

13.06 hrs.

RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE**Tenth Report and Minutes***[English]*

SHRI M. BAGA REDDY (Medak) : Sir, I beg to present the Tenth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Railway Convention Committee on 'Progress of Modernisation Programme in Railways including Energy Conservation measures' alongwith Minutes relating there-to.

13.06 1/2 hrs.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE**Fifth Report***[English]*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore) : Sir, I beg to present the Fifth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Defence on Defence Research and Development Major Projects.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS**Twenty-Ninth Report***[English]*

PROF. R.R. PRAMANIK (Mathurapur) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy (Hindi and English versions) of the Twenty-ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests on the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill, 1995.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS**Evidence Tendered***[English]*

PROF. R.R. PRAMANIK (Mathurapur) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Evidence tendered before the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests on the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill, 1995.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, Statement by the Minister.

13.08 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER**On-Going Practice of Carrying Night Soil as head Load by Scavengers in the Country***[English]*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI. K.V. THANGKA BALU) : I share the concern voiced by Hon'ble Members on 23rd May, 1995 in the Lok Sabha during Zero Hour on the still prevalent practice of manual carrying of night soil. The House has raised the issue of this inhuman practice on a number of occasions.

The Government of India in 1980-81 launched the centrally sponsored scheme for liberation of scavengers under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. The scheme provided for conversion of dry latrines into water borne latrines and rehabilitation of scavengers in alternate and dignified occupations. With a view to giving greater thrust to the liberation programme, the task to conversion of dry latrines into water borne latrines was entrusted to the Ministry of Urban Development in 1991 and liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers continued to remain with the Ministry of Welfare. The National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers was launched by the Government in March, 1992 with the objective of eliminating manual scavenging by the end of the Eighth Plan.

The scheme provides for training upto 6 months to the liberated scavengers with stipend of Rs. 150/- p.m. Thereafter they are encouraged to take up alternate and dignified occupation for which financial assistance is provided upto Rs. 50,000/- with a subsidy of 50% of the cost subject to ceiling of Rs. 10,000/-, margin money loan of 15% of the project cost at 4% interest and the remainder as bank loans. Under the Scheme, the Liberated Scavengers have to set up production/service units. The Ministry of Welfare has released Rs. 255.20 crores so far to States/ Union Territories for implementation of the scheme. 37,694 scavengers were trained and 60,863 scavengers assisted under rehabilitation programme till 31st March, 1994. The targetted coverage during 1994-95 was to train 42,000 scavengers and rehabilitate 1,44,000 scavengers. 13.63 lakh dry latrines have been converted under the low cost sanitation programme liberating 83,566 scavengers upto.

The Ministry of Welfare is alive to the lack of adequate progress in the implementation of the scheme despite special efforts being made with State/UT Governments. We have written to the Chief Ministers thrice on this issue. We have also discussed the implementation of the scheme with Chief Minister and State Ministers in zonal Conferenc-