

13.40 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. 10-HOUR WORKING DUTY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MIABHOY TRIBUNAL AWARD

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): Several Hon'ble Members of this House, as well as the other House, referred to the workload of running staff, operating and maintenance staff, etc. and its effect on the safety of train operation. So far as the running staff are concerned, according to the commitment of the previous Government, a limit of 10 hours duty at a stretch was assured and was to be implemented by the end of 1976. Already all Express, Mail and Passenger trains are working to this schedule and 85 per cent of goods trains. In the past, there was delay in sanctioning the additional manpower to fully implement the balance of the scheme. I am glad to inform the House that a decision has now been taken to permit the Railways to provide additional running staff to the extent of 2700. With the positioning of this additional staff, which will naturally take some time, it is expected that the 10-hour rule will be completely implemented in as short a time as possible, for all the trains—passenger and goods.

Again, as a result of the modifications in the Hours of Employment Regulations, consequent on the acceptance by the Government of the Miabhoy Tribunal Award, extra posts in different categories were required and these had not been sanctioned for a long time, resulting in overtime payments to staff as well as inadequacy of rest givers. I have, therefore, decided to permit the Railways to sanction upto 10,000 posts of operational staff, other than running staff, for the proper implementation of the Miabhoy Award. Here again, some time is required for actual implementation because of the need for recruiting the staff, training them and putting them in position.

13.42 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (FORTY-FOURTH AMENDMENT) BILL—Contd.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR (Pondicherry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate the hon'ble Minister of Law for introducing this Bill but at the same time I cannot help myself express our feelings. As far as our party is concerned I agree with Shri Somnath Chatterjee that a comprehensive Bill will solve the problem. As such the explanation given by the hon'ble Law Minister is that it is a question of compulsion as they have to restore the powers to High Courts and Supreme Court. I do not see any reason. I think it is a question of convenience which they are adopting as was done by the previous government. When the Swaran Singh Committee was appointed, I remember, the hon'ble Members said that those were the dark days for our country but when it is a question of practice, I am sorry to say, the same old method is being adopted.

I think this House is aware of the fact that when the first introduction was sought to be made in the first Session of this Sixth Lok Sabha the hon'ble Minister for Law tried to introduce a Bill to repeal the entire Forty-second amendment. I do not know what prevented them. I feel for all these days—it is not a question of days but months—they are not in a position to come forward with their mind. Whether it is Janata Government, Congress Government, a Communist Government or a Socialist Government. I am afraid we cannot dupe the people for ever, I think it is a question of convenience that prevented them from coming forward with a bigger Bill or made them to say to the people that they are not in a position to call a special session or Assembly for that.