

13.12½ hrs.

STATEMENT ON REPLIES TO
MATTERS RAISED BY HON.
MEMBERS ON RAILWAY BUDGET
DISCUSSION

The Minister of Railways (Shri S. K. Patil): In the course of the discussions on the Railway Budget earlier this year, I had said that I would try to send replies to hon'ble Members in respects of matters raised by them which were not covered by my own replies on the floor of the House.

The suggestions made by hon'ble Members have been most useful to the railway administrations and have been, and are being, implemented to the extent practicable. Even general observations where no specific reply is called for, have been taken note of and are being kept in view by the authorities concerned.

In accordance with the practice followed last year, I have now arranged for three copies of a consolidated set of replies so far finalised, to be placed in the Library of Parliament for perusal of all hon'ble Members interested.

13.14 hrs.

RE: DE-SCHEDULING OF CER-
TAIN CASTES AND TRIBES

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Sir, may I have your permission to raise a matter. Generally, the practice is that when the Lok Sabha session is on, all important decisions of Government, whatever they take, are generally announced in the Lok Sabha. Even if they want to take any decision which involves a general principle, naturally, the Lok Sabha Members are consulted. I may invite your kind attention to the news item today in the Statesman where it said.....

Mr. Speaker: What is it that Shri Banerjee is raising?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I am submitting about this news item....

Mr. Speaker: Has he asked for permission for such a statement?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Under what rule?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I do not have the book here. The rule may be applicable tomorrow. Today it may be allowed. It is a very important matter.

Mr. Speaker: He might consult the book first.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I rise on a point of order. Is it open to the Minister or to the Government to take a decision of general importance without announcing the same in the House? As an illustration, I want to mention this:

"The Union Government is understood to have decided to gradually de-schedule those castes and tribes whose general condition has improved as a result of Government and other measures.

"The decision has been taken in the light of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee headed by the Law Secretary, Shri B. N. Lokur, which was constituted sometime ago to examine the question of revision of the lists of scheduled castes and tribes."

Here, in this House, whenever we have raised this question, we have been told that the matter is under consideration—not only of scheduled castes but also of backward classes. I have received a letter from the Home Ministry, from the Department of Social Security, that the

contents of my letter may be kept in view while finalising this matter. I want to know whether Government have taken a decision to re-schedule some of the categories like dhobis.

My submission is that they should make some announcement in the House. What they have done is very improper. That is why I tabled the Calling Attention Notice. Let the Home Minister make a statement on this. It is going to affect the scheduled castes in general.

Shri Priya Gupta (Katihar): I have also written to the Prime Minister about West Bengal.....

Mr. Speaker: I shall remind Mr. Banerjee that he has raised the point which could not be raised at all. He had given me a Calling Attention Notice.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Not Calling Attention Notice, Sir. May I draw your attention to the ruling....

Mr. Speaker: Please listen to me.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: You have said that there is no occasion. Where is the occasion, Sir? Something has come out in the newspapers. Government have taken a position behind the scene. Am I not entitled to raise this?

Mr. Speaker: When did I give that decision?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: On many occasions.

Mr. Speaker: Not at all.

Shri Nath Pal (Rajapur): It is being misunderstood.

The ruling was not in the form in which he is trying to submit it. You have emphasized the desirability that if the matters in which Parliament is interested and is directly concerned are decided by the Govern-

ment, the announcement regarding the change in policy should first be laid on the floor of the House and not be leaked out. The desirability of this was repeatedly emphasized by you.

Mr. Speaker: I have said so many times that it does not constitute a breach of privilege. The word 'desirability' is there. Yesterday the Minister made a detailed statement that they were going to revise the list.

Shri Nath Pal: His contention is that it has been.

Mr. Speaker: Supposing the Government has done it. . . .

Shri Sonavane (Pandharpur): The information that has been given by Mr. Banerjee is not correct. A Committee was set up under Shri Lokur to find out whether any such castes or tribes could be eliminated from the lists of scheduled castes and tribes. That report is complete and has been submitted to the Government. There is lot of discontentment and so the Members of Parliament from scheduled castes and tribes have been called by the hon. Minister tomorrow for a meeting to consider those suggestions contained in the report. Therefore, no decision to remove any caste or tribe from the list has been taken by the Government. But that report contains some recommendations which are being considered along with other things. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Mr. Banerjee should contain himself. I had disallowed his notice and he has raised the same subject in a different manner; he has brought out the same thing which he ought not to have done.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: No, Sir. Please listen to me.

Mr. Speaker: He had sent me the notice and I disallowed this.

[Mr. Speaker]

Now, on the second point whether a decision has been taken by the Government, the hon. member says that the Members from scheduled castes and tribes have been called for a meeting.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: He is not a Government member.

Mr. Speaker: I am not going to allow him.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want your ruling on this.

Mr. Speaker: My ruling is that the hon. member should resume his seat.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Please listen to me, Sir. It is a very serious matter.

Mr. Speaker: He will sit down now.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Such an important matter....

Mr. Speaker: He is obstructing me now. I am telling him to resume his seat.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Kindly listen to me, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: He is interrupting the proceedings.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: All the scheduled caste people are agitated over this.

Mr. Speaker: I am not allowing this. Will he sit down or not? Mr. D. C. Sharma.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: He is not the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Now I will ask him to go out. Independently of that, whether he is Minister or not, will he go out? He cannot argue.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I am going out.

13.19 hrs.

UNION DUTIES OF EXCISE (DISTRIBUTION) AMENDMENT BILL, ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF EXCISE (GOODS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE) AMENDMENT BILL AND ESTATE DUTY (DISTRIBUTION) AMENDMENT BILL—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further consideration of the following three motions:

"That the Bill further to amend the Union Duties of Excise (Distribution) Act 1962 be taken into consideration;

That the Bill further to amend the Additional Duties of Excise (Goods of Special Importance) Act 1957 be taken into consideration; and

That the Bill further to amend the Estate Duty (Distribution) Act 1962 be taken into consideration."

Shri D. C. Sharma will continue his speech.

Shri D. C. Sharma: (Gurdaspur): I submitted very respectfully yesterday that the way in which the Commission was appointed by the Government of India, by the various Ministries under the Government of India, was very very arbitrary. Mostly those people are appointed who are out of touch with the sentiments of the people, with the feelings of the people and with the urges of the people. Referring to the Fourth Finance Commission I was saying that the Finance Commission had no knowledge of the stresses and strains under which some of the States in India were working. They have given a formula to decide this thing which is, more or less, rigid and inflexible. If such formulae are to be evolved, we could have done it without incurring the expenditure on this Finance Commission. A computer could have done this. A few Members of Parliament could have done this. This could have been done also by some officers of the Ministry. As I said yesterday, the very