an individual but for what India stands for and is struggling to achieve.

India and Yemen

It is a very great pleasure for us to have you and your colleagues with us here tonight. This is the first time that a Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic has visited our country and we are specially glad that you have come at a time which is of significance for us, that is the 25th Anniversary of our Independence. We hope that this visit of yours will be just a beginning and that there will be many more exchanges between our two countries.

India has had close contacts with the Arab countries over the years and your own civilisation has had close dealings with the East as well as the West. But in between there was the advent of colonial rule all over Asia and during this period, our friendship and our exchanges suffered an eclipse. Now we are once more trying to re-discover these old links and to revitalise them.

We have watched with great interest what you are doing in Yemen. We are happy that all sections are now united and this is the best way of going forward and I am sure that with the efforts that Your Excellency, your Government and people, under the able leadership of your President Al-Qadi Abdul Rehman Al-Iriani, are making, your country is achieving notable progress.

While you are here, I hope that you will have some opportunity even during your short visit to see the results of our achievements in science and technology and what we are trying to do to overcome our own under-development. You were telling us this afternoon how your country in the past years had been rather isolated and also had got somewhat left behind in the development of even basic necessities for your people. Perhaps we can exchange our experiences and help each other in this matter and bring about a transformation in various fields.

India has firmly supported the Arab cause not out of any sentiment but because we felt it was the cause of justice and we shall continue to do so. In our external affairs, we have, as you know, followed the path of co-existence and non-alignment; and we feel that recent years have proved the validity of this policy and this path. So today when we want to renew our friendship and re-strengthen our friendship with your country, we feel that the past and the present are both on our side—the old links and the present trends which call for closer co-operation between different countries regardless of their economic or social system and regardless of their beliefs.

We had last year suffered very greatly. Our next-door neighbour, as you know, went through a period of great difficulty, great sufferings, atrocities and finally a desperate aggression provoked an armed conflict.

Speech at dinner in honour of the Prime Minister of Yemen Arab Republic, New Delhi, August 10, 1972

But we do not believe in continuing confrontation and it is our sincere hope that we will be able to exchange this confrontation of so many years—twenty-five years—into friendship and a more co-operative attitude because it is in peace and friendship and co-operation that we can progress and all the countries of our sub-continent can progress.

So, we are facing the 26th year of our Independence with self-confidence and with hope and faith that perhaps a new life can begin for our people. We know from our own experience that no matter how good a step you take or how much you achieve, or what you do, the next step always brings its own difficulties and problems. But we can only hope that with each step we are more prepared to face the difficulties and the problems and in this the more people, the more countries who stand together trying to help one another, the greater the chances of our succeeding. So we feel that a new beginning has been made. Naturally like any new journey that you undertake, nobody knows exactly where it will take you. But if we face the future with courage, I have no doubt that we will be making the best of whatever does happen.

You have also certain problems but I am sure that you also face them with confidence and courage and that we, the people of Asia, can join together, can try to change the pattern which has got very set, that is the pattern of quarrelling amongst ourselves, to move towards a new world.

I was very interested to hear of your recent travels. You gave us very useful, valuable information and also the talks which we had, though brief, gave us a far better understanding of your country, some of its history and of your aspirations for the future. As I said we have had some similar experiences and perhaps by sharing our experiences we can be of assistance to each other.

I would like to request you all, ladies and gentlemen, to drink to the health and welfare of His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Yemen Arab Republic, and to the abiding friendship between the two countries.

Reminiscences and Tributes

Birth Centenary of Gandhiji

TOMORROW IS THE Centenary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth. It should be a day for rejoicing and thanksgiving. But my heart is burdened with infinite sorrow. How can I speak of him, and how can we rejoice after what has happened last week? The communal riots have made mockery of all our celebrations and have created impediments in our path at a moment when we were poised for more rapid advance with a glow of enthusiasm and a fresh spurt of energy.

Ahmedabad was sanctified by Gandhiji's life and work and it was there that he expounded those ethical principles, formulated in South Africa, for which today the whole world reveres him. In his frail frame was a heart as wide as the world. There was nothing narrow or dogmatic about him. While he was unshakable in his basic beliefs, he never said that his own way was right and all else was wrong. Of religions he once said : "All religions are true, all religions have some error, all religions are as dear to me as my own."

Mahatma Gandhi taught that freedom could have no meaning until it guarantees security to every individual regardless of race or creed. If we cannot assure this to every minority in India, we betray the very cause for which Mahatmaji lived and sacrificed his life. The evil forces which spread the gospel of hatred and were responsible for Gandhiji's martyrdom are again active. If we wish to celebrate Gandhiji's Centenary, we can do so only by fighting the evil of religious fanaticism as he did, ready to sacrifice our own lives to protect the rights of others.

India is a democracy pledged to become a socialist state in which the masses will be the real masters. How can we progress or achieve true socialism unless we show reverence for other people's beliefs? We cannot preserve the ancient civilisation which is our priceless heritage unless we uphold the fundamental tradition of reverence and respect for others. India can have no future without utmost dedication to the ideal of tolerance. The only proof of this dedication is the unflinching resolve to oppose all those whose bigotry and fanaticism drive them to sadistic violence.

Mahatmaji was one of the greatest fighters of mankind. He fought relentlessly against all types of injustice. He taught us how to overcome fear and hatred, as individuals and as a nation. He admonished us to live for the masses of our people, and told us that the good of the people should override all other considerations. Let us remember the words in which Mahatma Gandhi declared his resolve : "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice, an India, in which there

Broadcast over All India Radio, October 1, 1969

shall be no high class and low class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony."

I should like to recall also how Mahatma Gandhi valued the cultures of other lands. He realised that we could keep our freedom intact only through goodwill for the whole human family and not merely for "this little spot of earth called India". Let us compare the breadth of vision of Gandhi and Nehru with the narrow bigotry of small men who lurk in darkness and inflict scars on the unity and integrity of India.

On this day of Gandhiji's Centenary, it is not sufficient to hold meetings and seminars and to organise exhibitions. What right have we to take pledges in the name of Mahatma Gandhi when we betray the basic principles of his life? By destroying our own people with anger and hatred in our hearts, we damage the very foundation of our nation. It is imperative, therefore, that all of us, individually and collectively, search our hearts today and make atonement for what has happened.

Gandhiji said that in the midst of evil good persists. Let us seek the good and stamp out the evil. This is the only way to pay homage to his life and his work.

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IT SEEMS TO be traditional in our country to reduce thought into *sutras* and life into rules and rituals. A Gandhi industry has come into being, especially in this Centenary year. In indexing, annotating and paraphrasing Mahatma Gandhi, we tend to forget that he repudiated finality in judgment. All that he did was to point out the infinite possibilities for man.

Mahatma Gandhi was a man of peace but not a man of submission. We have not seen a greater fighter. He was born a townsman, but became a villager. He achieved spiritual and political power but identified himself with the poorest, the lowliest and the lost. He saw no rest or salvation for himself so long as there was a single human being needing sympathy and redressal of injustice.

Mahatma Gandhi preached simplicity but he had no patience with poverty. He disliked wealth and penury equally. His advocacy of khadi and rural crafts was aimed primarily at creating work, income and creative joy for the millions who were forced into idleness by a sterile and exploitative system. He was an opponent of machinery which enslaved man and which created false urgencies, but not of machinery which helped men to find their basic needs.

Message published in the annual number of the *Kurukeshetra*, New Delhi, October 2, 1969

Mahatma Gandhi's example and message are not time-bound or space-bound. The force of his thought has influenced men of many lands, and will guide us for generations to come.

C. N. Annadurai

AS PRIME MINISTER I did have dealings with Shri Annadurai and I met him when I came to Madras and later when he was ill in New York. From the very beginning I was impressed by his understanding the problems not only of Tamil Nadu but the problems which we face all over India. Shri Annadurai had the rare gift of understanding and friendship and whoever he met, he met with an understanding heart and mind. Of his many qualities, I think, the one that stands out most in the minds of the people who met him was his deep concern for all those who were poor or downtrodden. He knew that unless we could help these people no part of India could go ahead. He knew that the problems of India were far too complex and difficult for them to be solved by anyone alone. That is why he believed in unity—in people working together, in maintaining law and order and creating the conditions in which the country could go ahead.

It is a tribute to our democracy in India that we could have different parties functioning and yet combine together on a common platform to pay homage to a man who felt deeply for his people and who did good work. He passed away at the time perhaps when he was most needed. But I am sure that he has left in the hearts of the people of Tamil Nadu a deep impression which will strengthen them and sustain them to face their problems.

I am very glad that the Chief Minister has asked me to unveil these portraits. I know that even without the portraits Shri Annadurai will be well remembered but it is right that his portraits should hang here in this Hall, where he was sworn in and where he worked.

Speech while unveiling the portraits of late Shri C. N. Annadurai, Madras, October 6, 1969

Donating Anand Bhawan

TODAY IS MY father's birthday. Even before Independence, we celebrated this day, not by giving presents to him, but to those who were in need.

Jawaharlal Nehru loved beautiful things but felt no attachment to possessions. However, he did have a special feeling for Anand Bhawan which he described in these words : "It is far more than a structure of brick and concrete, more than a private possession. It is connected intimately with our national struggle for freedom and within its walls great events have happened and great decisions have been reached."

So Anand Bhawan is not just a building but a symbol of our fight for freedom for which many members of our family had struggled, suffered and sacrificed. For me also, memories of the house are not of family life but of the days of jail going, police searches, confiscation of goods and, above all, the constant flow of people of all sections and from all parts of India. Thus Anand Bhawan became a part of our history, and people still flock to it in large numbers.

My father left the house to me but it is appropriate that I should not keep it as my private property. I have, therefore, decided to gift it to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, so that it may be suitably used to keep alive the name of Jawaharlal Nehru not as a bit of history, frozen into brick and mortar, but as a living memory of the man beckoning us to remain true to his beliefs which are so basic to the survival of our great country.

It joins the original Anand Bhawan, donated by my grandfather to the Congress in 1930 and since then known as Swaraj Bhawan. For many years Swaraj Bhawan served as the office of the Indian National Congress. But since Partition, it is a home for children.

The Trustees of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund have signified their acceptance of the gift of Anand Bhawan and have agreed that Anand Bhawan will be open for people to visit.

Statement donating Anand Bhavan to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, November 14, 1969

Guru Nanak

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS ago today, one of the greatest of our sages, Guru Nanak, was born. As we observe this quincentenary of Guru Nanak's birthday, we have to ask ourselves the question : What is it that we are celebrating? Are we merely recalling the memory of a hisotrical event five centuries ago? Are we engaging ourselves in a mere ritual? Are we recalling the memory of a man of no relevance to us today?

I hope that as we observe this sacred day, we will take time to study the life and work of this great sage of India so that we may derive some guidance from his teachings in solving the problems of our day. Only thus Guru Nanak, his life and work, would come to life and become something of direct relevance to our hopes and aspirations of today.

From time to time, India has produced men of wisdom, of courage, of vision and of deep spirituality who rebelled against time and circumstance and tried to rejuvenate our social and spiritual existence. Guru Nanak was one of them.

Guru Nanak arose to liberate the people from narrowness of their creed. He proclaimed that religion was not locked up in books, however sacred. He taught Hindus and Muslims to regard each other as brothers. He proclaimed the equality of men and women. He attacked the notion that God dwelt in the cooking pot, and instituted the practice of people of all castes and religions breaking broad together.

Guru Nanak's challenging statement, "There is no Hindu, no Muslim," startled the people of his times, into the realisation of a profound human truth. How true this statement is even today, centuries later. If only we can today think of ourselves not merely as Hindus, as Muslims or as Sikhs, but as human beings who have to live and grow with other human beings, how much better we would be!

When we say that a great teacher is immortal, what we mean is that the truths he revealed were not limited to the conditions of their own time and place, but give us strength to overcome our own problems, in our own time and place. Religious intolerance, casteism and superstition are still our biggest problems and Guru Nanak's teachings are specially relevant to us.

Guru Nanak found society riven by deep divisions. Hindus and Muslims were working against one another. The people of both religions were under the thrall of priests. Empty rituals ruled the lives of common people and made them forget that compassion, tolerance and equality are the core of true religion. He raised his voice against

Broadcast over All India Radio, November 23, 1969

the worst aspect of Hindu society—the degradation resulting from dividing people between pure and impure.

Many of the ills, against which Guru Nanak fought, still persist in our midst and the only way we can celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of his birth, is to take a fresh vow that we shall remain true to his message and fight again to rid ourselves of the cramping effect of narrow religiosity drained of its spiritual content.

On this day, which is so sacred, not only to Sikhs everywhere but to all people of our country, I salute one of the great builders of our nation and a prophet of united humanity. If Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, and Christian, Jain and Parsi, remember Guru Nanak's teaching of equality and brotherhood, all will be well with our land.

Dedication of Memorial Plaza

IT IS INDEED a happy thought to have a Plaza to commemorate the two great figures of human history. My good friend, Shri Ramachandran, wondered what a Plaza was. A Plaza in Europe and a Chowk in India are very old ideas but in every age they have found new expressions. Originally, I believe, a Plaza meant the market place while a Chowk in India has been the hub of the town business and centre of life. Often enough the best buildings and monuments of the town were found there and so the Plaza and the Chowk brought together art in everyday life. In a way that links the past and the present and makes monuments human and approachable.

This Plaza links two luminous persons—Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Gandhiji and Martin Luther King stood for non-violence. Yet they both died of violence. They never met but they were united in death. Gandhiji was born in a civilisation which prized compassion and tolerance above all, yet allowed itself to be vitiated by intolerance. The Rev. King belonged to a country which was dedicated to the equality of all men and yet it denied this principle to many of its own citizens. Both discovered reality to be far from their ideal but for that reason neither rejected the ideal as impracticable. They strove to make the actual approach the ideal. For Gandhiji liberty and equality, love and sacrifice was summed up in the word *Ahimsa*. To him non-violence was the condition and the test of human progress. While in some ways human beings have become more sensitive to evil and to violence and much of the lesser violence

Speech while dedicating the Memorial Plaza to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., New Delhi, January 21, 1970

which was found in homes and in schools has decreased, we must confess that the proneness to violence in large groups is very much with us and the tools of war and destruction are ever more potent. Gandhiji had faith that the spirit would prevail and that non-violence would overcome violence. The Rev. Martin Luther King saw and spoke of the danger to the world from hunger and from discrimination. He felt that his dream would be seen by others. He felt that not only his people but all people would overcome their hatred. The faith of great men must be backed by the conscious efforts of many. And while we are here to dedicate this beautiful Plaza, I think each one of us must ask ourselves what the dedication means to us personally, in what way do we dedicate ourselves to these great ideals.

Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps very much ahead of his time. We know that the world as it is today is full of violence and hatred. We know too, as he himself has pointed out, that in the midst of violence there has always been compassion, in the midst of untruth there has always been truth. But it does not come of its own. It comes because there are some who make a conscious effort for this. It is in the measure that the need for this effort is more deeply felt and the effort is made more consciously and with every part of our being, we can hope in some small measure to succeed.

When we think of violence and hatred, we must also wonder why they exist. And if there are real causes for their existence, surely it does not help to whisk them away but to see how those causes can be removed. And this is part of the work to which the Ford Foundation has devoted itself. It is part of the work for which each one of us as citizens is responsible. Whether we live in a poor and developing country or whether we live in a rich or an advanced country, the problems are very much the same, though they apply to different conditions.

As I said earlier, this Plaza has linked the two countries as many joint projects have done all over the country. I should like to congratulate the Ford Foundation and the India International Centre on this plan to commemorate the quest of equality and of non-violence. The Centre has established itself as a home for scholars from all parts of the country and of the world. The Ford Foundation has supported much constructive and creative activity in our country, as elsewhere. I appreciate this new gift which it has given to our people.

I have great pleasure in dedicating this Plaza and I hope it will always not merely be a reminder but a reminder which hurts, a reminder which is not a reminder of pleasure but a reminder which hurts us for our own weaknesses, which hurts and reminds us of the gaps in our work and our effort, and if in that way, it can inspire us to greater effort and to greater work, I think you will have achieved a very great deal.

Swami Vivekananda

IT IS INDEED a pleasure and a privilege for me to be here, to have the opportunity of seeing the famous memorial and to share a platform with Swami Ranganathanandaji who is not only silver-tongued but a man of great learning and wisdom, a man who has followed the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda in taking our thought across the shores to distant lands.

Swami Ranganathanandaji, I am afraid, has put too great a task on my shoulders. I do not think that a few words of mine can give courage or wisdom to the people. Swami Vivekananda and other great leaders of Indian thought have told us that these qualities must come from within us. Others can show the path but whether to follow that path or not is the responsibility of each individual.

This morning the Committee very graciously sent me a small booklet of the sayings of Swami Vivekananda. I had read it before but I was glad to see it again. The grand words that inspire us in every page, in every saying of Swami Vivekananda, are courage, strength, self-reliance and faith. This is what India had needed and what India needs today. We have been the inheritors of a truly great culture and a truly great tradition. How has he analysed our national illness? How has he pointed out the shaping of our nation? Swami Ranganathanandaji's words, just now, give some indication that we are in no way near living up to our great traditions and our great heritage. And we have, in a way, given up its importance by reducing it to mere ritual and routine. We have forgotten that the ritual, the routine, is merely a way which could lead us to something and is not an end in itself.

The greatness of Swami Vivekananda lay not only in his great intellectual power and erudition but also in his burning passion to do good not only to the whole of India but to the entire world. His special intellectual gift was that he was keenly aware of the forces at work in the modern world. Just before coming here, I looked at the exhibition on Swamiji's life and mission, which has been arranged here. And it was remarkable how Swamiji could, even at that time, visualise the present-day problems and could know fully well, then, the trends at work in modern times.

Swami Ranganathanandaji spoke, just now, of the need for removing economic poverty. We are pledged to do that. We are trying to take various steps which can lead us forward in that direction. We do not know if we will succeed. We know only that we must try to do this with all the strength that we have.

Speech at Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee meeting, Kanyakumari, September 16, 1970

But the eradication of poverty is not enough for any nation. We have to eradicate spiritual poverty also. We have many words of wisdom and guidance from Swami Vivekananda and other great spiritual leaders. But if there is a lacuna in the thinking of the modern man, it is his great desire to find the short cut, the great desire to have the path made easier for him. And the easier we make it or the more comforts we have, the poorer we become in other ways. But I think that there is a way of reconciling the two and I think that perhaps India can find that way. But I do not think that it is easy for India or for anybody else to find it.

We know today that materialism, whether of the capitalist variety in the West or of the Communist variety in what is called the East—but which really is also of the West—have both failed to answer questions which man asks about himself. Both have solved some problems, but created many new ones. It is essential to solve these problems. We cannot have the world divided into rich and poor; we cannot afford to let the vast majority of mankind not be regarded as part of the human race.

Some of these problems exist in our country. To improve them materially was the first step, but the other step is no less essential. Man cannot be at peace with the world unless he is at peace with himself. Man has mastered Nature, not by force, but by trying to understand these forces. That is why science has succeeded where magic has failed. We understand some forces of Nature and, as we understand them, we discover that there are many other forces which are still beyond our understanding. We have not even attempted to understand this small creature, a very tiny speck in the universe, which we call man. This is what our philosophy has tried to do, but, as I said earlier, most of us have conveniently ignored that part.

I spoke of the new questions being raised. It is good that questions are raised, because by doubting we are led to inquire and by inquiring we are likely to understand. Today there is a ferment in India of one kind and in the entire world of another kind. And the ferment is there because many of the young people find fault with the old values. Does that mean that old values are wanting? I do not think that it is so. But I do think that because we of the older generation have not lived up to the older values, the young people wonder whether they can eulogise these values or not. Therefore they try to search new paths. To us, some of these paths, some of these experiments, do not make sense. But if through this approach of trial and error we can find the truth at last, I think that even the upheaval will have served a purpose.

The world also has the problems that we have in our own country. Swami Vivekananda and many other great persons have shown that

all this variety is really a part of one great unity and that we always should grasp this unity. And science itself is nothing else than the quest to discover unity in the wide variety of our experience.

There is one other word that Swamiji has often used in his lectures and that word is "boldness". I remember a story he told of how he was once being chased by monkeys. The faster he ran, the faster the monkeys ran and caught up with him. And then somebody suggested : "Don't run, face them." And when he faced them, the monkeys withdrew and went away. This is true of most problems of the world. If you think that a problem is too big and you run away from it, it presses and presses you further and u'timately devours you. But if you face it with courage, you have a chance of solving it. And even if you do not solve it, it is still worth the struggle, because through your experience, someone else will be in a better position to solve it later.

Swamiji preached the brotherhood of man. In all nations, this is today the most potent of slogans, the most potent of forces. But here again the strength has to come from man himself. Swami Ranganathanandaji just now spoke of politics entering all activities of life. It is not politics which is bad but what we make of politics. In fact, I think that nothing in life is itself good or bad, but it is what we put into it or take out of it that matters. We have made politics a question of individual bickerings and individual selfishness, instead of what it is supposed to be, that is, a vast movement for an entire people, a movement towards raising the people economically as well as morally and spiritually. This is what politics should be. That kind of politics should permeate all our lives. That is what Gandhiji did. He took great religious ideals and put them to work for society as a whole, put them to work in the daily lives of people, not as high ideals but as practical steps to gain our goal. Today, all have accepted the goal but there may be some who doubt whether we are really moving towards it because of the thorns and stones of our feet. The thorns and stones will always be there, no matter what journey we undertake. They were there when we fought for freedom. They were there in the path of Swami Vivekananda and all great reformers of our country and other countries, but these people could go ahead because they did not look down at their feet, but upwards towards light and towards their goal. We should direct our vision towards our goal, which is indeed a great goal, because it encompasses not only our own country but the whole of humanity. India has indeed been fortunate that it has had so many leaders in our political movements, in our movements of religious reform, in our movements of social reform, who have raised the vision of our people by giving them guidance not only in understanding the past but in trying to understand and move towards the future,

I had the special privilege of being introduced to the writings and sayings and to the life of Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission even when I was very small. In fact both my parents and especially my mother had very close connections with the Mission. And I can truly say that the words of Swami Vivekananda inspired the whole of my family in our political work as well as in our daily lives. Today I would like to ask the same question which Swami Vivekananda asked : "Why is India alive ? What is it that she is fighting for ?" We are fighting for something which we must nourish. But without work and sacrifice in our lives, we cannot do that.

I should like to give my good wishes to this Committee which has done a great work of adding something to the memory of Swamiji in this place of pilgrimage which is so close to the hearts of all Indians. I do not think that a reminder was needed for Swami Vivekananda. But there are some who need this reminder and therefore they provided it and I hope it will be a source of strength to all those who come here.

Gamal Abdel Nasser

WITH YOUR PERMISSION, Sir, I should like to add a few words about another sad death which has taken place. Once in a while a man is born who gives shape, content and expression to the suppressed longings of a people. The late President of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abdel Nasser, was one such man—a patriot, the foremost figure of resurgent Arab nationalism and a great visionary inspired by the ideals of secular nationalism. He was a friend of our country and symbolised the great traditions of shared ideals of Indian and Egyptian nationalism. It was, therefore, natural, that there should be grief throughout our country when President Nasser passed away so suddenly and at so young age. His death is a loss to the people of the U.A.R. and to the Arab world and to the freedom-loving people everywhere, especially in Africa and Asia.

Tribute in Lok Sabha to late President Nasser of United Arab Republic, November 9, 1970

C. V. Raman

THE COUNTRY, THE HOUSE, and everyone of us will mourn the death of Dr. C. V. Raman. He was the greatest scientist of modern India and one of the greatest intellects our country has produced in its long history. His mind was like the diamond, which he studied and explained. His life's work consisted in throwing light upon the nature of lights, and the world honoured him in many ways for the new knowledge which he won for science.

He was a great teacher, who believed that learning is not for hoarding but to be shared. He had an unsurpassed enthusiasm for explaining the phenomena of nature in a manner that the most uninitiated could understand. I have personal experience of this, for in 1936 or 1937 I travelled to Europe on the same ship with him and Dr. Homi Bhabha. It was a memorable journey, during which many new vistas were opened for me.

Dr. Raman inspired successive generations of young scientists in our country to new achievement. His immediate circle of students were almost as able as he himself. Once when he was asked what had brought him the Nobel Prize, he replied : my students.

Dr. Raman was an individualist, who kept away from governmental committees and from mass politics. Yet he yielded to none in his love of his country and in his pride in being an Indian. His own vast learning had not come from study abroad and he did not think that foreign education by itself was a mark of ability. He wanted foreign scholars to come to India, and indeed many did come to study in the institution which he founded and directed.

He was a great representative of integrated culture; his interest in music, in literature and in gardening is well-known. It may be rare for nature to produce another combination of such intellectual power, simplicity of manner and enthusiasm.

A *Bharat Ratna* has gone—leaving us a great example of achievement to cherish and emulate. Our condolences to Shrimati Lokasundari Raman and to other members of the family.

Statement in Lok Sabha, November 23, 1970

Tribute to Soviet Cosmonauts

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF science is the spirit of sacrifice and search for knowledge. The exploration of outer space has reawakened in all of us a sense of wonder. Whether cosmonauts belonged to the Soviet Union or to the United States of America, we have regarded them as representatives of all mankind. We have felt personally involved in their journey, following their every move, sharing the anxiety of their families and of their country. We have felt exhilarated by their achievements.

The tragedy of the death of the Soviet cosmonauts, Lt.-Col. Georgi Dobrovolsky, Flt. Eng. Vladislav Volkov and Test Engineer Viktor Patsayev is all the greater because it happened at the very end of a successful exploration. As the House knows, they spent a record number of 23 days aboard the *Salqut,* the 25-tonne orbiting laboratory launched on April 19. The experiment was a success. They gathered very valuable information, and even though they themselves are not here to share in it, I know that it was a contribution to progress.

May I request you, Sir, on behalf of this House to express our deep sympathy with the Soviet Union and especially the families of these gallant, courageous youngmen ?

Lokamanya Tilak

THE GOAL OF making India a modern and dynamic country will be achieved, not by adopting violent methods, but by following Lokamanya Tilak's peaceful methods of revolutionising the thoughts of society. India possesses a noble tradition of remembering its great leaders, respecting their teaching and taking inspiration from their lives.

India desires to march forward on the road to progress by following the rapid strides in science and technology in the world. In doing so, the country will not like to ape or blindly follow others. It is desirable to keep in mind the eternal principles dear to our people and carve out our independent thoughts.

The people in other countries, by making rapid strides in science and technology, have achieved comforts and pleasure but lost inner peace. India too wants to achieve comforts and amenities for her

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Statement in Lok Sabha, July 1, 1971

From speech at the corner-stone-laying ceremony of The Lokamanya Tilak Smarak Mandir, Poona, February 10, 1971

teeming millions through progress but at the same time she wants to ensure peace of mind to her people.

G. M. Sadiq

INDIA TODAY MOURNS the loss of a great son. Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq was loved and respected by the people of Jammu and Kashmir whom he served all his life. He was amongst the valiant few who mobilised the people of that State in their struggle for freedom and educated them in the values which we all cherish. After Independence, he made outstanding contributions to the building of new Kashmir. As Chief Minister, he guided the State out of a most difficult period. He was a valued colleague and a sincere friend. His loss will be felt all the more today because of his total dedication to our basic values of democracy, socialism and secularism. These are the values for which we are fighting today. We shall grievously miss his wise counsel and guidance.

My deepest sympathy and condolence to the people of Kashmir and to the bereaved family.

Knowing Jawaharlal Nehru

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West, the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But

Condolence message on the death of Shri G. M. Sadiq, New Delhi, December 12, 1971
Foreword to first volume of *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, New Delhi January 18, 1972

his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the normal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historians to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to

the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

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MY FATHER ONCE said that to do justice to Gandhiji, one should be almost as great as Gandhiji himself. I think, perhaps, this is true of Jawaharlal Nehru himself and I certainly do not claim the ability to interpret his many-faceted personality. His spirit was so vital, his range of interest so wide and his undertaking so varied, I do not know if we will ever know the man completely. The deliberate misunderstandings about him and his personality had been created during his lifetime by certain sections of our own people and these were taken up and exaggerated by foreign observers or experts, as they are sometimes called. But he remained throughout unshakable himself.

There are only two stories which come to mind just now. One was the famous 'banyan tree'. I personally think that nothing could have been more untrue about him because it was our constant complaint—especially mine and also of many young people and others—that he did allow everybody to grow, even those who should not be, even those we considered to be weeds, to put it frankly, and he did allow them to grow even though they were constantly threatening him. This was one story.

The other, of quite a different type, was about his wearing a Gandhi cap. Time and again, in almost every book about him I have read, it says that he wore Gandhi cap because he looked more handsome in it. Now this is a matter of judgment. I know that when we were discussing the question of bringing out a stamp on him, I know that when various famous photographers wanted him to pose, the unanimous verdict was that he must take the cap off because of the

Statement while releasing the first volume of *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, New Delhi, January 25, 1972

beauty of his head. But in India, especially in North India, it is a mark of disrespect sometimes not to have your head covered and certainly, during the Independence movement the Gandhi cap had a particular association and it was worn as much for itself as a mark of defiance, as a mark of assertion of what one believed in and what one was fighting for.

I have only mentioned these two very small points to show how something is picked up and it goes on pursuing you, no matter how much you try to shake it off.

Well, there are so many books about him. I do not think I have even seen half of them. But I am sure you will all agree that he was his own best biographer. It is not only his autobiography, *The Discovery of India,* and vast quantities of writings and speeches which reveal different aspects of a fascinating personality in which merged the personal, the national and the international; his thoughts and his actions were so closely inter-woven in the unfolding story of India and they provided much of its drama and influenced its trend. These are some of the reasons which prompted this compilation of an authentic record of Jawaharlal Nehru's writings and speeches.

Three of his books are famous and are perhaps the most authoritative guide to his thinking. But there is much more which is worth preserving and presenting for the benefit not only of the specialists and scholars but of the earnest citizen who would like to have a deeper understanding of his heritage. We were, by and large, a writing family. That is each person, young or old, had his or her field of activities which kept him very busy. So the only way we could communicate, not necessarily as serious message but even some joy which we felt or some joke which we felt should be shared, was by putting it down in writing and leaving notes in various places where we hoped they would come to notice. And of course, because of his position and the type of work he undertook and later because of being Prime Minister naturally there was very much more to write about and the very quantity of what he produced is quite astounding.

Although the *Glimpses of World History* was especially written for me, I think I have felt closest to the *Discovery* and perhaps it is because I was entrusted with the reading of the proofs. And the very day the volume arrived from the publisher I came under an attack of the mumps. So, it is not an experience that I will easily forget. Mumps, as you know, is one of those illnesses which are hilarious to the person who comes and sees it but extremely painful for a person who has got it. So, I have very special memories of the early days of this book. This *Discovery* was completed in 1944 and he had 20 more years of crowded creative life, record of which he kept in copious letters, speeches, documents and all of which are well worth studying.

With the present Jawaharlal Nehru series, which is being published by the Memorial Fund, the approach is different. As Dr. Karan Singh has said just now, and as their titles indicate, they are selective and only such speeches and writings are included as will be of more than passing value.

Some very important and even historic documents will have to be left out because of reasons of official secrecy. It is estimated that the series will run into 20 volumes. Someone questioned the appropriateness of applying the word 'selected' to such a bulky series. Had the yardstick been that of throwing light on current history much more would have to be included because from the literary and intellectual point of view so much of what he wrote was of extraordinary quality.

Most of you have heard of the fortnightly letters which he wrote to his ministerial colleagues and Governors. We took great pains over them and they are a store-house of knowledge and wisdom on a variety of subjects. The official record shows these fortnightly letters add up to 6,000 pages. That gives some idea of the material which exists. In 18 years of office he naturally had to write a great deal of routine nature and many of his speeches were of necessity rather repetitive because he was an educator of the people. Through his speeches he reached out to the individual regarding no one as too backward or too uneducated to understand national or international policies or even the intricacies of science and technology.

He was not just a fluent and a prodigious writer. He was meticulous and exacting. He believed in revising and checking what he wrote as is evident from the manuscripts of his books. This quality made the task of the editors very difficult. They had constantly to ask themselves what they can leave out in order to compress the material into 20 volumes.

I have great pleasure in releasing the first volume. I hope the series will prove a major contribution to the understanding of our times. Jawaharlal Nehru integrated our ideals into our national life laying the firm foundation of a secular democracy directed towards socialism. I think the greatest memorial to him is that today the people of India are forward-looking and self-confident.

Raja Rammohun Roy

THE EVOLUTION OF a society is moulded by a large number of people, known and unknown, who symbolise or set in motion great ideas and forces. Raja Rammohun was remarkable not only for his own personal attainments but for his immense influence on his own times and on the course of the future.

He can rightly be called the first of the moderns. What is modernity? To be modern does not mean repudiating all that is old. It means a rejection of the attitude that justifies and worships everything that is old, which puts the golden age in the past, and which fails to anticipate the needs of the future. The modern mind recognises no narrow walls of territory, of religion, or any confining creed. It takes all the world for its home, and all knowledge for its province.

It is in this sense that Raja Rammohun Roy was a modern. When most Indians lived a frog-in-the-well existence, he acquainted himself with the great intellectual forces at work in Europe—the ideas of the Enlightenment, the concepts of liberty and equality, and the method of inquiry which the pioneers of science had promulgated.

As Gurudev Rabindranath said of him, "Rammohun was out of proportion to his surroundings but was the man for whom our history had been watching through the night. He brought as a gift to his people a mind that comprehended the best aspirations of the East and the West; a mind that opened itself to the confluence of cultures....The vision of the modern age with its multitude of claims and activities shone clear before his mind's eye and it was he who introduced it to his country."

Rammohun was an outstanding student of our classical languages, Sanskrit and Persian, but he also championed the cause of European languages. His knowledge of the classics of all great civilisations enabled him to speak about the unity of mankind and the equality of all races—a view which was far ahead of his own times, and one which even now is universally accepted.

You must have heard of Rammohun Roy's letter to the Foreign Minister of France in the early part of the 19th century in which he said: "All mankind are one great family of which numerous nations and tribes existing are only various branches. Hence enlightened men in all countries wish to encourage and facilitate human intercourse in every manner by removing all impediments to it."

Here is the vision of the Universal Man (the *Visva-Manava*) which later came to form the core of Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore's outlook, and which powerfully influenced Jawaharlal Nehru, and through them has become part of our own outlook.

From speech at Raja Rammohan Roy bi-centenary function, Calcutta, May 20, 1972

Prithviraj Kapoor

A REMARKABLE INDIAN has died. It is hard to believe that Prithviraj Kapoor is no more. A whole generation of our people has been deeply influenced in its attitude to the theatre and the film by this veteran actor and his gifted family. Prithviraj was an artist with a social conscience. His powerful plays did much to strengthen our secular fibre and to inspire young people to work for the idea of equality. His was a generous personality, always ready to help worthy causes, always prompt in supporting young talent. He became a father figure of the dramatic profession in our country.

Statement paying tribute to the late Shri Prithviraj Kapoor, New Delhi, May 29, 1972

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Keeping Our Identity

QUESTION : Some recent events, for instance, the issue of Princes' privy purses, troubles in Bengal, provincial or communal disputes, give foreigners the impression that the India of yesterday does not wish to give up before the India of today or tomorrow. What are your views?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Our ancient philosophy says that change is the only constant factor in life. In our own times this is being very forcefully demonstrated all over the world and we have also seen that pace of change is much faster. In India, there is a conflict between the forces of change and the forces of the *status quo*. I think almost every country has seen such a conflict at one time or another but the size and the diversity of India, the magnitude of her problems and also the fact that our struggle is peaceful and in the full gaze of the world, make the whole thing appear more dramatic. Every effort has been made for decades to bring India into the mainstream of technological and intellectual transformation. This does seem to have frightened some sections of the people like those who enjoyed greater privileges, or had amassed greater wealth and other vested interests of one kind or another. We are fighting for a programme but this programme is not an end in itself; it is only a means or a tool in order to give a better life. We do not just mean that the people should have food, shelter, clothing and employment which are no doubt very important. But we think that other things in life are also important. So when we say a better life, we are looking far beyond merely economic transformation and you are right when you say that it does need a social transformation as well.

QUESTION : Will the progress of Indian agriculture, for instance, the Green Revolution or the agrarian reform, be sufficient to meet the country's elementary needs?

THE PRIME MINISTER : I do not very much like the word 'Green Revolution', but it is true that we have made very great advance in agriculture and we have irrigated land that is now over 35 million acres. But with all this the revolution, as you call it, is limited to about one-fifth of the irrigated land. Of course, the irrigation programme is going ahead quite fast and now we have initiated new programmes for intensive agriculture in the dry areas, providing them special varieties of seeds and fertilisers; and these programmes are labour-intensive so that they will help in providing employment also. We are also paying special attention to commercial crops; but, as you know, industrial

Interview given to Mr Jean Pezieux of the French National Radio, New Delhi, February 12, 1971

advance is necessary for better agriculture also. Another important point is land reforms which is urgent.

QUESTION : If you want to speak about industry now, what in your view can give India the means for economic independence and render possible for the country to reach the take-off stage ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : We are already in the take-off stage in many industries and we already export large industrial machinery and goods such as steel, electrical transmission equipment and transformers. One of our concerns here has secured orders for the export of boilers in international competition. Other items are machine tools, radio isotopes, rolling stock, locomotives and trucks and we sell things even to United States. But, of course, much more has to be done.

QUESTION : You recently expressed your hope that the relations between India and China would improve. On what basis can rapprochement be achieved ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : As yet it is only a hope and, perhaps, it is too early to speak of the basis of rapprochement. I said quite some time ago that we desire the normalisation of relations with all our neighbours and this can be done by first taking steps to lessen hostility or to blunt the hostility between these countries and all of us should try not to have provocative propaganda or threatening attitude. Once you have created a friendly atmosphere, you can go ahead to the next step.

QUESTION : Many a developing country has given to itself an authoritarian regime but in India you maintained a democratic liberal one. Why, and how I could say ?

THE PRIME MINISTER : Well, why, because we are working for the people and even while we were struggling for independence, the aim was not merely to get independence. We had also to think of what we will do with independence. We will use the new opportunities for raising the standard of living of our people. We believe that the interests of the people are best safeguarded in a democracy, because democracy is perhaps the only system which strengthens the people themselves. And that is why, in spite of opposition from various groups of voters, my father and his colleagues worked out a democratic system for our country and now we are trying to give it greater meaning. Democracy has its weaknesses but so has every other system.

QUESTION : You have with your father assisted and participated in the entry of India into the modern world. What part of her original identity has India been able to conserve in this process ?