

[25 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

उपसभापति: आप बैठ जाइए।

श्री रामदेव भंडारी: मैं बैठता हूँ। महोदया, मैं हमेशा आपकी आज्ञा का पालन करा हूँ।

उपसभापति: आप बैठिए, देखिए मंत्री जी खड़ी हैं। मैंने बिजनैस बूला लिया है। आपका नाम मेरी टेबल पर नहीं था। आप बैठिए ना, बहस क्यों कर रहे हैं।

श्री रामदेव भंडारी: मैं आज्ञा पालक हूँ, मैं बैठता हूँ।

उपसभापति: मैं आपको बता दूँ कि जब बिल खत्म हो जाएगा, उसके बाद हम आपका मसला ले लेंगे। जब एक बिजनैस शुरू हो जाता है तो उसके बीच में आप बिहार पर बोल भी देंगे तो उसका कोई नतीजा नहीं निकलेगा क्योंकि इनका बिल पूरा हो जाए, इस पर एक ही घंटे का समय दिया गया है और खाली 3 लोग इस पर बोलने वाले हैं। इसके बाद आप बोल लीजिएगा। बिहार से सबको हमदर्दी है, जैसे आंध्र प्रदेश से हमदर्दी है।

Now, we will take up the Rehabilitation Council of India (Amendment) Bill, 2000
...(Interruptions)...

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Madam, three lakh telephone workers are on a strike. ...(Interruptions)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. N.K. Premachandran, why are you interrupting? We have taken up the Rehabilitation Council of India (Amendment) Bill, 2000. Are you not-concerned about the rehabilitation of the handicapped people? Please take your seat. ...(Interruptions)... Nothing will go on record without my permission.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN *

THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2000.

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (MS. MANEKA GANDHI): Madam, I beg to move:-

"That the Bill to amend the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration. "

Should I speak now, Madam?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

* Not recorded.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Madam, the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 came into force with effect from the 31st July, 1993. The main functions of the RCI include standardization of training courses at different levels. Regularization of standards of training in all the training institutions throughout the country, recognition of institutions/universities for their training courses within and outside the country on a reciprocal basis and maintenance of a Central Rehabilitation Register for professionals possessing recognized qualification in the area of rehabilitation.

The experience gained by way of implementation of the RCI Act has brought out the need for making certain amendments in the Act, with a view to making its implementation more effective and broad-based and to bring it in consonance with the Persons with Disabilities Act. In so far as the definitions are concerned, with a view to avoiding legal complications, as a part of our consultation process with experts and NGOs working in the disability rehabilitation, we have set up an expert committee to advise us. I would like to express my appreciation for the suggestions given by the committee, many of whose major suggestions for amendments have been accepted and incorporated in the Amendment Bill. We have proposed to strengthen the activities of the RCI by adding research and rehabilitation and promotion of special education within its ambit. I am happy to inform you that the RCI has undertaken a major programme for training of the PHC doctors and other personnel working in rehabilitation throughout the country. In the present Act, the Central Ministries representatives are three—the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. There are a number of Central Ministries which are vitally concerned with different facets of problems being faced by persons with disabilities as rehabilitation is a multi-sectoral task. The expert committee recommended raising the number to five. In the proposed amendment, seven Ministries are represented. The names of these Ministries/Departments have not been specified in the Amendment Bill so that in case any change in the representation is considered necessary, the Act need not be amended time and again. In addition to the original three Ministries, the other Ministries will be given representation by rotation and this will be specified in the revised Rules which will be framed after the amendment. There is no intention to bureaucratize the control over the Council but to ensure association of other concerned Central Ministries/Departments for more effective coordination within the schemes meant for the welfare of the persons with disabilities.

The RCI Act is a regulatory Act. Any dilution in the training standards may adversely affect the quality of rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. Therefore, the penal provision has been retained with a view to have some teeth to ensure its effective implementation.

My Ministry is implementing, various programmes for the welfare of the persons with disabilities. We have a continuous dialogue with the NGOs in this regard. This process will continue. The Government has an open mind to review the implementation of the Act as and when required. Any useful suggestion from the hon'ble Members is welcome.

I would like to thank the hon'ble Members of the Standing Committee on Labour and Welfare for their valuable suggestions and support given to this Bill. We have considered the suggestion of the hon'ble Committee regarding inclusion of the definition of 'Special Education' in consultation with the Ministry of Law (Legislative Department). We have been advised that since the expression 'special education' is finding a place only in the long title of the Bill and in the context of the qualifications of the Chairperson of the RCI and as it is a well known and well understood expression, it is not necessary to insert the definition of the expression in clause 3 which relates to the definitions.

I request the hon'ble Members to support this Bill.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is one amendment by Shri Margabandu. Mr. Margabandu, do you want to move your amendment or not?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU (Tamil Nadu): There are only two points.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Margabandu, your name is there in my list as a speaker. At that time while you are speaking, you can speak. But if you want to move the amendment to send it to a Select Committee, what is the point?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: I would like to speak.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You speak. I am not denying you your right to speak. I am only saying you that this Bill has to be discussed today. Why do you want to move your amendment to send it to a Select

Committee when it is already under consideration? Why do you want to delay it?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: If an assurance is given by the Minister for an amendment, a vital amendment, I am not pressing for it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: When the time comes, then you can request the Minister. She will consider, if she can. But at this point of time would you like me to say that you are moving your amendment? Do you want to press for your amendment?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Yes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Madam, I move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Rehabilitation Council Act, 1992, be referred to a Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha-consisting of the following Members:-

- (1) Shri Suresh Pachouri
- (2) Shri Sangh Priya Gautam
- (3) Shri Satish Pradhan
- (4) Shri H.K. Javare Gowda
- (5) Shri C.P. Thirunavukkarasu
- (6) Shri N. Thalavai Sundaram
- (7) Shri Ram Deo Bhandary
- (8) Shri Dipankar Mukherjee
- (9) Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan
- (10) Miss Frida Topno

with instructions to report by the first day of the 191st Session. *The questions were proposed.*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: So, without speech, he has moved the amendment.

श्री ललितभाई मेहता(गुजरात): महोदया, भारतीय पुनर्वास परिषद (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2000 का समर्थक करने के लिए मैं खड़ा हुआ हूँ। महोदया, करीबन 15 साल पहले यह सिर्फ एक सोसाइटी ही थी और 1992 और 1995 में जो विधेयक पारित हुआ उसके तहत कुछ बातें ऐसी लाई गईं जिन पर यह संशोधन बहुत पहले आना चाहिए था लेकिन यह अब लाया जा रहा है इसलिए मैं मंत्री जी को बधाई देता हूँ।

दुखी मानवता की सच्ची सेवा करना यह ईश्वर की सच्ची उपासना है और इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए मंत्री जी जो यह विधेयक लाई हैं इसका सभी को स्वागत करना चाहिए। महोदया, देश में 100 करोड़ की जो आबादी है उसमें से करीबन पांच करोड़ बीस लाख लोग ऐसे हैं जो असमर्थता के शिकार हैं। कोई अंधा है, कोई अपंग है, कोई अपाहिज है, कोई मानसिक और शारीरिक दृष्टि से असमर्थ है। पांच करोड़ बीस लाख लोगों में से करीब 80 प्रतिशत हमारे नागरिक गांव में रहते हैं। गांव में रहने वाले असमर्थ नागरिकों के लिए जो चिन्ता करना चाहिए, जो व्यवस्था होना चाहिए, वह आज तक भी नहीं हुई है। आज भी असमर्थ नागरिकों के लिए जो व्यवस्थाएं हो रही हैं वे ज्यादातर शहरों में हो रही हैं।

महोदया, विकलांग और अपंग लोगों को शिक्षा देने के लिए एक इंस्टीट्यूट देहरादून में बना हुआ है। मानसिक रूप से विकलांग लोगों के लिए एक इंस्टीट्यूट सिकंदराबाद में बना हुआ है। अर्थोपेडिकली विकलांग लोगों के लिए कलकत्ता में एक इंस्टीट्यूट बना हुआ है। मुम्बई में गूंगे-बहरे नागरिकों के लिए व्यवस्था कायम की गई है, लेकिन जो रिमोट एरियाज हैं, गांवों में बस्ती में रहने वाले जो नागरिक हैं उनके लिए हम कम मात्रा में सुविधाएं पा रहे हैं। वहां पर जो स्वैच्छिक संगठन हैं, एनजीओज हैं वे इस कमी को पूरा करने के लिए प्रयत्नशील हैं। एनजीओज के रोल को भी सरकार को ध्यान में रखना चाहिए। एनजीओज को जो सुविधाएं मिलनी चाहिए, प्रशासनिक सुविधाएं मिलनी चाहिए, आर्थिक मदद मिलनी चाहिए, सबसिडी मिलनी चाहिए वह नहीं मिल पा रही है। इस दृष्टि से मेरा मंत्री जी से निवेदन है कि सरकार पूरे देश में, सभी क्षेत्रों में इस विधेयक के बाद भी, वह इसको कार्यान्वित करने में सफल नहीं रहेगी। जहां-जहां एनजीओज काम कर रहे हैं, उनको प्रोत्साहित करना, उनकी दिक्कतों को दूर करने के बारे में सरकार को सोचना चाहिए। मंत्री जी ने बताया है कि वह बाकी के मंत्रालयों को क्रम में इस विधेयक के अन्तर्गत लाना चाहेंगी। मैं उनसे निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि आप स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय, श्रम मंत्रालय और मानव संसाधन मंत्रालय में जो महिला और बाल कल्याण विभाग हैं उनको भी इसके साथ जोड़कर अपनी स्कीमों को कार्यान्वित करें।

[उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री सुरेश पचौरी) पीठासीन हुए]

जो नये बच्चे पैदा होते हैं उनको पालियों की ज़ाप दी जाती है। उसी प्रकार से जो बच्चे बचपन से अंधे होते हैं, उनके लिए भी विटामिन 'ए' की व्यवस्था की जाए। इसके लिए देशभर में एक कार्यक्रम बनाया जाए, इससे देश में जो बच्चे अंधे हो रहे हैं, उनकी संख्या को हम कम कर सकेंगे। इसके लिए ठोस व्यवस्था पर विचार करना जरूरी है। हमारे कई क्षेत्र ऐसे हैं जो ट्राइबल हैं जहां पर वनवासी बंधु रहते हैं वहां पर भी शारीरिक असमर्थता पाई जाती है। इस विधेयक के बाद

1.00 P.M.

भी ट्राइबल एरियाज के लिए चिंता करना जरूरी होगा। हमारे देश में अनेक लोग ऐसे हुए हैं, हमारे अनेक सांसद, अनेक विधायक, मुख्य मंत्री, कलाकार, साहित्यकार, कवि आदि भी विकलांग थे। विकलांगता अयोग्यता का परिचायक नहीं है। उनमें भी शक्ति निहित रही है, इनकी निहित शक्ति को बाहर लाने के लिए जो प्रावधान किये जाने चाहिए थे, उन प्रावधानों पर विचार इस विधेयक के पास होने के बाद मंत्रालय को करना चाहिए। मैं इस विधेयक का समर्थन करता हूँ। आपने मुझे बोलने का समय दिया इसके लिए आपका धन्यवाद।

DR. A.R. KIDWAI (Delhi): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Bill. I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for bringing this important Bill before the House. It is a very important subject because there is a large population of physically handicapped people in India. I must appreciate, all of us must appreciate, the efforts which the hon. Minister is making for their rehabilitation. In India, because of unhygienic conditions and because of poverty, the number of people who are physically handicapped is much larger than anywhere else. The people who are physically handicapped can be utilised to do productive work so that they can live a honourable life in the society provided they are given some training to do certain activities. It has been found that those who are physically handicapped, if they lose one ability, they develop other abilities much better and they can do better. Take the case of those persons who are blind. Their sensory nerve improves. Their memory improves and they can remember things much better than many others. Those who cannot move physically, can do many things. They can do more productive work sitting at home. Those who cannot speak, are ideal persons to be utilised at places like printing press, etc. because they can be very good typists. They can edit the material for printing without disclosing the secrets and examination papers to anybody else. Such people are being utilised in other parts of the world more effectively. So we should take advantage of the capabilities of these persons. I am happy that in India there are several institutions which are doing good work. Unless they are given proper attention and help by the Government, they cannot succeed. Our objective should be to give training to physically handicapped people and rehabilitate them in productive work so that they can go back to their families and be productive members and enjoy the respect and affection of their families. Some institutions have been set up for this purpose. But because of bureaucratic interference and because of bureaucratic negligence they are languishing. Therefore, I would like to take

advantage of this opportunity to request the hon. Minister to constitute an Expert Committee which should visit such institutions to ascertain their suitability and capacity to give training. After ascertaining their suitability and competence, they should be recognised. There should not be any hindrance in the continued support which they need. I know about several institutions which have been functioning for the last several years and have been doing well. But suddenly they are informed that the Ministry has refused to give any grant. Therefore, they have been closed down. The students who were under training have been suffering. Sir, I support the Bill very strongly. I request the hon. Minister to set up an Expert Committee in the Ministry itself. The grant should be given only on the recommendation of the Expert Committee and that too without any bureaucratic interference. Because of bureaucratic interference the Ministry is lacking in its efforts to rehabilitate the physically handicapped people. I am sure, as a result of this Bill, we would make more efforts to rehabilitate these people. Thank you.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY (West Bengal): Sir, this is an important Bill. And as per the figures of National Sample Survey, it concerns about five per cent of our population, that is, about five crores of our people. Our country has the largest handicapped population and hence we have a large responsibility. I want to share some of my concerns with the hon. Members of this august House.

In the first place, amendment to section 2 of the principal Act does not really extend the definition of handicapped persons. I understand, many of the handicapped people are extremely unhappy with the proposed amendment. Some forms of handicap like autism should have been included in this definition.

My second point is, clause 2 of the proposed Bill extends the objective of the Council from 'training of rehabilitation professionals' to include 'promotion of research'. This is a welcome change. But which are the institutions from where this training for research will be conducted? The principal Act in the Schedule mentions some institutions which grant recognised rehabilitation qualifications. But they are not only few in number but they are also located only in the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai and Calcutta, and in Chandigarh, and only three more are in Pune, Bhavnagar and Mysore. We need many more institutions to create professionals. This is a very specialised job and it needs commitment, mental courage, dedication and humanism. It is necessary to understand the handicapped persons, to recognise them, and to have not only

compassion for them, but also to respect them as human beings. In the rural areas of our country, it is very difficult to get expertise or even medical facilities. Institutions should be created in rural areas so as to generate awareness, to create professionals and to promote research. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the schemes which the Ministry has in order to build institutions which would train professionals and promote research in the rural areas and in various districts of the States. Then, clause 4 of the proposed Bill leaves much to be desired. Clause 4 (a) stipulates qualifications of the Chairperson -- 'having experience in administration' etc. I am afraid, this will only help a retired bureaucrat who can claim to have vast experience in administration. Actually, the emphasis should be on quality -- qualifications of proven humanism, record of dedicated service and championing of human rights. And when we look at Clause 4 (b), it is, indeed, important to have interaction amongst the different departments of the Central Government. It is a good idea to have representations from various Ministries. But why is it that the names of the Ministries have not been mentioned? In the principal Act, three Ministries, namely, Health, Welfare and Finance, have been mentioned. I feel, the Ministries of Human Resource Development and Labour must also be included in this Council. What does the hon. Minister have in mind about this? Why is it that they have not specifically mentioned the names, because if it is not specific, then there will be room for future manoeuvring and future politicking amongst the bureaucrats.

Sir, the amendment of Section 13 is welcome. But compulsory registration may dissuade some of the experts who are offering voluntary services, from doing so. Another point is that this Bill does not incorporate any of the suggestions made earlier by the NGOs and also some of the earlier draft for amendment in the principal Act. Has the Ministry consulted the well-known NGOs who are in this area? Lastly, I would like to say that Dr. Kidwai's suggestion of appointing an expert committee to go into the details of the Bill and also to identify the grievances, demands and the interests of the handicapped is a must. With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU : Sir, I propose two amendments and I also request that this Bill should be referred to the Select Committee. Now, section 4 of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 defines four categories of disabilities and, according to this section, 'handicapped' means a person who is visually handicapped, hearing

impaired or who is suffering from locomotive disability or who is suffering from mental retardation. Under the Disabilities Act, seven categories of disability have been mentioned. Under the Disabilities Act, 'disability' means blindness, low vision, leprosy, hearing impairment, locomotive disability, mental retardation and mental illness. Now, an expert committee was also appointed. That expert committee had categorised ten disabilities. I request the hon. Minister to take into consideration the recommendations made by that expert committee. Those recommendations have not been taken into consideration for the purposes of this Bill. In the proposed amendment 2(1)(c), there are only seven categories, whereas the expert committee report also included learning disability, autism and receptive and executive forms of Aphasia and Dyphasia; these have not been incorporated in this amendment. You had appointed the expert committee and the committee had suggested all these things. Then, what is the reason for omitting these categories? I do not want to impute any motive. But I do want to request the hon. Minister to consider the inclusion of these three categories of disability also.

The second amendment is about the constitution of the Council. Section 3 of the Disabilities Act gives several categories of persons who can be Council members. There are nearly 28 members who have been contemplated to be the Council members in the original Act. Clause 4 (b) of the proposed Bill mentions only seven members. I am bringing it to the attention of the hon. Minister. Clause 4(b) says, "Such number of members not exceeding seven, as may be nominated by the Central Government, to represent the Ministries of the Central Government dealing with matters relating to persons with disabilities". This is the amendment that you want to bring in. If the original provision of 28 members is put there, as per section 3 of the original Act, there will be a remote chance of any influence or interference. But, now, the expert committee's suggestion... (*Time Bell*) I am finishing, Sir. So far as the expert committee's suggestion regarding representation of two more Ministries, namely, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Labour and Employment is concerned, the proposed amendment here merely says 'Ministries'. It does not specify the five Ministries mentioned by the expert committee. The expert committee refers to the five Ministries. So, those five Ministries should be incorporated in the Bill. My request is that one representative from each of these five Ministries and two representatives from the States, in rotation, by alphabetical order, should be taken in that Council. So far as five Ministries which have already been identified by the Expert Committee

are concerned, my only request is - so far as clause 4(b) is concerned --that when representatives are being taken from the Ministry, one representative from each Ministry has to be taken. If this Bill is passed as it is, there will be a discretion for the Ministry to take all the five members from one Ministry. That should not be there. One representative from each of these five Ministries should be taken. Besides that, two representatives from the State Governments should be taken. Sir, I have one more point. There are several NGOs which are functioning in our country. I request that at least two representatives from NGOs should also be taken in that Council. In this way, the number of members will have to be increased to nine. (*Time Bell*) I am concluding, Sir.

There are three Acts relating to persons with disability. One is the Rehabilitation Council Act, 1992; the second is, the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 and the third is, the National Trust for the Mentally Retarded, 2000. All the three Acts should be scrapped and one comprehensive Act incorporating all the essential provisions of them can be thought of so that the necessary objective can be achieved. There is one deviation in the Bill. Even after receiving the Expert Committee's Report, the same has not been incorporated in the Bill. So, I request that this Bill may be referred to a Select Committee so that there can be an indepth study of all these things. Apart from that, this Bill is all right. So, the Ministry can take into consideration these two things. If my suggestions for including three more items of disability, one representative from each of the five Ministries and two representatives from the NGOs are agreed to, then I welcome this Bill. If it is not done, this Bill will not serve any purpose. The Government is going against the recommendations of the Expert Committee which, in fact, was appointed by it. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to take into consideration all these things and bring in necessary amendments in the Bill so that the interests of the persons with disability can be safeguarded.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, I stand here to support the amending Bill. I think the views expressed by many of my learned colleagues here are a good contribution to the Bill. Having got the experience of this Ministry, I request the Members of this House that they should not delay this Bill even for two minutes.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM (Uttar Pradesh): Then don't speak.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: I will delay it for two minutes. because of these reasons. Sir, if we accept the amendment of the hon.

Members that this Bill should be referred to a Select Committee and more and more Ministries should be represented in the Council, then, it would defeat the purpose of the Bill. Sir, for the first time, a serious and effective step has been taken to mitigate the problems of people with disability. Sir, this House takes serious note of the problems of the people who are just two or three per cent of our population and who are crying for reservation and special rights, but the Government does not take note of the problems of these people who constitute five or more than five per cent of our population. These people do not belong to one religion or one region but they represent the entire country. Sir, if this Bill is sent to a Select Committee, I doubt, that this Bill can ever see the other end of the tunnel.

It will be defeating the purpose. If you send it to a Select Committee, as a friend here said, then the Ministry's control will get strengthened. Please, don't take it otherwise. Those who come to the meetings of the Select Committee, particularly relating to this delicate nature, would not be interested. It is wrong to refer it to a Select Committee just to satisfy some people or just to give hearing to the officials of various Ministries.

In the end, I would say that we should avoid procedural wrangles in adopting this Bill. I appeal to the House to congratulate the learned Minister, Smt. Maneka Gandhi, who has brought this Bill, who has put her heart and soul on this. This Bill will usher in a new era in giving benefits and in creating a future for the disabled people. I support the Bill.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I would like to thank all the Members for their interest in the Bill. Before I begin to answer each person's concerns, I would like to say that, actually, it is a general concept that passing a Bill through Parliament is a long, serious and tedious process. I would never have undertaken it had I not thought that I would do something better than what had previously been done or that I would do something that filled in a lacuna. I would never bring a Bill here to make it worse, especially for a section of society, having very few sports people, and that they, I am afraid, some times, are not very effective. Therefore, we have really put our heart and soul, as Mr. Ramoowalia said in his kind words. We have put our heart and soul and it has taken me two years. It has gone through an expert committee and round table discussions around India to come to this stage.

Sir, one by one, I would like to answer the concerns. The hon. Member, Mr. Lalitbhai Mehta said that there should be more things done for the disabled. Since I have become the Minister, we have started one camp, for the minimum of a week and some times more than one week. Every Member of Parliament has been written so that, if they want, we can give them a camp. Over a hundred Members of Parliament have written back and have had camps. There have been more disabled people who have been given limbs, eyes, ears and other things in the last two years than those who have been given in the last forty years. Even that, I feel, is inadequate. Mr. Mehta has also asked as to what is available in the rural area; we have four institutes in metropolises. With that in mind, we are setting up 108 permanent centres for the disabled, one for every five district in all rural areas, of which the first ten have already been set up, and by the end of this year, there will be 30 that would be set up; by the end of next year, all the 108 would be in position. Each one of them would cater to 10,000 to 20,000 people on a permanent basis, which means, if you have had a limb when you are a child of six, you can come back and have it replaced when you are seven or eight or ten-year old. That will be exchanged for free. If you have no vision, you will be given aids, if you have a hearing problem, you will be given aids; if you need an operation, you will be referred to one of our hospitals and given priority. Apart from that, six composite centres, which are big hospitals for just the disabled, are in the process of setting up, so that they do not have to go to normal hospitals and catch illness which they do not have because disabled people are not ill; they are just disabled. One in Kashmir has already begun operation; one in Lucknow is starting this month; and, we have chosen four other States too. There are four spinal centres being set up because one of the main problems is spinal disability. And ALIMCO which was in the red to the tune of several crores of rupees is now very firmly in the black, not only they have made so much profit, but they are also starting four ALIMCO units to provide more and more limbs for the disabled. One of them is being set up in Karnataka and the other in Orissa. By the end of this year they will start working. We have done a great deal in the last two years for the rural populace. Regarding NGOs, we have changed our schemes to make them simpler. We have started giving large amount of money to many more NGOs. In fact, the number of NGOs has doubled and the amount given to them has also doubled. We have also revived schemes where we have teachers, where we have staff and we have increased the salaries so that better people are attracted. Prof. Kidwai mentioned — I would like to thank

him for his support — the problems of NGOs which are getting grants. I can assure him the process has been streamlined. He said that in the case of a number of NGOs who are getting grants, these grants have been stopped. I am sorry to say this. But, for the first time, in many, many years, we are undertaking very intensive investigations into the NGOs. All the NGOs who have taken money and found not to have done anything are being blacklisted. Unfortunately, our blacklist grows longer by the day. Why I feel very strongly about this is because this is an area for the minorities, for the disabled, for drug addicts, for all the people that life forgot or the society marginalizes. If the NGOs do not work for them after taking money from the Ministry, then it is India's money going to the bad. That is why my inspections are very detailed. On the other hand, every Member of Parliament has been sent a letter by me that these are the NGOs I am giving money to in your district, and would you kindly tell me whether they are working and whether you would like to have more of them. We have tried to involve Members of Parliament at every stage where the NGO sector is concerned. Regarding what Dr. Ray, said, I think, there is an incomplete understanding of what we are about to do. For one thing, we are bringing the RCI Bill in consonance with the PWD Act so that there are no two competing, contesting and anti-each other Bills'. I have not limited the category. Please understand. I would be the last person to limit the category. Mr. Margabandu has also said that we have left out autism. We have not left out anything. But what has happened is that, over the years, more and more disabilities have come to light. Many of the disabilities that we are talking about now did not exist 10 years ago. Let us look at Alzheimer's disease, let us look at Parkinson's disease, let us look at autism, these were not even in the purview of the Government till recently, just now they have become major problems. So, I have deliberately not listed any illnesses, leaving the field open to all. I want to put thalassemia, I want to put autism and also I want to put in other ten diseases that my successor will take into account, because, by then, there will be new problems coming, with more pollution and with more overcrowding. Who knows what disabilities will come. Therefore, in the PWD Act, which I will bring in the next Session, we have put *anya* disabilities in which case all these can come in. We have not just limited it. But we have expanded it to include everything. If I say autism only, thalassemia only, then my successor will have to bring this Bill again before Parliament to cover more disabilities. Therefore, I have left the door open for anybody who is in

trouble to come to us. Secondly, as regards training, Dr. Ray said that we have only four or five institutions. I would like to inform the House that we have 121 recognised training institutes. Each institution becomes better and better and capable of training, because I do not want second or third class training. Last year, I have trained 28,000 doctors to be rehabilitation experts. And as each institute comes up, we will recognise it. The more the institutions that come up, the better it is for me. I have no interest whatsoever in limiting knowledge or confining it only to a few institutions. For the rural areas, the RCI has collaborated with the IGNOU and the Bhoj University. Regarding, the administrative experience of the Chairman, Dr. Ray has said that we only want to put in retired bureaucrats. Let me tell you that the last two Chairpersons have been eminently suitable. There was Thakur Hari Prasad, who ran one of the largest centres in the country for the disabled, and he has been succeeded by Major Ahluwalia, who all of you know, is one of the foremost carers for the disabled in this country and runs the spinal centre. All of them have vast experiences.

Now, regarding including Ministries, one of you have said, "Make it less," some of you have said, "Make it more." Some of you have said, "Specify it." Some of you have said, "Don't specify it". Out of 28 people, 7 are going to be from Government. Therefore, the role of the Government in pushing through funds is very limited because it is one-fourth. Secondly, I have again not specified the Ministries because I have found in my experience that sometimes we need the Railway Ministry, sometimes we even...

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: I would like to interrupt here. It is already that five ministries...

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Let her complete first.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: We have three Ministries that have been originally named. The Expert Committee has recommended that. We have put in 1...

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Out of 7, 5 are from Ministries; two are State representatives.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: That is all right. But what we have said is, we will not confine ourselves only to the Ministry of HRD or that dealing with women and child. I have deliberately again not taken their names, and

I am allowing different Ministries to come in because we have worked with the rehabilitation people. The disabled in this country cannot be confined to just education. Sometimes they may need the Railways to do something, maybe Indian Airlines to do something, maybe they may need Petroleum and Chemicals to do something. Therefore, as and when the Ministry is needed on that particular agenda of the RCI, they will be called in, which is why we have allowed them to rotate. So, it is not a confined procedure but an opening procedure because I find that when Ministries are not involved in the RCI, they also tend to do nothing. Therefore, I have thrown the entire Government open-to be picked from for the RCI.

Secondly, you have said that all seven will sit there. It is not true. They have been called in rotation. I have said in the beginning that other Ministries will be given representation by rotation and this will be specified in the revised rules which will be framed after the amendment.. I said that in the beginning. So, perhaps you did not hear that.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Not only can even Members be incorporated but two more NGOs can also be added.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Out of 28, the rest are NGOs.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: No NGO has been sought to be included.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): Let her reply, Mr. Margabandu. After that, if there is any point, you may ask her.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: All NGOs have been included. I myself come from a NGO background. I am very keen for their expertise. Sir, I would, like to conclude by thanking all of you. I request you to pass this Bill.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: If the assurance is given by the Minister for including these things as spoken to, then I will withdraw my amendment. After an assurance is given, I will withdraw.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: No, Sir, I have not given you any assurances. I have already dealt with what you have said and the last thing that you have asked is that it should be referred to a Select Committee. It has already gone to the Standing Committee. So, for it to go to yet another Committee would be really reinventing the wheel.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Goa): I would like to know from the hon. Minister kindly to clarify whether she or her Ministry has issued revised guidelines for NGOs assisted by her Ministry, indicating the reduction in funds and the withdrawal on tapering scale to terminate the assistance over a specified period. If she has done that I want to know whether she realises that the revised guidelines will act as a disincentive for the voluntary sector, resulting in stagnation in the programme meant for the targeted groups?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): She has already said that she will involve MPs also as far as giving funds to NGOs are concerned.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the reduction in funding not act as a disincentive for the targeted groups?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, this is not concerned with the Bill at all. But, in spite of there being the risk of delaying it by two more minutes, I would like to submit that we have not reduced anything. What I have done is, there are a large number of NGOs whom we have been supporting for many, many years. All those NGOs, which can stand on their own legs, after a review, will have their funding reduced by 5 per cent; and those that are there in the tribal areas and those that are there in the rural areas and those that cannot ever be self-supporting will continue to get the support. Now, what is happening is, my entire funds are committed liabilities to NGOs which should have stood on their own a long-time ago. On the other hand, we have allowed them, for the first time, to charge fee from those who can pay, which is something they have been wanting for many years. There is no question of reduction for those who need it. Nor do I have any intention whatsoever of weakening this sector in the slightest.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Okay. I would request the hon. Minister to have a fresh look at these revised guidelines and call Members of Parliament to give information. You may look at it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): Mr. Margabandu, are you pressing your motion for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Yes, Sir. There was an assurance in the course of the Minister's speech. But, when I specifically pointed out, the Minister bogged down and said, "I am not giving any assurance." Since that assurance has not been given, I am pressing for referring the Bill to a Joint Select Committee ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Which assurance? What for? What assurance do you want? ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : He wants an assurance on the learning disability, Autism, receptive and executive forms of Aphasia and Dyphasia which you said, 'It will be open.'

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Yes. I have already explained it.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: He wants an assurance on this. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: It is already there in the Bill. You do not need an assurance for this. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: If it is there, I withdraw my motion.

"The motion for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee was, by leave, withdrawn."

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): Now, I will put the motion moved by Shrimati Maneka Gandhi. The question is: "That the Bill to amend the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI) : We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill. There is one amendment in clause 2 by Shri Margabandu. Are you moving?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: I am not moving.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): There is one amendment in clause 3 by Shri Margabandu. Are you moving?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: I am not moving.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

Clause 3 was added to the Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): There is one amendment in clause 4 by Shri Margabandu. Are you moving?

SHRI R. MARGABANDU: I am not moving.

The question was put and the motion was adopted

Clause 4 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 7 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRIMATI MENAKA GANDHI: I beg to move: "That the Bill be passed."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

I. THE APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS) NO. 3 BILL, 2000

AND

II. THE APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS) NO. 4 BILL, 2000

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): The Minister will move the Bills separately, but the discussion will take place together.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the authorisation of appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services for the purposes of Railways during the financial year ended