

## Vote of Thanks

S.N. JAIN

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I am very happy to propose a hearty vote of thanks on behalf of all of you and the Indian Law Institute. We are grateful to the Vice-President of India for inaugurating this Seminar on "Constitutional Developments Since Independence." We feel honoured by his presence. It is indeed very kind of him to have accepted our request to inaugurate this Seminar. It is difficult to think of a more appropriate person than he for the purpose. He has had a distinguished career not only in public service but also in law. He is an eminent jurist of India and has handled complicated legal problems with masterly skill. I have no doubt that his presence this evening and his learned inaugural address have inspired us all to deliberate on various difficult problems in different business sessions with effectiveness. The Chief Justice of India is the President of the Institute. It is most gracious of him to have presided over this session.

The Seminar is an interdisciplinary seminar and the invitees come from different disciplines—law, political science and public administration. The function of law in a welfare society is not only to maintain law and order and adjudicate on disputes between two immediate parties but also to give a lead to the social order and to adjust the complex human relationship in a manner which subserves the social good. Law in order to play a role of social reconstruction must draw upon the experiences of other social scientists. Law will not develop, and this applies particularly to constitutional law, to suit the needs of the people if it is excluded from facts of life, social behaviour and policy. The interdisciplinary seminars like the present one prepare a grounding for development of law in that manner.

The Constitution of India has completed two decades of its existence and is running into its twenty-third year. Two decades is not a long period in the history of a Constitution but in the context of fast changing social and political processes in India, it may be a fruitful exercise to

evaluate the working of the Constitution during this period and consider how it has met the needs and aspirations of the people.

The Constitution was drawn up by the representatives of the Indian people who reflected all shades of political, social and economic views. They gave us an elaborate charter. However, it has to be a living document, its contents and significance not petrified for all times to come but varying from age to age through the process of interpretation and adaptation to the changing needs, and even by a process of its amendment if it becomes necessary. Since its inception, the Constitution has generated a mass of case law, a number of practices and conventions and several amendments. It is not possible to go through the gamut of the Constitution during the short period of three days of the Seminar. Therefore, three important areas have been selected for study in depth :

- (i) Parliamentary Government (including Legislative Procedures);
- (ii) Centre-State Relations; and
- (iii) Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.

The Seminar, it is hoped, will not be merely an academic exercise. It would not confine itself to what the Constitution means today but would consider what it should mean to subserve the needs and aspirations of the people of India for which it is meant. We will be taking up concrete, specific and current problems for discussion in the different sessions. Some of the topics on which papers have been received are : Powers of the Speaker, Powers of the Governor, Legislative Privileges, Demand for Creation of New States, Freedom of the Press, Personal Liberty, Agrarian Reforms. Altogether over 45 papers have been received which will form the basis of our discussions.

Heavy work awaits us in the different business sessions. The task is both difficult and complex, but we have with us learned delegates equally well equipped to tackle these problems. We are thankful to the delegates for responding so well to our invitation and contributing learned papers. Let me also thank you all for associating with the Seminar by your presence this evening.