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Title: Moved the motion for consideration of the Railway Claims Tribunal (Amendment) Bill, 1998. Motion for Consideration- adopted
14.55 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, the House will take up item number 13. Hon. Minister of Railways.

1456 hours

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill further to amend the Railway Claims Tribunal Act, 1987, be taken into consideration."

सभापति महोदय, यह विधेयक बहुत सीमित उद्देश्य के लिए लाया गया है। रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल के अध्यक्ष, उपाध्यक्ष और सदस्यों के वेतनमान से संबंधित यह विधेयक है। पंचम वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों के लागू होने के बाद रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल के लिए भी इसका नोटिफिकेशन हुआ था, लेकिन चूंकि इस विधेयक में ऐसा कोई प्रावधान नहीं है कि उसको भूतलक्षी प्रभाव से लागू किया जा सके, इसलिए उनका जिस दिन से नोटिफिकेशन हुआ, उस दिन से पंचम वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों के आधार पर वेतनमान लागू किये जा सके। अब इसमें एकमात्र समस्या यही है कि जो ऐडमिनिस्ट्रेटिव ट्रिब्यूनल है, उसमें इस तरह की व्यवस्था है। इस विधेयक का सीमित उद्देश्य यही है कि इसमें सरकार को जो रूल बनाने का अधिकार है, उसमें भूतलक्षी प्रभाव से इसको लागू करने का अधिकार लेना चाहते हैं ताकि उनको भी ये सब लाभ १.१.९६ से मिल सकें। यही इस विधेयक का सीमित उद्देश्य है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion moved :

"That the Bill further to amend the Railway Claims Tribunal Act, 1987, be taken into consideration."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri P.C. Chacko.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Mr. Chairman Sir, I have to speak something about the Railway Claims Tribunal (Amendment) Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Shri P.C. Chacko.

1458 hours

>SHRI P.C. CHACKO (IDUKKI): Mr Chairman, Sir, this is probably a very non-controversial piece of legislation. I am happy that I am getting an opportunity to support my hon. friend Shri Nitish Kumar. He is such a nice friend of mine, but so far I did not get an opportunity to support him, and also Shri Ram Naik. It is because when good people are in a bad company, unfortunately, we are not able to support them. But at least when a Bill of this kind has come, I am happy to support them.

This Bill will enable the Railway Claims Tribunal to implement the pay revision with retrospective effect. Probably, this was left by oversight at the time of introducing the Bill in 1987 and the Bill did not contain a provision for the retrospective implementation of pay revisions coming into effect subsequently.

But, Sir, this is also an opportunity to look back and see whether the Railway Claims Tribunal is working as effectively as it should be even though the Minister was very brief, probably in the overall context in which he is working and the unfortunate accidents which are taking place in the Indian Railways every day. Probably due to that, he was mincing words and did not want to go into details. A very outspoken Minister otherwise was with a very few words today. I can understand the plight of the Minister and also the Minister of State, as the Indian Railways is going through a situation of crisis and a very bad phase of its life. The job of the Railway Claims Tribunal is going to increase manifold because the railway accidents are increasing. The Railways seem to be totally helpless, without any programmes or concrete measures to implement the safety measures which are required by the Indian Railways.

15.00 hrs.

The Claims Tribunal is dealing with a number of items, probably, a number of claims which are likely to come up, not only arising out of the railway accidents but also the cases arising out of the large size of the organisation. The varied claims that arise out of many counts cast a responsibility on the Railways and thus to take care of the constitutional and legal provisions, the Railway Claims Tribunal was created.

I am of the opinion that if the Railway Claims Tribunal, which has been instituted under an Act of Parliament, is not discharging its responsibilities to the satisfaction of the Railway administration, which it owes it to the people in general, then when such a piece of legislation is being discussed in the House, it gives us an opportunity to look back, analyse and see whether such Tribunals are working towards achieving their desired objectives.

Sir, the situation here is something like this. Even though there are provisions for Benches at various places; even though the jurisdiction could be divided; even though the work could be divided amongst the various Benches and even though there are provisions for taking early decisions, yet the cases for claims are piling up before the Railway Claims Tribunal. One of the provisions in the original Act itself says that the Claims Tribunal shall decide every application as expeditiously as possible and ordinarily every application shall be decided on perusal of documents and like that. This shows that this very Act and the setting up of this very institution is for taking expeditious decision on matters of claim.

But we have to analyse the present situation and the present functioning of the Claims Tribunal. I am not attributing any motive; I am not blaming anybody who is constituting the present Tribunal or the persons who are heading this Tribunal. But the fact remains that this organisation or the set up of this Tribunal is not up to the expectation. It is because the large number of claims which are pending are pending for years together. It is expected from a Tribunal like the Railway Claims Tribunal that there would be a time bound settlement of claims. The Parliament passed the Resolution in the year 1987. It has been more than 12 years now. Even though this Amendment Bill has been brought with a different purpose, yet we should see as to how its functioning could be made more effective. We have to analyse as to what remedial measures could be thought of for making the functioning of this Tribunal more effective and efficient.

Sir, the Indian Railways truly represent the country, India. It is because it is a vast national organisation. There are various claims of the passengers which arise out of accidents and various situations. The Claims Tribunal have to be much more effective and much more time bound in taking decisions, otherwise this Tribunal itself would not be able to live up to the expectations of the Parliament.

Sir, there are various provisions in the Act, which inter alia includes the powers of the Chairman, powers of the Vice-Chairman, powers of the judicial Members and powers of the Technical Members. The Parliament, in a very well thought out piece of legislation, has given powers to them. There is no dearth of powers. It has got all the powers of a Civil Court and the decisions could also be executed without going to any appellate body. So, they are self-sufficient for taking decisions and executing the decisions. But the fact remains that even after five, six or seven years, many matters are still pending before the Tribunal. I do not know whether the hon. Minister has applied his mind to this vexed question or not. Even for those people who are approaching the Tribunal for their legitimate claims, for them also it is a foregone conclusion that it would at least take four to five years for their cases to be decided.

Sir, this is probably what is worrying the common man; this is what is worrying the users of the Indian Railways. It is necessary to give the Tribunal the facilities and the retrospective effect of recommendations of the Pay Commission, but at the same time the hon. Minister for Railways has a duty to see that this Tribunal is working more effectively and more efficiently. There are a number of instances.

Sir, I come from a place which is far off from the capital of India.

Railway Ministers in the past had been sympathetic towards the problems of the people of Kerala whether they are with regard to development of railways or of providing new lines and trains. However, it appears that since Kerala is a far off place, the consistent cries and pleas of the people of that State could not reach Delhi. It is

difficult for the people sitting in Delhi to listen to us. It appears as though they are trying their best but still our grievances are not being heard. We are facing a similar problem with the Tribunals too.

Sir, the House has the right to know as to how many Benches are functioning and as to whether these Benches are sufficient to handle the cases coming before the Railway Claims Tribunal. While the House is discussing the issue of providing more facilities, removing the lacunae in the way of implementing decisions, on the performance and other things, we have a right to know whether sufficient attention is given to the problems arising in different parts of the country. I think that this mechanism should be increased manifold and that there should be a provision for time-bound disposal of cases.

The subject of judicial reforms is a widely discussed subject in the country nowadays. This issue also is a part of that subject. 'Justice delayed is justice denied' is a famous dictum. But the fact remains that several cases are pending before the Railway Claims Tribunal due to various reasons. Cases are piling up without being disposed of for years. Such a situation has to be adequately remedied. This House has got a right to expect an assurance to this effect from the Minister when he came forward to ask for its approval.

Four years back, a tragic accident took place near Quilon and an Inquiry Commission was set up to go into the causes of the accident. The Commission officially came to a very strange conclusion that the accident took place because of a tornado. It was a very interesting conclusion which was ridiculed by experts. Even today, everyday when we look into the newspapers in the morning, we do so with a lot of anxiety. We wish that nothing should happen on that day. But rail accidents have become a common thing today. I am not blaming the Government or the Minister for this. The Government is giving facilities to the Tribunals and we are happy about it. The tribunals should do their job. But the situation is going to go out of control of the people who are to control the things. Where are precautionary steps which are expected to be there? There is no research going on in this field. There are a large number of unmanned level-crossings. Our rolling stock has become almost outdated. People's lives are at great risk. Travelling by rail has become a potential risk because the rolling stock is not serviced properly. I am not saying that the routine work is not being done. But the fact is that danger is lurking in every corner at all times.

The Railways, which is the biggest transport system in the country, is facing a kind of a situation where people's lives are put in great danger. That kind of a situation has to be handled. The consequences of such situations are being handled by the Tribunals. So, the Tribunals should be strengthened. At the same time, it is not our intention to give more and more work to the Tribunals. Let there be as less work as possible for the Tribunals. That is what we want. To achieve that, efficiency of the railway system, safety precautions on the Railway system, etc., are very important preconditions. Otherwise, while we discuss a legislation like this, we may have to appoint Benches in all the Talukas in the country. Even if 500 Benches are set up, the claims which are lying with the Railways today cannot be settled. That kind of a situation is there. When things are going out of our hands, we have to apply our mind on this basic question. This House expects a satisfactory reply to this question from the Railway Minister.

The Railway Claims Tribunals are judicial in nature. Hence people from the judicial background are appointed on this. For the Technical Members on the Tribunal, the qualifications fixed are that a person must be in service for three years drawing the salary of the Joint Secretary. These become the qualifications for the post of Vice-Chairman. Then, the Vice Chairman can act as the Chairman. This kind of a situation gives rise to a lot of manipulation.

So, experts are necessary. Experts are available in this country but their services are not being utilised. Any Act which is available to us, the implementation of it is very important. Here, the responsibility lies squarely on the Minister of Railways and the Ministry of Railways. I want to say that effective implementation of the Tribunal set up is not being done. That is one major defect.

About the facility, the Government should decide of a time-bound implementation or time-bound decision or disposal of the grievances before this set up. These are all very important items. When the Indian Railway lines are soaked with blood, when we are hearing of accidents everyday, when this railway travel has become very risky and seeing the situation which is prevailing in the country today, probably, we have to apply our mind at

least to act more swiftly. Just by merely bringing the legislation before the House and saying that it is a very innocent piece of legislation and so 'you pass it', will not be enough. All right, we have no objection in approving this Bill, supporting this Bill. But there are a lot of things to which the Government's attention and the hon. Minister's attention is to be drawn into.

These are the few suggestions which I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Railway Minister and the Ministry of Railways. With these submissions, I would like to support this Bill. Thank you.

>SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Mr. Chairman, Sir, when I start to speak on this Bill, it was very interesting to find that Shri P.C. Chacko made a bit of caustic remark against the hon. Railway Minister and the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways that they are good people in the bad company... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : I was supporting them.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Yes, Sir, they are good people in the bad company of Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee and they are good people in the bad company of Shri L.K. Advani because they are very bad people. They are in the bad company of them and Shri P.C. Chacko is in very good company of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao and the 18 ex-Ministers who are now running to the courts everyday. He is in very good company of them. The onions have washed away all these sins of the past Congress Government... (Interruptions) ... Yes, onions have totally washed away ... (Interruptions)

Now, I come to the subject. Sir, I rise to support this Railway Claims Tribunal (Amendment) Bill, 1998. I will not go into the details because Shri P.C. Chacko has in every detail described the provisions of the Bill. I need not say that this Bill wants to provide powers to the Central Government to make rules retrospectively. I will not repeat it because the hon. Minister has also said so. From 1.1.1996 onwards, the Railways Claim Tribunal people, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman will be able to get the revised pay scales. Previously, 12 years back, the Railway Claims Tribunal came into existence with one retired judge who heads the institution. He becomes the Chairman. There are experts generally one from the Railway Finance Service and one from the Railway Traffic Service, who become Members of this Tribunal. This has been found in the line of the Income Tax Claims Tribunal.

Now, the Central Administrative Tribunal people have also got their salaries and allowances as per the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission. But the Railway Claims Tribunal people have not yet got it, and only by virtue of this Amendment Bill, they will be able to get all these things.

I just want to say that this Railway Claims Tribunal has got two powers. The first is compensation. They given compensation for the loss of goods in transit, for the freight traffic, parcels and things like that. Later on, another responsibility was also given to them. That is the award of accident compensation.

Railways and the court for compensation. If out of an accident, anybody died or sustained serious injuries, then, the relative of the deceased or the victim himself in the case of injuries had to go to the court and the court was taking a pretty long time to settle the disputes. It was felt that the claims could be resolved expeditiously only through these Claims Tribunals. That was the intention.

There are 21 Tribunals all over India. In places like Calcutta and Delhi, there are more than one Claims Tribunal and in all other places like Bhubaneswar, there is only one Tribunal.

The maximum amount of compensation was previously Rs.2 lakh; it has now been enhanced to Rs.4 lakh.

I fully agree with Shri P.C. Chacko that the intention of settling the disputes expeditiously has not been fulfilled. I do not blame the Railway Claims Tribunals because the judicial system of our country itself does not provide for speedy trial of any case. Shri Chacko has mentioned about judicial reforms. I also agree with his contention that judicial reforms are required. I am not going to blame the Tribunals because it is not very easy for the Tribunals, under the present system, to conduct a speedy trial of any case. Anyway, it is an improvement on the

Adhoc Railway Safety Commission, which was there previously and which also took a lot of time to settle the disputes.

I also fully agree with Shri Chacko and appeal to the hon. Minister of Railways to make settlement of disputes time-bound. Let him fix a date; say, every case should be settled within two or three months. If he can do this, he can improve upon his predecessors and give speedy justice to the people who have suffered because of accidents all over the country. I appeal to the hon. Minister of Railways that he should think about this and fix a time limit within which a case is to be settled.

My next suggestion is, if the cases are piling up day after day as mentioned by Shri Chacko, then, the number of Tribunals should be increased. If we can have two Tribunals in Delhi, if we are having two Tribunals in Calcutta, why can we not have two Tribunals in other places also? We can have them. After all, we want to dispense speedy justice to our people. If we want to dispense speedy justice, then, we will have to take these measures like increasing the number of Tribunals. This is also my appeal to the hon. Minister of Railways.

I have another two more points. There are two aspects which the Railway Claims Tribunals deal with. One involves the rail safety and the other involves the rail security. We are going to have a full-fledged discussion about rail safety. So, I am not going into the details of it. I will finish it very briefly within one minute. One major aspect that we have found in the last five or six years is that the investment proposal of the Railways on rail safety has gone awry. It was very surprising that not much attention has been paid for track renewal. Not much attention has been paid for the maintenance of the track and for taking up safety measures for the traffic. Actually, in India, in comparison to the increase in the load of the Railways and the increase in the number of passenger trains, I do not think that the number of accidents are very high. But why should there be any accident? Can we not just stop them? Even the loss of one life, the loss of one compartment or coach is a loss to the nation.

If we can stop it, we can stop it for good; and for that reason, I would appeal to the hon. Railway Minister not to divert money to other sectors which are not remunerative, just like gauge conversion. I would say that unmindfully, that project was taken up. I will appeal to the hon. Railway Minister to see what was the projection of gauge conversion, what was the traffic it was intended to carry and what is the real traffic which it is actually carrying now. Has there been any increase in it really? I can tell you that there has not been any increase; not much appreciable increase is there in the load of traffic it carries. We may have to compare the money that we have spent with the return that we are getting.

So, I would appeal to him not to unnecessarily divert money to other unremunerative sectors, but I would say that money should only be invested in sectors like the railway safety, the auxiliary warning system, traffic circuiting, construction of fly overs, development of communication between guard and the driver, between driver and the nearest station master, between driver and the control, and between driver and another driver. It has to be developed. If we want to introduce safety factor, this has got to be introduced. We will also have to go in for mechanised maintenance of the track because this is one of the most important factors. Manually, we cannot maintain tracks. Unless we go in for mechanised track renewal, we are not going to solve the problem of railway accidents.

Finally, when we are talking about security, I am just asking why is the RPF so helpless, why should the Railways pay so much money towards compensation for goods which are lost, which are pilfered during the time of transit. The load of freight traffic which the Railways were carrying was 89 per cent during the time of Independence and after Independence; now, it has come down to 40 per cent. Now, the roadways are competing with the Railways in diverting the freight traffic.

You will see that after the construction of six-lane express highway from Gujarat to Assam and from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, the freight traffic that the Railways are carrying will be further low. Unless the pilferage is stopped, unless the Railways develop a commercial attitude and unless the Railways develop its yard management, the freight traffic cannot be improved. When we send some goods through roadways, it may reach the destination within say, three days; but when we send them through the Railways, sometimes, it may take seven days, sometimes, it may take eight days, sometimes it may even take 15 days, and sometimes, it may even

be totally lost. So, track maintenance is the most important factor in reducing the compensation which we are paying through the Railway Claims Tribunal.

Last but not least, I would appeal to the hon. Railway Minister to ensure that the RPF does not become a party to the pilferage of railway goods that is taking place.

>SHRI SUDHIR GIRI (CONTAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the outset, I support the Bill.

While supporting the Bill, I would like to make certain observations. The need of amending the Bill arises from the fact that the salaries and allowances of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and other Members of the Railway Claims Tribunal are to be increased with retrospective effect. Giving such retrospective effect will definitely improve the conditions of the incumbents; and there is no doubt about it.

Since the prices of goods are skyrocketing, the increase in salaries and allowances of the staff is definitely justified. I do not have any doubt about that.

The second consideration is efficiency. If we want that the incumbents should be efficient, their remuneration should be increased. They have achieved efficiency not in the affairs of administration or management but in committing malpractices. There are gossips among the young railway officers that crores and crores of rupees are being looted by the higher echelons of the Tribunal. Such gossips are prevalent even among the railway passengers also. I think the higher echelons should be slammed in this regard. I have specific information with regard to the nexus that exists between the higher echelons of the Railway Claims Tribunal and the anti-social elements. The real problem is that the users are being harassed, whereas the persons resorting to malpractices get higher remuneration. If we compare the traffic carried by the railways with the road traffic, day after day and month after month, the road traffic is increasing at a tremendous rate. The rail traffic has not increased in such proportions. This is a pointer to the fact that the people who want to send their goods by rail are losing faith in the Railways.

Sir, in regard to salaries and allowances to the higher officers, I think, there is a great discrimination. The rate at which the officers' salaries and other allowances have been increased are incongruous insofar as the salaries and allowances of the lower categories of employees. I appeal to the hon. Minister of Railways to see to it that such incongruities are abolished. In this connection, I should mention that the compensation paid to >the injured and the near and dear ones of the people who have lost their lives in the accidents are very meagre.

In comparison with the need of the present day, especially in the backdrop of rising prices, we think that the rate of compensation to the grievously hurt persons should be increased. Compensation due to the death or loss of life should also be increased. For this purpose, a Committee should be set up to look into the need of the hour. The rate of increase in salaries and allowances in respect of the higher echelons reflect... (Interruptions)

कुमारी मायावती (अकबरपुर) : माननीय सभापति जी, यह जो बार-बार हरिजन शब्द इस्तेमाल कर रहे हैं यह असंवेधानिक शब्द है और पार्लियामेंट में कई बार इस पर बहस हुई है। यह प्रस्ताव पास किया गया है। कानूनी तौर पर यह फैसला लिया गया था कि पार्लियामेंट में हरिजन शब्द इस्तेमाल नहीं किया जाएगा, क्योंकि संविधान में कहीं भी नहीं लिखा है।

सभापति महोदय : आप बैठिए, प्रोसिडिंग देखकर यदि शब्द असंसदीय है तो इस शब्द को निकाल दिया जाएगा।

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : I have not mentioned the word, 'harijan'.... (Interruptions) I have only used the word, 'comparison'. I did not mention about any tribe or the word, 'harijan'.

कुमारी मायावती : आप कम्पेरिज़न को एससी, एसटी कह कर बोल सकते हैं। ... (व्यवधान) इससे पहले इन्होंने हरिजन शब्द एक-दो बार इस्तेमाल किया है।

सभापति महोदय : अगर यह शब्द बोला है तो इसे निकाल दिया जाएगा।

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Is the word, 'harijan' unparliamentary? ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: I have not uttered the word, 'harijan'. There is no reference to it.

सभापति महोदय : आप इस मामले में मत पड़िए और अपनी बात समाप्त कीजिए।

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : What is wrong in it?

... (व्यवधान)

कुमारी मायावती : महोदय, मैं इतना समझती हूँ। इन्होंने शुरु में हरिजन शब्द इस्तेमाल किया है और बाद में कम्पेरिज़न की बात कही है। इसलिए इस शब्द को कार्यवाही से निकालना चाहिए।

सभापति महोदय : मायावती जी, इस शब्द को प्रोसिडिंग देखने के बाद यदि आवश्यक हुआ निकालने के लिए बोल दिया गया है।

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (IDUKKI): Sir, the word 'comparison' is being heard by Mayawati Ji as 'harijan'. That is a different matter. Since the Chair has given the ruling, what Shri Premachandran says becomes relevant. Mayawati Ji has raised an issue that this word cannot be used. The Chair has said that the word will be removed from the records which means that it is unparliamentary. I would like to know whether it is unparliamentary or not. Otherwise, it will create a lot of problems in future during the discussion. She has raised the issue and has asked a very pertinent question, whether the word 'harijan' is unparliamentary.... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: She has objected to the use of the word, 'harijan'.

कुमारी मायावती : मैंने असंवैधानिक बोला है।

... (व्यवधान)

इन्होंने बाद में कम्पेरिज़न शब्द का इस्तेमाल किया है।

... (व्यवधान)

जो ट्रांसलेशन हो रही है मैं उसको सुन रही हूँ।

सभापति महोदय : आप इस पर विवाद मत करिए।

... (व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not raise controversy.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : The basic question is, whether it can be used or not.

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : What is the objection in using the word 'harijan'? It was used by Mahatma Gandhi.

कुमारी मायावती : महात्मा गांधी जी की आइडियोलॉजी के आधार पर यह पार्लियामेंट नहीं चल रही है, संविधान के मुताबिक चल रही है। भारतीय संविधान में कहीं भी एस.सी., एस.टी. के लिए हरिजन शब्द का इस्तेमाल नहीं किया गया है। मैंने संवैधानिक बात की है।

... (व्यवधान)

SHRI P. UPENDRA (VIJAYAWADA): Sir, whatever may be its previous connotation, the hon. Speaker had ruled recently that the hon. Members should avoid using the word harijan. That is already on record... (Interruptions).

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (IDUKKI): Sir, respected people and leaders of this country should not be drawn into controversy and mentioned like this. This is more objectionable than the word harijan.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Chacko, please do not go into the controversy.

रेल मंत्री (श्री नीतीश कुमार): सभापति जी, हमारा एक ही आग्रह है कि वहां से जो माननीय सदस्य बोल रहे थे तो उन्होंने कहा कि कम्पैरीज़न शब्द का प्रयोग किया। बात वहीं खत्म हो जानी चाहिये। अब इस मुद्दे पर चर्चा इस अमॉडमेंट के बाद हो। मेरा कहने का मतलब है कि पहले यह बिल पास कर लिया जाये, फिर उस पर चर्चा कर लें।

सभापति महोदय : मैंने भी यही कहा।

श्री नीतीश कुमार: एक तो सुनने में गलती हो गई और उसके बाद इसे डिबेट का रूप दे रहे हैं। अब ४ बजे पाइस राइज़ पर चर्चा होगी। यह छोटा सा बिल है, इसे पास कर दिया जाये। इसलिये आग्रह करूंगा कि उस पर अलग से चर्चा कर ली जाये।

कुमारी मायावती : कम्पैरीज़न बाद में बोला है और हरिजन पहले बोला है। यदि यह शब्द पार्लियमेंटरी नहीं है तो बार बार पार्लियमेंट में क्यों इस्तेमाल होता है ?

सभापति महोदय : मायावती जी, आप बैठिये।

श्री नीतीश कुमार: बात यह है कि इस बिल पर चर्चा हो रही है, यह पूरी हो जाये, उसके बाद आप चर्चा कर लें...

... (व्यवधान)

कुमारी मायावती (अकबरपुर) : ।

इसका उल्टा क्या होता है

... (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : कृपया आप विवाद में न पड़िये।

श्री प्रभुनाथ सिंह (महाराजगंज): सभापति जी, आप इनसे कहें कि पहले क्षमा मांगे।

... (व्यवधान)

कुमारी मायावती (अकबरपुर) : हमें अच्छी तरह से सुनाई दिया है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions) *

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not allowed you. Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

श्री प्रभुनाथ सिंह : इन्होंने गाली दी है, पहले यह क्षमा मांगे।

सभापति महोदय : अब इस पर कोई बात नहीं होगी। हम रेल बिल पर चर्चा कर रहे हैं।

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : Sir, I am coming to my conclusion... (Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, in the name of harijan are you going to destroy everything?... (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is already a ruling by the Speaker on this matter. We should avoid the use of this word.

श्री प्रभुनाथ सिंह : सभापति जी, हरिजन शब्द संसदीय हो तो उसका प्रयोग करने में क्या गलती है ?

सभापति महोदय : इस पर स्पीकर साहब की रूलिंग हो चुकी है, इसलिये मामले को बार बार क्यों उठा रहे हैं। सुधीर गिरी जी, आप आपनी बात समाप्त करें।

* Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

** Not Recorded.

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री, संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री तथा योजना और कार्यक्रम क्रियान्वयन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री राम नाईक): सभापति जी, आपकी रूलिंग सबको मान्य है और जो शब्द आपको निकालना है, वह आप निकालें लेकिन शायद इस सबमें मान्यवर सदस्या ने कुछ सदस्यों को ...कहा। उसको भी रेकार्ड से निकालना चाहिए, इतना मेरा निवेदन है।

सभापति महोदय : जो भी अनपार्लियामेंटरी वर्ड है, वह रेकार्ड से निकाल दिया जाए।

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): Sir, the aspersions cast on the Father of the Nation may be removed from the record...(Interruptions)

SHRI AKBAR AHMAD (AZAMGARH): I have not cast any aspersion on the Father of the Nation... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please sit down. Shri Sudhir Giri, please conclude.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI (CONTAI): The increases in the salaries and allowances of the higher echelons of society do reflect the attitude of the Government's acceptance of the diktat from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank because such incongruity cannot remain in the society itself...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Sir, I am on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Sudhir Giri is not yielding. Kindly sit down.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : I am on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under what rule?

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Under Rule 376. I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Chair that a Member has mentioned, if I am not wrong, that Mahatma Gandhi is not the 'Father of the Nation'. If that is so, that should not go on record. That is my very serious objection...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have already said that.

SHRI AKBAR AHMAD : I have never said that.

मैंने नहीं बोला। इनको गलत सुनाई दिया है।

... (व्यवधान)

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : If that is not there, that is all right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Giri, have you finished your speech?

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : I have not finished my speech...(Interruptions)

कुमारी मायावती : इनको सुनाई कम देता है। हमको अच्छा सुनाई देता है। ... (व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : In conclusion, I appeal to the hon. Minister that completion of the Tamluk-Bigha Railway Project is of urgent importance. I have been repeatedly reminding the hon. Minister for completing this project. I also appeal, while I have availed myself of the opportunity, that the hon. Minister should provide adequate funds in the next financial year for the completion of the Tamluk-Bigha Railway Project.

* Not Recorded.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार (चैल): माननीय सभापति जी, माननीय रेल मंत्री जी द्वारा प्रस्तुत रेल दावा अधिकरण (संशोधन) विधेयक, १९९८ पर बोलने के लिए आपने मुझे समय दिया, इसके लिए मैं आपका धन्यवाद करता हूँ। अभी कुछ सम्मानित सदस्यों ने रेल दावा अधिकरण के बारे में अपने विचार यहां व्यक्त किये हैं। मैं सुझाव के तौर पर कुछ बातें माननीय मंत्री जी को बताना चाहूंगा कि रेलवे क्लेम ट्रिब्यूनल के अध्यक्ष, उपाध्यक्ष और सदस्य के पंचम वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों पर वेतन लागू करने की बात उन्होंने कही है और विधेयक प्रस्तुत करते समय उन्होंने ऐसा ही कहा कि केवल वेतनमान में सुधार की बात है, लेकिन दावे से संबंधित बहुत से ऐसे मामले हैं जिन पर सम्मानित सदस्यों ने अपनी बात कही है। उससे अपने को संबद्ध करते हुए मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि आज चाहे रेलवे के डीरेलमेंट से संबंधित दुर्घटना सवारी गाड़ियों की हो या मालगाड़ियों से संबंधित हो, तमाम ऐसे केसेज ट्रिब्यूनल में लंबित पड़े हैं जिनका निबटारा जल्दी नहीं हो पाता है।

तमाम ऐसे केसिज ट्रिब्यूनल में वर्षों से लम्बित पड़े हुए हैं जिनका निपटारा जल्दी नहीं हो पाता। इसलिए मैं चाहूंगा कि जितने भी क्लेम ट्रिब्यूनल में लम्बित पड़े हुए हैं उनका समयबद्ध तरीके से जल्दी से जल्दी निस्तारण हो।

दूसरी बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि खासकर सवारी गाड़ियों और माल की दुलाई से संबंधित क्लेम ज्यादा होते हैं। माल की दुलाई से संबंधित ज्यादा क्लेम इसलिए होते हैं चूंकि बहुत से सामान समयबद्ध तरीके से नहीं पहुंच पाते या रास्ते में डैमेज हो जाते हैं, उनके क्लेम से संबंधित बहुत से मामले लंबित हैं, उनका निस्तारण जल्दी होना चाहिए।

एक अन्य बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि ट्रिब्यूनल के कार्यों का एक सकारात्मक उत्तर आना चाहिए और उसके फैसले भी सकारात्मक होने चाहिए। साथ ही साथ दुर्घटनाओं या माल की डिलीवरी या इस प्रकार के जितने भी मामले हैं, उन पर जल्दी कार्यवाही हो। जिस प्रकार अध्यक्ष, उपाध्यक्ष या सम्मानित सदस्यों के वेतन के बारे में हम यहां पर संशोधन के माध्यम से पुनर्विचार कर रहे हैं, उसी प्रकार से ट्रिब्यूनल के तमाम दूसरे कर्मचारियों के वेतन के बारे में भी पुनर्विचार करना चाहिए, उनकी सुख-सुविधाओं के बारे में भी मूल्यांकन करना चाहिए। साथ ही साथ ट्रिब्यूनल के जो भी अधिकार या कार्य हैं, समय-समय पर उनका भी मूल्यांकन बहुत जरूरी है। न्यायसंगत दावों का फैसला जल्दी होना चाहिए, इसमें समय न लगे। ट्रिब्यूनल के कार्यों का पुनरीक्षण समय-समय पर होना चाहिए। खंडपीठ के अधिकार और कार्यों का मूल्यांकन होना चाहिए और दावों का फैसला भी जल्दी होना चाहिए, यदि ऐसा हो जाए तो बहुत अच्छा होगा।

एक महत्वपूर्ण बात मैं और बताना चाहूंगा कि चाहे वह सवारी गाड़ियों का मामला हो या माल की बोगियों का मामला हो, जहां तक बोगियों के रख-रखाव या सुरक्षा की बात है, वहीं पर संरक्षण की बात भी बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। सभापति महोदय, कुछ ऐसी ट्रेनें हैं जिनकी बोगियों का रख-रखाव इतना खराब है, उनका मेन्टेनेन्स नहीं हो पाता, जिसके कारण आम यात्रियों को बड़ी असुविधा होती है। आज हम चाहे जिस ट्रेन में भी सफर करें, हमें जो बैडरोल मिलता है वह बहुत गंदा और फटा-पुराना होता है। जब पूछते हैं कि किसका ठेका है, तो पता लगता है कि बिहार के ठेकेदार हैं। यह सौभाग्य है कि भारत सरकार के जितने भी रेल मंत्री हुए हैं, वे बिहार से ही हुए हैं। इसलिए मेरा मानना है कि रख-रखाव और रेल से संबंधित जो भी सुविधाएं हैं, चाहे वे माल की दुलाई से संबंधित हों या सवारी गाड़ियों से संबंधित हों, बिहार को यह मौका मिला है कि एक ऐसी मिसाल कायम करे कि जिससे लोगों को सुविधा मिल सके। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं चाहूंगा कि जो माननीय मंत्री जी इसमें संशोधन लाये हैं, उसको यहां सर्वसम्मति से पास किया जाए और जो अन्य सुझाव आये हैं उन पर भी विचार किया जाए।

>DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (VISHAKHAPATNAM): Sir, since time is already over, I will speak only for a few minutes before you would be pressing the bell.

The Bill brought by Shri Nitish Kumar is such that there is no chance to be opposed by any Member of the House. The entire House is unanimously supporting the Bill. We are extremely happy in supporting this small Bill. At the same time, every Member has been collectively highlighting that red-tapism should not be there and that claims should be settled at an early date. So, I want the hon. Minister to clarify whether the Government has powers or rights to give clear instructions to the Tribunals on fixing a time limit, if possible. If it is not possible legally, the entire House appeals to the Tribunals that when people die in accidents, the victims should not be unnecessarily harassed or delayed and they should be paid the compensation promptly.

In conclusion, it is a very good Bill. As regards revision of salaries, we are all supporting it. When we support them, it means we are supporting the victims of accidents.

Lastly, though it is out of the way and not concerned with the subject, I would appeal to both the Railway Ministers to increase the frequency of Vishakapatnam-Bangalore Express from two days to seven days so that people living in Vishakapatnam can go and see Saibaba at Puttabarthi via Chennai.

>1550 hours

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): The amending Bill is only an enabling one. So, I have to support this Bill. In the meanwhile, I have to point out one thing. Now-a-days, I am afraid of getting into the trains. I do not know whether I will reach my destination. I do not know even my end will be in the railway coach because anything may happen at any time when I am fast asleep. How can I be sure that I will see the next morning? During the dead of night, everything will go and I will be nowhere. I am sorry to say that even after 50 years of Independence, this is the situation prevailing in the country. Are you sure that you will be alive when you are travelling in train? Are you sure? Can you say that you will be alive when you are travelling in train? You cannot say. That is the situation.

We are having the largest number of railway network in the world. Railways are operating round the clock. Without vigilance, we will not be able to control this situation. Now, the entire system is in chaos. This is the common man's only mode of conveyance. If you do not keep it properly, the poor man in the street and the poor Indian will be put to hardship. So, I request the hon. Minister to be more vigilant. We have two Ministers of Railways. Both of them are very active. But your activity is resulting in catastrophe. So, I only suggest to them to be more careful in running the Railways.

What is the functioning of the Railway Claims Tribunal? The people go to the Consumer Protection & Redressal Tribunals where they get the ready justice and the compensation is awarded by the Tribunals, but the people will not get award or compensation during their life time from the Railway Claims Tribunal. There were people who had gone from the world but they have not received compensation or claims from the Tribunal. Suppose I file an application for compensation. I will not be sure whether I will get the compensation during my life time. Are you sure that you will get the claim from the Tribunal when you are alive? This is the situation. Please expedite the matter. Justice delayed is justice denied. So, I request the hon. Minister to take immediate steps so that the poor man's claim is awarded and grievance is redressed.

With these words, I support the Bill.

>SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN (QUILON): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I fully support the Bill because it is only an enabling one to give retrospective effect to salaries and allowances as per the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission. This Act is covering only the loss of property and life, and some other damages. It has been mentioned that in a tragedy took place long back in Perumon, Kollaur, 106 people lost their lives. So many persons were engaged and entrusted with the task of saving the lives of the people in the tragedy. They have not been given any proper reward. So, I would like to suggest that those who are engaged in this rescue activities should also be given proper compensation and they should also be given reward. I can cite so many examples, including Perumon, Kollaur tragedy, where many persons who took part in the rescue activities have not been properly rewarded or compensated, though they have suffered a lot of difficulties in carrying out the rescue operations. I would urge upon the hon. Minister to consider this aspect also when he takes up for consideration of the Railway Claims Tribunal Bill.

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श्री मोहन सिंह (देवरिया): सभापति जी, चूंकि रेलवे की अनुपूरक अनुदान मांगें आनी हैं और रेलवे की सुरक्षा के ऊपर एक लम्बी बहस होनी है, इसलिए इस विधेयक का बहाना बनाकर सम्पूर्ण रेलवे के क्रिया-कलापों पर मैं चर्चा नहीं करना चाहता। यह बिल बहुत सीमित उद्देश्यों का है और मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करूंगा कि ट्रिब्यूनल की संख्या बढ़ाई जानी चाहिए, क्योंकि जितने सीमित पैमाने पर अभी ट्रिब्यूनल्स हैं, जितने कार्य के निष्पादन की हम उनसे अपेक्षा रखते हैं, वह समय पर नहीं हो पा रहा है।

दूसरे डैलीगेटिड लैजिस्लेशन के जरिये एक्ट में ही नियम बनाकर इस बात का प्रावधान होना चाहिए कि इस तरह की चीजों के लिए आपको माननीय सदन के सामने आने की आवश्यकता न पड़े, इसको कृपापूर्वक देखें।

अन्त में केवल एक बात हम कहेंगे। हम राज्य सभा की दर्शक दीर्घा में बैठे थे। माननीय अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी उन दिनों विरोधी पक्ष में बैठा करते थे और उस जमाने में जगजीवन राम जी रेल मंत्री हुआ करते थे तो उन्होंने एक बात कही कि रेलवे की दुर्घटनाएं इतनी बढ़ रही हैं कि इस देश में मुसाफिर जग और जीवन को छोड़कर राम-राम जपते हुए ट्रेन में चलते हैं तो क्या मैं वही बात आपको दोहराकर कह सकता हूँ। कृपापूर्वक इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए रेलवे की सुरक्षा और मुसाफिरों की सुरक्षा का व्यवस्था करें, इस निवेदन के साथ मैं इस विधेयक का समर्थन करता हूँ।

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रेल मंत्री (श्री नीतीश कुमार): सभापति महोदय, जैसा कि सदन को ज्ञात है कि इस विधेयक का मकसद बहुत ही सीमित है, पंचम वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों १.१९९६ से लागू हो सकें, रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल्स के सभापति, उप-सभापति और सदस्यों के लिए और उसी सीमित उद्देश्यों से यह विधेयक लाया गया है, क्योंकि इसमें जो प्रोवीजंस थे, उसमें जो रूल बनाने का प्रावधान है, मूल एक्ट में, उसमें रिट्रोस्पेक्टिव इफैक्ट से हम नहीं बना सकते थे, यही अधिकार इस विधेयक के जरिये लिया जा रहा है, ताकि उस अधिकार का प्रयोग करते हुए १.१.९६ से उनको यह लाभ दिलाया जा सकें, उनके वेतनमान के सम्बन्ध में, उनकी और सुविधाओं के सम्बन्ध में, लेकिन इसका सब लोगों ने समर्थन किया है, लेकिन इस पर चर्चा के दौरान कुछ बातें सामने आई हैं। एक तो सेफ्टी को लेकर सब लोगों को चिन्ता है, हम सब लोगों का चिन्ता है, हम भी खुलासा करना चाहते हैं, सेफ्टी के क्या मैजर्स लिये गये हैं और किसी प्रकार की नई समस्याएं रेलवे के सामने आ रही हैं, हम इन बातों का सदन के सामने खुलाना करना चाहते हैं और हम भी चाहते हैं। मैंने संसदीय कार्य मंत्री जी को भी कहा था कि इस पर चर्चा होनी चाहिए, सदन में भी उस दिन कहा, बताया गया कि इस पर चर्चा होगी, विस्तृत तौर पर खुले मन से इस पर बातचीत होनी चाहिए और क्या उपाय किये जाने चाहिए, उस पर चर्चा हो। इसलिए उस विषय पर मैं आज प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त नहीं करना चाहता हूँ।

राधाकृष्णन जी को देखकर हम लोग यहां प्रसन्न होते हैं। इस उम्र में भी इस सदन के माननीय सदस्य हैं और इतने एक्टिव हैं, हर विषय पर अपनी राय रखते हैं। बहुत ही मजाकिया लहजे में इन्होंने कहा है कि कौन जाने, सुबह पहुंच पायें या नहीं पहुंच पायें। यह दुनिया तो यहां आवागमन है, कब किसको जाना है, यह तो कोई नहीं जानता है, इसलिए अपने बारे में हम सोचकर नहीं चलते हैं और ज्यादा यात्रा पहले भी हम रेल से ही करते थे, आज भी हम रेल से कर रहे हैं। कल जब इस जगह पर नहीं रहेंगे, तब भी हम ज्यादा यात्रा रेल से ही होगी।

... (व्यवधान)

श्री राजो सिंह (बेगूसराय): लाश भी रेलवे से ही जायेगी।

श्री नीतीश कुमार : इसलिए रेलवे से तो सब लोगों को अन्यानाश्रित सम्बन्ध है, यह छूट नहीं सकता है, लेकिन रेलवे की सुरक्षा पर बहस होनी है और हम लोग भी उसमें सारी बात रखना चाहते हैं।

इसके अलावा रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल के काम को लेकर और खासकर जो पैडिंग केसेज हैं, उनके बारे में चर्चा हुई है। हमारे पास आंकड़े हैं, केसेज पैडिंग हैं, इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं हैं। कुछ केसेज एक साल से पैडिंग हैं, थोड़े केसेज दो साल से भी अधिक समय से पैडिंग हैं। लेकिन ऐसा नहीं है कि जिंदगी बीत जाये और रेलवे क्लेम्स पैडिंग हैं। जितने आंकड़े हमारे पास उपलब्ध हैं, एक्सीडेंट से सम्बन्धित आंकड़े उपलब्ध हैं, लेकिन क्लेम्स और जो दूसरा नुकसान हो जाता है या सामान गायब हो जाता है, उसके भी मामले रेलवे क्लेम्स के बारे में आते हैं। रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल को अपना काम तेजी से निष्पादित करना चाहिए, इसमें किसी की दो राय नहीं हो सकती है और पूरे सदन को अपेक्षा है, सरकार की भी यही अपेक्षा है। रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल में कुछ वेकेंसीज हैं, हम उन वेकेंसीज को पूरा करने के लिए अपनी तरफ से पहल कर चुके हैं, लेकिन उसके कई स्तर हैं, उसके विस्तार में जाने का वक्त नहीं है, लेकिन हमारा प्रयास है कि रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल की वेकेंसीज को जल्दी से जल्दी पूरा किया जाये और उसके आधार पर रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल के काम में किसी भी प्रकार की रुकावट नहीं आये।

16.00 hrs.

रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल को अपने कामकाज में और व्यापकता प्रदान करने के लिए या रेलवे क्लेम्स के मामले का निष्पादन और बेहतर ढंग से कैसे हो सके तथा रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल की फंक्शनिंग के बारे में जो चर्चा की गई है, मैं चाहूंगा अच्छा होगा अगर पहले रेलवे की संयुक्त समिति में इन पर विचार हो और माननीय सदस्यों ने जो राय दी है, उस पर चर्चा हो। रेलवे क्लेम्स ट्रिब्यूनल जो बनाया गया है, पहले जो व्यवस्था थी, वह नाकाफी थी। उसमें लोगों को परेशानी होती थी।

हर दुर्घटना के बाद क्लेम सैटलमेंट के लिए सैटलमेंट कमिश्नर बनता था, राज्य सरकारें उसे बनाती थीं। उससे लोगों काफी परेशानी होती है। उसको दूर करने के लिए रेल्वे क्लेम्स ट्राइब्युनल की व्यवस्था बनाई गई है। लेकिन बदले हुए दौर में रेल्वे ट्राइब्युनल के काम को और बेहतर ढंग से करने के लिए

... (व्यवधान)

श्री राजो सिंह (बेगूसराय): पटना में है या नहीं, अगर है तो और बेहतर बना दो।

श्री नीतीश कुमार: वहां है और जगह भी खाली है। मेरा सुझाव होगा कि यहां जो सुझाव आए हैं, हम भी महसूस करते हैं।

already given a recommendation.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: No, no; the 'passenger amenities' is a different thing.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: What other hon. Members have mentioned is not related to safety and security. They have mentioned that its scope should be widened. They had asked about the functioning of the Railway Claims Tribunal and its various types. And about delays, what steps should be taken so that each and every case could be expedited?

उसके बारे में जो लोगों ने कंसर्न जाहिर की, उस पर मैंने सुझाव दिया कि रेल्वे की स्थाई समिति इस विषय को भी अपने विचारणीय मुद्दों में लेकर इस पर गहन चर्चा कर सकती है। उसके बाद अगर किसी सुधार या संशोधन की जरूरत होगी तो हम उसके लिए तैयार रहेंगे। फिलहाल यह सीमित उद्देश्य है, मैं नहीं समझता किसी माननीय सदस्य ने इस पर विरोध प्रकट किया है इसलिए मेरा आग्रह होगा कि इसको पारित किया जाए।

MR. CHAIRMAN :

Now, I shall put the consideration motion to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Railway Claims Tribunal Act, 1987, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 added to the Bill.

Mr. Chairman, The question is:

"That Clause 1, Enacting Formula and the Long Title stand part of the Bill."

The Motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the

Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed." The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we are taking up the discussion regarding atrocities committed on minorities in various parts of the country.

1604 hrs

(Prof. Rita Verma in the Chair)

rise in prices of essential commodities? The other day it was not concluded.

MR. CHAIRMAN : What happened?

inconclusive. It has to be taken up first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: According to the agenda supplied, we have to discuss the issue regarding atrocities committed on minorities in various parts of the country at 4 p.m.

up the discussion on rise in prices? It was inconclusive that day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the House agrees, we can continue the discussion on the price rise. It is up to the House. Shall we take it up?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, we are discussing the price rise.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let me please call your name, Shri T.R. Baalu. Shri Baalu, please continue.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): But, we would like to know when you will take up the question of minorities... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You will come to know shortly.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : How long will you continue, so that accordingly, we will adjust? How many speakers are there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: At least 15 names are there.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Then it will go on indefinitely.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN (BAHRAICH): No, it cannot go on indefinitely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can take up the issue of Atrocities on Minorities after this discussion is over. Fifteen names are there and I should say that everyone should take not more than five minutes.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : Madam, I think, the hon. Home Minister is not in town today and any discussion on the question of atrocities of minorities in the absence of the hon. Home Minister will not serve any purpose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is precisely the point.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : In fact, I was given to understand that the Government was to make a request for the postponement of this discussion for tomorrow. I would like to know the position because nobody from the Ministry of Home Affairs is present in the House... (Interruptions)

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : It should not be discussed in the absence of the hon. Home Minister... (Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : No, it has to be.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : But there has to be some commitment.

parliamentary practice and procedure, we can take a note of the points and pass on to the hon. Home Minister. But the point is valid that if the hon. Home Minister is present then that would be better ... (Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (CALCUTTA SOUTH): Without the hon. Home Minister the discussion cannot start... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have all agreed.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : This is a very important subject and it is not that if notes are going to be taken and passed on to the hon. Home Minister.

SHRI RAM NAIK: He has misunderstood me. I said that his point was valid, so the discussion on price rise can go and this discussion could be there when the hon. Home Minister was there. That is why I was trying to say... (Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : But we must know, when?

SHRI RAM NAIK: I will find out and let you know within 10-15 minutes time.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : Madam, you have now the names of 15 Members already on the price rise discussion. In any case, if you give five minutes to everyone, it will be more than two hours. That means it will go up to 6 o'clock. So, unless you extend the sitting of the House, we cannot take up this subject.

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