
MOTION RE. PLEDGE BY MEMBERS

Mr. President: Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will now move the motion which stands in his name.

The Honourable Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (U. P. : General): * [Mr. President, many years ago we had made a tryst with destiny itself. We had taken a pledge, a vow. Now the time has come to redeem it. But perhaps the pledge has not yet been redeemed fully through stages have been reached in that direction. We have almost attained independence. At such a moment. it is only appropriate that we take a new pledge, a new vow to serve India and her people. After a few moments. the Assembly will assume the status of a fully free and independent body and it will represent an independent and free country. Therefore great responsibilities are to devolve upon it. If we do not realise the importance of our responsibilities, then we shall not be able to discharge our duties fully. Hence it 'becomes essential for us to take this pledge after fully understanding all its implications. The resolution that I am presenting before you relates to that pledge. We have finished one phase, and for that rejoicings are going on today. Our hearts are full of joy" and some pride and satisfaction. But we know that there is no rejoicing in the whole of the country. There is enough of grief in our hearts. Not far from Delhi, big cities are ablaze and its heat is reaching us here. Our happiness cannot be completes At this hour we have to face all these things with a brave heart. We are not to raise a hue and cry and get perturbed. When the reins of Government have come to our hands. we have to do things in the right way. Generally, countries wrest their freedom after great bloodshed, tears and toil. Much blood has been spilt in our land, and in a way which is very painful. Notwithstanding that, we have achieved freedom by peaceful methods. We have set a new example before the world. We are free now but along with freedom, come responsibilities and burdens. We have to face them, and overcome them all. Our dream is now about to be translated. into reality. The task of wresting freedom and ousting the foreign government was before us till now and that task is now accomplished. But uprooting the foreign domination is not all. unless and until each and every Indian breathes the air of freedom and his miseries are banished and his hard lot is improved. our task remains unfinished. Therefore a large portion of our task remains to be done, and we shall try to accomplish it. Big problems confront us and at their sight sometimes our heart quivers, but, then again, the thought that in the past we have faced many a big, problem and we shall do so again, gives us courage. Shall . be cowed down by these? It is not the individual pride and strength that is comforting, rather it is the pride of the country and the nation, and a confidence in people who have suffered a terribly for the cause that makes me feel bold to think we shall successfully shoulder the huge burden of hardships, and find a solution of these problems. After all, India, is now free. That is well and good. At a time when we are on the threshold of freedom, we should remember that India does not belong to any one party or group of people or caste. It does not belong to the followers of any particular religion. It is the country of all, of every religion and creed. We have repeatedly defined the type of freedom we desire. In the first resolution, which I moved earlier, it has been said that our freedom is to be shared equally by every Indian. All Indians shall have equal rights, and each

one of them is to partake equally in that freedom. We shall proceed like that. and whosoever tries to be aggressive will be checked by us. If anyone is oppressed we shall stand by his side. If we follow this path then we shall be able to solve big problems, but if we become narrow minded we shall not be able to solve them.

I shall read out in English this resolution which I am now putting before you]*

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her successes and, her. failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. That responsibility rests upon this' Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we might fulfil the pledges we have so oft-en taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to, wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work and work hard to give reality to. our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. 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.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make appeal. to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill-will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.

I beg to move, Sir,

"That it be resolved that:

(1) After the last stroke of midnight, all members of the Constituent Assembly present on this occasion, do take the following pledge:

'At this solemn moment when the people of India, through suffering and sacrifice, have secured freedom, I..... I a member of the Constituent Assembly of India, do dedicate myself in all humility to the service of India and her people to the end that this ancient -land attain her rightful place in the world and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind;'

(2) Members who are not present on this occasion do take the pledge (with such verbal changes as the President may prescribe) at the time they next attend a session of the Assembly." (*Loud applause.*)