

(iv) MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF POWER DISTRIBUTION IN THE COUNTRY

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR (Gandhinagar): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the Chair for permitting me to raise under Rule 377, a matter of considerable and urgent public importance and even anxiety.

The present frequent power shedding and non-availability of power throughout the country for essential uses, both in the industrial and agricultural fields, is primarily due to deficiencies in the management and control of power distribution, although we are producing sufficient electric power to meet the needs of the country. The President of India in his Address to Parliament this year has rightly referred to the 13 per cent increase in the power generation. Yet, we are confronted with the problem of plenty and paucity so far as electric power is concerned. The machinery that was created in the shape of Regional Electricity Boards in 1964 have not been able to serve the purpose for which they were created for ensuring integrated operations of economic and efficient use of electric power. They are handicapped in their operations because they are to discharged their onerous duties with improvised load despatch centres. The International Development Association—I.D.A.—credit sanctioned in 1974 for the purchase of scientific equipment like computers, telemetres etc. for the load despatch centres has not yet been used and many extensions have been sought, which have led to adverse comments by the World Bank and other International Monetary Fund Officials about the non-utilisation of loans sanctioned to India. I am afraid there is reasonable ground for suspicion that there is bureaucratic collusion with the interested suppliers of this equipment. In 1977, the Central Electricity Authority had called for tenders and about 17 firms had submitted their tenders. Till now, the Central Electricity Authority has not finalised the tender, although the dates

of validity have been extended several times.

I have come to know that one of the tenderers is Messrs. Seimens about whose collaboration attempt with BHEL—Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.—has become the topic of the day and subject-matter of national debate. I would like to know whether the effort of Seimens to enter into the national power system control and management, especially in the matter of economic and efficient use of available power, has the same background as that of their collaboration with BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.). This requires urgent and highlevel investigation before their tender is accepted. It will not be in the national interest to associate any foreign multi-national with a vital and strategic sector like electric power supply and distribution. I suggest that Parliament should be taken into confidence before any decision is taken by the Government in this regard. I also demand that an immediate high-level technical probe be instituted to find out as to why the Regional Electricity Boards have not been able to deliver the goods so far.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your permission I want to add only one sentence because the matter has come to my notice. This morning a newspaper report points out that our Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai has already appointed a nine-member Janata Party Committee to examine the entire question of foreign technical and financial collaboration. If that is so, then, I am all the more worried as to why this kind of collaboration with a multi-national should not be probed or gone into in the national interest of our country?

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1979-80—
GENERAL DISCUSSION—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up further general discussion on the Budget (Railways) for 1979-80.