

attached to it. If this is the way the matter is treated, I wonder whether the relief materials sent earlier by the Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu had also met with similar fate.

I urge the Government of India, particularly the External Affairs Minister, to intervene, sort out the matter and see to it that the relief materials reach the refugees for whom these are intended.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with what the hon. Member has mentioned.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay, okay. All the Members associate themselves with what he has said. .Now, Shri D. Raja.

**Failure of the National Commission on Scheduled Castes to present
Annual reports to Parliamentary Regulatory**

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I am raising an issue which is very important. I hope the entire House takes note of this.

Sir, there has been an increase in violence against dalits and people belonging to Scheduled Castes. There has been an increase in atrocities committed against them. There is all-out social and economic exclusion of people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and dalits in the country. I do not want to take the time of the House in listing out visible forms of crimes and injustice done to the people belonging to Scheduled Castes.

There is a National Commission for Scheduled Castes. It has been given enhanced powers; it has been given the responsibility under Article 338. The Commission has to investigate; it has to monitor the implementation of safeguards provided to the Scheduled Castes under various arrangements and, in doing so, it has to cover a wide gamut of activities which include implementation of laws, provisions relating to compensatory discrimination such as reservations in recruitment, promotion and admission to educational institutions, economic development including educational development. This Commission is required to submit a report every year to the President, and the Government is required to lay it on the Table of both the Houses of Parliament, after incorporating the Action Taken Report. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has submitted seven Reports since 1992-93 onwards. The newly constituted National Commission for Scheduled Castes had submitted its first Report in 2004. The Government has not placed any report on the Table of the House since 2001. I find an amount of * on the part of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes in not submitting the Annual Report to the President regularly. I find * on the part of the Government to place the Report on the Table of the House with

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

the Action Taken Report. If this is the attitude to the people of Scheduled Castes, if this is the attitude to the Dalits, I think, it should be a major concern for the entire House. I demand the Government to place the Reports on the Table of the Parliament, along with the Action Taken Reports.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, we all associate ourselves with this.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with this.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with this subject.

SHRI VIKRAM VERMA (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I also associate myself with this.

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY (Orissa): Sir, I also associate myself with it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Minister of Road Transport and Highways to reply to the discussion.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): Thank you very much, Sir. At the onset, I would like to thank all the hon. Members who participated, not only participated in this discussion but also gave some very valuable suggestions. The intensity of participation demonstrates how roads affect the lives of all sections of people, across all States, covering so many districts, and roads have a component, as a trade component, an industrial component and an agricultural component. Roads represent a very important part of our domestic economic stimulus because it is not only employment generation but it also creates highways to betterment and progress. Sir, several valuable suggestions have been made, and I have taken note of most of these valuable suggestions. I was rather surprised, or, I would say, I am also happy that Members have gone into a lot of depth in this, in analysing the problems, which, I thought, I would be saying in my reply, Members have brought it out in their discussions in the points they have made.

Sir, this programme which was launched in the year 1999, the Highway Development Programme, obviously seeks a connectivity across the country. First, the connectivity which was called the Golden Quadrangular; then, to connect the East-West, and then various phases of the programme have come up. Sir, the endeavour now is to step up this programme as much as possible, and I have said that we will be endeavouring in this direction. We have set a target of doing 7000 kilometres per year. Towards this, there is an enormous amount of capacity building which is