

contained in the Thirty-Ninth Report (Tenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Ministry of Railways, (Railway Board)—Reservation for the Employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Northern Railway including reservation for SCs and STs in award of Petty Contracts and Minutes of the sittings of the Committee relating thereto.

- (ii) Two Tour Reports of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that the Business Advisory Committee at its meeting held on Thursday, the 11th March, 1999 allotted time for Government Legislative and other Business as follows:—

Business	Time Allotted
1. Statutory Resolution seeking disapproval of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Repeal Ordinance, 1999	2 Hours (To be discussed together)
2. Consideration and passing of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Repeal Bill, 1999, as passed by Lok Sabha.	
3. Consideration and return of the Appropriation Bills relating to the following after they have been passed by Lok Sabha:— (a) Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) for 1999-2000 (b) Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1998-99. (c) Demands for Excess Grants (Railways) for 1996-97	1 Hour

Business	Time Allotted
4. Consideration and return of the Appropriation Bills relating to the following after they have been passed by the Lok Sabha (a) Demands for Grants on Account (General) for 1999-2000 (b) Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for 1998-99	1 Hour
5. General discussion on Goa Budget for 1999-2000.	
6. Consideration and return of the Appropriation Bills relating to the following after they have been passed by the Lok Sabha:— (a) Demands for Grants (Goa) for 1999-2000 (b) Supplementary Demands for Grants (Goa) for 1998-99.	1 Hour
7. Statutory Resolution seeking disapproval of the Central Vigilance Commission Ordinance, 1999.	3 Hours (To be discussed together)
8. Consideration and passing of the Central Vigilance Commission Bill, 1999 as passed by Lok Sabha.	
9. Statutory Resolution seeking disapproval of the Patents (Amendment) Ordinance, 1999	4 Hours (To be discussed together)
10. Consideration and adoption of amendments made by the Lok Sabha in the Patents (Amendment) Bill 1999	

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Long Pending Grievances of the Employees of Regional Rural Banks regarding pay Parity with employees of Commercial Banks.

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN (Kerala): Sir, the employees of the Regional Rural Banks have been agitating for a long time, and making certain demands. Their first demand is that their pay-scales and allowances should be at par with those of the employees of the commercial banks. This matter has been dealt with by various courts also, and they have given a

decision that the settlements, which are applicable to the employees of the commercial banks, will have to be made applicable to the employees of the Regional Rural Banks also. Therefore, legally also this has to be implemented. But even now the Government is hesitating to agree to it. The management is also not agreeing to implement it. Therefore, I would like to request the Government to intervene in the matter and take a decision in this regard so that the pay scales and allowances/which are applicable to the employees of the commercial banks are also made applicable in respect of the employees of Regional Rural Banks.

SHRI N. R. DASARI (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, Yesterday thousands of employees of the Regional Rural Banks, from all over India, demonstrated in front of Parliament. Their demand is so simple and natural that they want to have a pay parity with the employees of the commercial banks. Their demand is that the decisions of the Sixth Bipartite Committee should be implemented strictly. The hon. High Court of Kerala and the hon. High Court of Karnataka have already delivered their judgement justifying their demands. But so far the Government has not implemented it. It is making a lot of discrimination, which cannot be justified by any law. Therefore, I would like to request the Finance Minister to give serious consideration to their justified demands, and see to it that these employees, who are nearly 70,000 in number, working in about 15,000 Regional Rural Banks all over India, are also given the same pay-scales and allowances, as are given to the employees of the commercial banks. Apart from that, why has the Government not noted the fact that the decisions of the Sixth Bipartite committee have not been implemented? However, the decisions of the Fifth Bipartite Committee have been implemented. So I would like to request the Finance Minister to take into consideration their demands; and agree to their demands so that the employees

of the Regional Rural Banks may also be treated at par with the employees of the commercial banks.

श्रीमती चन्द्रकला पांडेय (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : धन्यवाद, अध्यक्ष महोदय, गत दस मार्च को भारत के विभिन्न भागों में 1996 में रिजनल रूरल बैंक की 15,000 शाखाओं में कार्यरत 70,000 से अधिक की संख्या में उच्चाधिकारियों व कर्मचारियों ने अपनी मांगों को लेकर शांतिपूर्ण प्रदर्शन किया था। उनकी मांगों के बारे में संसद में भी कई बार प्रश्न किये गए हैं किन्तु अब तक कोई कार्रवाई नहीं हुई। उनकी तीन सामान्य सी मांगें हैं

ट्रिब्यूनल अवार्ड द्वारा घोषित वेतनमान की समरूपता, कुछ रिटायरमेंट बनेफिट और नेगोशिएशन कोरम का गठन। सुप्रीमकोर्ट के निर्देश पर भारत सरकार ने नेशनल इंडस्ट्रीयल ट्रिब्यूनल का गठन किया था जिसने इन मांगों की जांच कर अपना निर्णय देते हुए समान वेतनमान, मंहगाई भत्ता और अन्य सुविधाओं की सिफारिश भी की थी। लेकिन छठे द्विपक्षीय समझौते के बाद पूरा जब पूरा बैंकिंग विभाग लाभान्वित हुआ, ग्रामीण बैंक कर्मचारी वंचित रह गये। इधर कर्नाटक और केरल हाई कोर्ट के आदेश के बाद भी उनके साथ न्याय नहीं हो रहा है। कर्मचारियों में निरंतर क्षोभ और निराशा बढ़ रही है जबकि कमर्शियल बैंक कर्मचारियों के लिए सातवें द्विपक्षीय वेज सेटलमेंट की बात चल रही है। महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से अनुरोध करूंगी और कहना चाहूंगी कि स्थानीय ग्रामीण बैंक देश की ग्रामीण अर्थ व्यवस्था के अभिन्न हिस्से हैं। जब हम यह कहते हैं

हैं अपना हिन्दुस्तान कहां,
वह बसा हमारे गांवों में।

इसलिए गांवों के इन बैंकों की उन्नति हम सब का और हमारी सरकार का कर्तव्य है। यह बैंक घाटे में भी नहीं चल रहे हैं। अपने कर्मचारियों को वेतन देने की क्षमता रखते हैं। अतः मैं पुनः आपके माध्यम से अपील करूंगी और मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करना चाहूंगी कि 31 मार्च और पहली अप्रैल से वहां के जो कर्मचारी हड़ताल करने वाले हैं, उसे रोकने के लिए इससे पहले उनकी मांगों पर विचार किए जाएं और उनके साथ न्यायोचित कार्यवाही की जाए। धन्यवाद।

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I also associate myself with the views expressed by the hon'ble Member and appeal to the

Government to consider the just demands of the rural banks' employees.

Hike in Telephone Tariff Intended by TRAI

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, we have been put in a very peculiar situation, particularly, in this House. There was suddenly a hike in the telephone tariff. Although it was done by the Telephone Regulatory Authority, the Government has to give the advice and make the policy. As soon as the telephone hike was announced, the very next day, the Government took a stand in the other House. Maybe, it was compelled to do so because it threatened with withdrawal of support. I do not mind or grudge. The Minister immediately announced that the increase in the telephone hike has been put on hold. Then, again, today there is an information that there has again been a hike in the telephone tariff, maybe by a smaller amount. Sir, the first point is that this House is completely in the dark. The hon'ble Minister prefers to make a statement in the other House and he does not think it proper to come to this House and inform us about his decision regarding any hike or reduction. This is definitely a parliamentary impropriety which this Government has relentlessly and repeatedly been carrying on, despite the protest being made in the House. We have been crying in the wilderness, but there has been no response from the Government side. No system can function if the Government is so unresponsive. This is one aspect. Sir, the second aspect is that there has to be a tariff policy. The Telephone Regulatory Authority cannot work according to its whims. Suddenly there is a rise, suddenly, that rise has been put on hold; and now, again, there is a rise. Then, what is the tariff policy? The question that I would like to raise before you, Sir, is this. Should the tariff policy be such that it helps the corporate houses? Should it be such that it helps the share brokers who are constantly using the STD lines? Should the Telephone Regulatory Authority act in a

way which helps the *satta* players because they are always in touch between one place and another? There has to be a tariff policy which is consistent with our economic needs. This is important because there has almost been a collapse of the postal and telecommunication system. The postal system has almost collapsed. Letters do not reach, telegrams do not go, and the parcels are held up. Therefore, telephone is the only viable, effective, telecommunication system. So, while determining the tariff policy, the Government has to take into account the collapse of the Postal Department and the needs of the common people who have become the users of it; and, secondly, the economic needs of the country. Thirdly, there has to be some basis for determining the tariff. It appears to me that the Government is adopting a totally casual policy based on political exigency. There is no economic basis, there is no plausible basis, and there is no proper basis. Therefore, Sir, I implore upon the Government to inform the House regarding the advice they are giving to the Telephone Regulatory Authority. According to the, regulation, the Government has to advise. What advice the Government is giving to the Telephone Regulatory Authority? The House must know about it.

Secondly, Sir, there should be a coherent tariff policy, not a casual policy, not a discriminatory policy, not a policy without having its base on propriety, reason and the economic need.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think the tariff hike that was proposed through the revised tariff rates announced by the TRAI the other day, has actually caused a lot of concern to all of us because, as you know, when we are opening up different infrastructure sectors and setting up regulatory bodies, the role and functions of the regulator are subjects of major debate and controversy. So far as the TRAI Act is concerned, it has been passed by this House as well. We were envisaging that the regulator would at independently but