

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