

PROF. R. K. AMIN: Sir, my point is this. Your norms are necessary when the new lines are to be laid and not when the metre-gauge is to be converted into a broad-gauge line. That is not the norm that should be applied. Here it should be only from the point of view of general development.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has noted it down.

PROF. R. K. AMIN: May I know from the hon. Minister from that point of view whether he has any general policy of converting the entire metre-gauge line into a broad-gauge line?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, do you permit me to transform this question into....

MR. SPEAKER: No, no.

SHRI R. K. MHALGI: Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister as to what is the criterion for constructing the railway line?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: As I indicated earlier, there are two aspects. As far as the conversion of the gauge is concerned, priority number one is that those areas which have the prospects of being developed or those areas which are already developed areas but for want of adequate facilities of transport, probably, the production is suffering in that case, we will give priority to them. As far as backward area is concerned, I have already laid down a norm in the budget.

MR. SPEAKER: It is all a question of a particular route about which we are discussing. We are here discussing the general policy also. I won't allow that question unless it pertains to a particular area. We have already discussed the general issues in the Budget discussion. Now, if you have anything to ask with regard to

this particular area, then I have no objection.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Sir, the Minister has already replied the questions.

MR. SPEAKER: By experience I say that this question hour should not be utilised for discussing about policy matters.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: The Minister has replied the supplementary question. I only want to know from him whether he is aware that Bankura is a backward district and whether he will take up the railway line Bankura-Damodar railway. At present there is a narrow gauge line. I want to know whether he will convert that into a broad-gauge line because of the backwardness.

MR. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with the main question.

Retrenchment of Apprentices from Railway Workshops and Offices

*333. SHRIMATI AHILYA P. RANGNEKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to stop retrenchment of apprentices from various railway workshops and offices; and

(b) the steps taken to absorb them?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE):

(a) In terms of the provisions of the Apprentices Act 1961, the statutory obligation is to engage Apprentices according to the prescribed ratio in certain trades, and give them training only. There is no obligation to give employment to these apprentices when they have completed training. Accordingly, at the end of their training, their apprenticeship with

the Railways stands terminated, and therefore, the question of their re-trenchment does not arise.

(b) As a special case, the Ministry of Railways have decided that Apprentices in clerical categories who have completed their training already will be considered for absorption against 50 per cent of the vacancies existing and those anticipated upto 31.3.1978. In artisan categories, the question of absorption of Apprentices in the skilled cadre is under consideration.

श्रीमती अहिल्या पी० रांगनेकर : मंत्री महोदय ने जो जवाब दिया है, वह पूरा नहीं है। जिन एप्रेन्टिसिज को काम पर लिया गया था, उनका भी विक्टिमाइजेशन हो रहा है। मेरे पास एक टेलीग्राम आया है, जिसमें रिस्चं डिपार्टिमेंट के कई लोगों के नाम हैं जिनको विक्टिमाइज किया गया है। क्या मंत्री महोदय इस बारे में जांच करेंगे ?

प्र० मधु दण्डवते : किसी को एप्रेन्टिस होने के कारण नहीं निकाला गया है। अगर माननीय सदस्य मुझे वे नाम दे देंगी, तो हम यह जांच करेंगे कि उनको किम कारण से काम से निकाला गया है। इस बारे में हमने एक नीति बनाई है और उसके अनुसार उनको काम पर लिया जायेगा। लेकिन एप्रेन्टिसिज के बारे में पालिसी स्पष्ट है।

श्री रामचारी शास्त्री : इस समय प्रशिक्षण-प्राप्त कितने एप्रेन्टिसिज हैं, जिन को काम नहीं मिला है ?

प्र० मधु दण्डवते : मेरे पास चार पन्नों का एक टेबल है, जिसमें ये सब मालूमगत हैं कि कुल कितने एप्रेन्टिसिज हैं, कितने अभी बाकी हैं, हर रेलवे में कितने हैं, आर्टिसन, कामशंस ग्रुप और क्लेरिकल ग्रुप के कितने कितने हैं। मैं आपकी इजाजत चाहता हूँ कि मैं यह स्टेटमेंट सभा पटल पर रख दूँ।

श्री छबिराम अग्रल : इस समय कितने प्रशिक्षित व्यक्ति हैं, उनमें से अनुसूचित जातियों और अनुसूचित जनजातियों के कितने व्यक्ति हैं, और यदि उनके रिजर्वेशन का कोटा पूरा नहीं है, तो क्या उन्हें रोजगार देने के सम्बन्ध में प्राथमिकता दी जायेगी ?

प्र० मधु दण्डवते : हमारी नीति हमेशा यह रहेगी कि हर एक श्रेणी में शिड्यूल्ड कास्ट्स और शिड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्स के लिए जो प्रतिशत निश्चित किया गया है, उसको पूरा करने की कोशिश की जाये। अगर किसी जगह बैकमीज पूरी नहीं हुई है, और उनके लिए योग्य एप्लिकेंट्स नहीं हैं, तो भी उन बैकमीज को फिल अप करके परसेंटेज को पूरा करने की कोशिश की जायेगी।

श्री छबिराम अग्रल : मैं ने यह पूछा है कि इस समय कितने प्रशिक्षित व्यक्ति हैं, उनमें से अनुसूचित जातियों और अनुसूचित जन-जातियों के कितने हैं, और यदि प्रारक्षण का कोटा पूरा नहीं है, तो क्या उन्हें प्राथमिकता के आधार पर रोजगार दिया जायेगा।

प्र० मधु दण्डवते : मेरे पास इस समय पूरी जानकारी नहीं है कि अनुसूचित जातियों और अनुसूचित जन-जातियों के कितने व्यक्ति ट्रेनिंग ले चुके हैं। लेकिन मैं माननीय सदस्य को यकीन दिलाता चाहता हूँ कि ऐसे जितने लोग हैं, उन्हें प्राथमिकता दी जायेगी और जो परसेंटेज निश्चित किया गया है, उसे पूरा करने की पूरी कोशिश की जायेगी।

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM:
Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the answer given by the hon. Minister to the main question it appears that he is not properly informed about the nature of the problem. Thousands of young workers have been recruited

as apprentices and after the training is over they are sent out. Of course, the Railways have no obligations to absorb them. The unemployment situation in the country is so serious that these young men are unable to find employment anywhere else. After the completion of the apprentice Course by these young men in the Railways, neither the public sector nor the private sector is willing to take these apprentices with the result that thousands of these young men are unemployed, even after 3 or 4 years after completing of the training. Now, these apprentices are willing to work even as unskilled workers, as khalasis in the Railways. Will the hon. Minister consider at least absorbing these workers as unskilled workers in the existing vacancies.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: He has widened the question. Anyway, I will answer that. Of the 14000 apprentices who were under training, about 1500 were in the clerical trade. Sir, the difficulty is that the trade unions have taken certain stand. As far as the commercial group or the clerical groups are concerned, we sat with the representatives of the apprentices and have arrived at an agreement and orders have been sent that by the end of the financial year whatever vacancies are left, 50 per cent of those vacancies on Railways in the clerical group will be filled by those who had completed the training and the other 50 per cent will be filled by the outsiders. As far as the artisan section is concerned, the problem is a bit complicated. My trade union friends know that. There had been pressure from the trade unions that when the apprentices or the artisans apply for skilled jobs, they should not be considered because there are unskilled labour who become semi-skilled labour after sometime and they have a desire that they should be actually promoted as skilled labour. There is a demand that they should be given

priority and therefore unless we arrive at an agreement with the trade unions regarding the artisans, we will not be able to take a final decision.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: My question is whether these people will be absorbed as unskilled workers.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: As far as these workers are concerned, those who apply for skilled jobs themselves do not prefer to be absorbed as unskilled workers. But if they approach, they will be considered.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: I have been approached by many apprentices with the complaint that they have been working as apprentices for several years. I do not know what is the exact position of these apprentices. I can give the example of Garden Reach Workshop. Their complaint is that if they are not absorbed at this stage, they will not be considered later because they will become age-barred. Therefore, this is the question which requires serious consideration because their future prospects are blocked. So, my question is that those apprentices who have served for several years should be absorbed without delay. For several years, they are waiting for absorption. I would like to know whether their case will be considered by the hon. Minister.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I have given a clear assurance and a written order has been sent that apprentices in clerical categories will be accommodated in 50 per cent quota of vacancies existing and anticipated upto 31-3-78 and if we consider all the hundred per cent available vacancies for the apprentices, there will be no vacancies left for candidates selected by the Service Commission. Therefore, in that 50 per cent quota, we will try to accommodate those apprentices in clerical categories who are waiting for a number of years.