

(SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) and (b) Reorganisation of Division on Railway zones is a continuous process and remain under constant review. Whenever the workload, operating requirements and economical and administrative considerations warrant, the reorganisation of Railways is taken up. Keeping in view of these considerations, there is no immediate need for making any changes in the present divisional/zonal set-up because the Railways are coping with the workload devolving on them efficiently and effectively. However, the appointment of a High Powered Committee is under consideration to go into the question whether any restructuring of zonal Railways as also of various Divisions in the light of existing as well as anticipated workload is necessary and if so in what respects.

12 Noon

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have great pleasure in welcoming the new Members who have been elected or nominated to this august House and those colleagues of ours who have been re-elected. Coming from various regions and different sections of society and with their varied experience, I am sure they will make substantial and useful contribution while participating in various debates and discussions in this House. I am also hopeful that the Members in the discharge of their responsibilities will, like their predecessors, show a consistently high standard.

The old concept of the legislature devoting its time primarily to law-making is fast changing. Our legislatures are becoming more and more conscious of their authority over the day-to-day functioning of Government. Thus for a Member who takes his works in Parliament seriously, these days there are plenty of opportunities for serving his constituency. A vigilant

Member who can raise a matter in the House objectively and pursue it can be assured of achieving positive results. But Members could make much more effective contribution in the House if they resist the temptation of putting too many questions or making speeches on too many subjects. It would be more purposeful and effective to, if Members speak only on those matters with which they could claim intimate knowledge. A system of specialisation amongst Members of the House will also vastly improve the quality of our legislation and deliberation in the House.

Our Constitution guarantees freedom of speech in Parliament. The unfettered freedom of speech which the Members enjoy must be regarded as an asset to them to draw Government's attention towards multiple problems with which the nation is confronted today and suggest remedies to overcome them. Properly and cautiously used, the freedom of speech has an undoubted value in keeping the Government alert and in tune with the changing developments, political as well as economic. Thus there is a duty and responsibility cast upon every Member to place himself at the service of the people to the best of his ability.

I would take this opportunity to add a word of caution. A speech is most effective when it is made with dignity and decorum. Strong viewpoints can be expressed without any ill-will or bitterness. Strength of conviction need not be confused with violence of expression because a good cause may suffer from bad advocacy. We should, therefore, be guided not by passions but by principles, not by passing impulses, but by abiding values. By dispassionate discussion in this House and with goodwill and willingness to understand each other's point of view, we can achieve our objectives better.

Constructive criticism ensure the better functioning of the Government

[Mr. Chairman]

and I am happy to say that we in the Rajya Sabha have a rich tradition and standard of conduct of which any Parliament can be proud. I have no doubt that the Members who have now joined us will breathe the atmosphere of the House and contribute to the working and implementation of the ideals to which they have just paid their allegiance.

I once again extend a hearty welcome to all the new Members.

SHRI K. K. MADHAVAN (Kerala): Thank you Sir, for your sermon. Can you assure the House that you will not discriminate between big Members and small Members?

AN HON. MEMBER: What is big or small?

सदन के नेता (श्री लालकृष्ण आडवाणी) : सभापति जी, मैं अपने को आप द्वारा व्यक्त विचारों से संबद्ध करता हूँ और सदन की ओर से तथा अपने दल की ओर से आये हुए नये सदस्यों का स्वागत करता हूँ । जितने नये सदस्य हैं, उनमें बहुत ऐसे हैं जो प्रभावशाली हैं, विद्वान हैं, अनुभवी हैं । मुझे विश्वास है कि उनके सहयोग से, उनके योगदान से यह सदन और भी अधिक प्रभावी रूप से देश के अन्दर लोकतंत्र को मजबूत करेगा और राष्ट्रीय सेवा में अपना महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे सकेगा । मैं पुनः उनका स्वागत करता हूँ ।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER CORRECTING REPLY TO UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 606 ANSWERED ON THE 14TH MARCH, 1978

Re. Alleged involvement of a Senior Cabinet Minister of Punjab in a Foreign Exchange Scandal

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): Sir, while laying on the Table of the House the reply given to the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No 606, on the 14th March, 1978, an inadvertent typographical error has occurred. The

year '1977' occurring in the third line of the reply may please be read as '1978'. I crave the indulgence of the House to correct the reply.

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND (Punjab): Sir, I crave the indulgence of the House for a minute. The question was submitted by me. Now, originally the question mentioned one paper. Then the concerned officials came to me. I gave it in writing that this item has appeared in "the Daily Nawan Zamana" of the 30th April, 1978. Now, not only in the reply but even in the question the year 1977 has been put. It led to a lot of commotion and noise and three days of the Punjab Assembly were wasted because the concerned Minister belongs to the Akali-Janata Government and the Minister on the basis of this paper from the Rajya Sabha denied it and tried to pass it on to a Minister in 1977. I am not causing a reflection on the officials but I would request that a thorough investigation should be made as to how a typographical mistake can be there in the question as well as in the answer when I gave it in writing clearly.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Statement showing the Bills passed by the Houses of Parliament and assented to by the President

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) showing the Bills passed by the Houses of Parliament and assented to by the President:—

1. The Constitution (Forty-third Amendment) Bill, 1977.
2. The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill, 1978.
3. The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill, 1978.

*The Bill was passed by the Houses of Parliament during the Hundred and Third Session of the Rajya Sabha and assented to by the President on 13th April, 1978.