

(vi) such further or other Indian Customs Waters, or inland area not exceeding one hundred kilometres in width from any other coast or border of India or such other Customs Station, as the Central Government may, having regard to the vulnerability of such waters, area or Customs Station, as the case may be, to smuggling, by notification in the official gazette, specify in this behalf."<sup>61</sup>

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now put amendment No. 6 to clause 2 to the vote of the House.

*The amendment No. 6 was put and negatived*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clause 2 was added to the Bill*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That Clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clause 3 was added to the Bill*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That clause 1, the enacting formula of the long title stand part of the Bill."

*The Bill was adopted*

*Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister may now move that the Bill be passed, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

*The Motion was adopted.*

17.51 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Thirty-first Report*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT) AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM): Sir, I beg to present the Thirty-first Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

17.52 hrs.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SAFAI  
KARAMCHARIS BILL

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI K. V. THIANGKABALU): Sir, on behalf of Shri Sitaram Kesri, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to constitute a National Commission for Safai Karamcharis and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

Sir, even after 46 years of Independence, we have a section of workers primarily in urban areas who continue to manually handle night soil and filth. It is a heinous crime, which is not recognised by the community. These Safai Karamcharis, though performing a very useful

and essential service to the community, more so in urban areas where rapid urbanisation has put tremendous stress on basic urban services, continue to be the most despised section of the working class because of the nature of their work.

The Government of India has been concerned with the working conditions and amelioration of the plight of scavengers right since Independence. Many committees were appointed and they made a number of recommendations but, Sir, we are not able to provide proper and effective conditions to them. Some of the State Governments have also made legislations in the past to improve the lot of this most deprived section of the society. In spite of these efforts we are not able to give them alternative jobs. The number of Safai Karamcharis in the country was estimated at about 4 lakhs by a task force appointed by the Planning Commission in 1989. Preliminary estimates of the survey conducted by the State Governments to identify the Safai Karamcharis and their dependents indicate that this number would be closer to 7 lakhs today.

The hon. Members would be aware that the Government introduced a scheme of conversion of dry latrines into water borne latrines and rehabilitation of the Safai Karamcharis who were rendered unemployed as a result of the conversion in 1980-81. Towns were taken up as a unit for eradication of the system and displaced persons were helped financially to set up alternative occupations so that they can come up in life with dignity. Many towns were declared scavenging free. However, the progress achieved was not satisfactory considering the magnitude of the problem. The scheme was, therefore, given a greater thrust in 1991 under the Leadership of the present Prime Minister, Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao.

The conversion of dry latrines into water borne latrines was made the responsibility of Ministry of Urban Development and the task of liberation and rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis was to be handled by the Ministry of Welfare.

Our Government is committed to removal of scavenging by the end of the 8th Five Year Plan viz. by March, 1997. A Law banning construction of dry latrines and declaring employment of manual scavenging a criminal offence introduced by the Ministry of Urban Development has been enacted by this Parliament.

The Ministry of Welfare has formulated and is implementing an ambitious scheme for liberation and rehabilitation of the Safai Karamcharis. The scheme is being implemented since 1991-92 and an amount of Rs. 111.23 crore has already been released to the State Governments for training and rehabilitation of the Safai Karamcharis. The total expenditure on the scheme during the 8th Plan period will be of the order of Rs. 905 crore.

There is no agency at the Central or State level to coordinate various aspects of the scheme and make recommendations. Our Government felt it necessary to set up a National Commission for Safai Karamcharis and give it a constitutional status. The Prime Minister in his Independence Day Speech of August 15th, 1992 had also announced Government's intention to set up this Commission.

Our Government feels that the National Commission would recommend policies and programmes which would go a long way in improving the living conditions of the Safai Karamcharis. The Commission would also study and evaluate the programmes and schemes relating to socio-economic rehabilitation of the persons engaged in manual scavenging. We would like the Members of the National Commission to be leaders of this community in particular and society in general with reputation for personal integrity and record of service to the cause of these deprived sections of the society.

It is proposed to provide in the Bill itself a Clause to place the Commission's Reports in the Parliament and the State Legislatures if such matters pertain to the State Governments. This provision will ensure that State Governments will also take appropriate action and measures for the welfare of Safai Karamcharis.

We have also given notice of our intention to move an amendment after the motion for consideration of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Bill, 1993, according to which it is proposed to amend the definition of Safai Karamcharis so as to include those doing any other sanitation work. The proposed amendment is to be effected on page 2 of the Bill by substituting the lines 7-8 as follows:

“(e) ‘Safai Karamcharis’ means a person engaged in or employed for manually

carrying human excreta or any sanitation work."

AN HON. MEMBER : Let us sit tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : How much time will you take?

SHRI K. V. THANGKABALU : Hardly two more minutes.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT) AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM) : I suggest that let us extend the time till the hon. Minister finishes his speech.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right.

18.00 hrs.

SHRI K. V. THANGKABALU : I am sure all the Members of the House will agree that the Bill to set up a National Commission is a necessary step towards providing a proper machinery for implementing the programme of liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers and for the development and welfare of the Safai Karamcharis in general.

With these words, I move that the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Bill 1993.

together with the proposed amendment, which I mentioned above, be taken into consideration.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That the Bill to constitute a National Commission for Safai Karamcharis and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

SHRI MANGAL RAM PREMI (Bijnor) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is after a long interval that the hon. Minister has introduced this Bill in the House. The hon. Minister who gave the assurance to this effect is not present in the House today.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is already six o'clock. You are on your legs. You will continue your speech tomorrow.

The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11 a.m.

18.02 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, August 13, 1993/Sravana 22, 1915 (Saka).