

Iran-

[Shri K. Lakkappa]

Therefore, before taking any steps, let the Railway Ministry appoint a commission of inquiry to go into the question of casual labourers who are working in various categories and see what the financial involvement will be, so that they can ease the situation in this respect.

I would cite the Southern Railways an example. There the tremendous manpower has not been respected, because many of the contractors who are directly involved in the construction and other activities of the railways have engaged many unskilled labourers

In Karnataka they are working in stone-quarries, and undertaking various activities for the Railways but they are thrown out of employment without any respect being shown to them; their family life is disturbed and many persons move from one place to another like nomadic tribes. They are employed for a few days and then thrown out of employment. A public undertaking like the Railways should make an effort to see that the jobs are categorised and they should be made permanent. There should not be retrenchment of labour after the work is over, because you know that they will be re-employed. This should be the proper approach. The labour laws have not been implemented because the Railway Board thinks that the employees are not the backbone of the Railway Administration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lakkappa may continue his speech next time. This debate also will continue next time. Now, the hon. Minister of External Affairs wants to make a statement.

17.56 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. FOURTH MEETING
OF THE INDO-IRAN JOINT
COMMISSION

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH): I was

in Tehran from 20th to 22nd February for the Fourth Meeting of the Indo-Iran Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation. Our meeting concluded in the early hours of this morning and I am taking this opportunity on my return to convey to this House the results of these discussions which I had conducted with my counterpart on the Joint Commission, H.E. Dr. Hushang Ansari, the Minister of Economy in the Government of Iran.

Iran is the most important supplier of crude oil to India and I am glad to inform Honourable Members that agreement has been reached to enable the Madras Refinery to expand its capacity from 2.8 million tons to 3.5 million tons per annum, an increase of approximately 25 per cent. The crude for this expansion will be supplied by Iran.

In addition to the expansion of the Madras Refinery, Iran has also agreed to provide on a fairly long term basis additional crude to help supplement present availability to us.

It gives me great satisfaction to inform the House that Iran has also agreed to extend financial facilities which would cover existing supplies to Madras Refinery as also the additional supplies of crude.

It has become necessary to step up our exports in order to meet the much heavier foreign exchange bill to enable us to import crude. It has been agreed that India will supply Iran Pellet-feed to the extent of 2.5 million tons per annum. To achieve this target, it will be necessary to develop the mining facilities at Kudremukh Iron ore deposits. The project envisages the construction of a Pipeline to carry the slurry; development of the Port of Mangalore is proposed to be undertaken to handle bigger vessels. Pelletization facilities will have to be set up. Iran will receive supplies for a period of about 20 years and has agreed to extend a credit of upto U.S. \$ 300 million for this project. The repayment would be spread over a period

and the expectation is that the foreign exchange thus earned will enable India not only to repay the credit but the export will yield additional foreign exchange.

Another project for which Iran has agreed to provide credit is for the production of Alumina based on Bauxite. Iran has indicated that her requirement of Alumina would be about 100,000 tons per year over a period of 10 to 15 years. Preliminary estimates indicate that this credit may come to US \$ 70 million.

An understanding has been reached for cooperation in the field of fisheries. It is contemplated that these arrangements would include the supply of fishing boats from India and the training of Iranian personnel as required. Details of this scheme are being worked out by an expert team from India which is at present in Iran.

In order that industrial capacity in India may be further expanded to meet the rapidly growing needs of Iran for various Commodities, it has been decided to set up a Joint Committee of experts with the object of identifying industries in India which are of interest to Iran and determine the best manner in which Iran can assist to expand production so that additional quantities could be made available to that country.

We have agreed to supply to Iran 3 lakh tons of cement and 65,000 tons of steel products including rails. Other items of interest to Iran, the availability of which from India will be determined shortly, include machinery and equipment, railway wagons and other engineering goods.

During my stay in Tehran, I was received in audience by His Imperial Majesty the Shahenshah and had also held discussions

with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. In particular I would like to bring to the attention of the House the deep interest and understanding that the Shahenshah has shown towards the current problems being faced by India. But for his constant guidance, the deliberations of the Joint Commission would not have yielded the mutually beneficial and successful results. These decisions provide opportunities to both the countries to strengthen their mutual relations.

18.04 hrs.

RE. RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH BY PAKISTAN

SHRI S. A. KADER (Bombay—Central-South): Sir, on a point of information. Information has just now been received that Bangladesh has been recognised by Pakistan. Is the hon. Minister in a position to make a statement on that?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH): Sir, I have also heard this report that Pakistan has accorded recognition to Bangladesh. If this news is correct, we welcome this, because from the very beginning we have been urging that recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan is recognition of a reality. This recognition should now open up ways of further implementation of the Simla and Delhi agreements. We welcome this development.

18.05 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, February 25, 1974/Phalguna 6, 1895 (Saka).