

Secondly, it is the question of protection of immigrants who are supposed to be registering. The agreements are entered into between the employer in the Gulf or other countries and the Indian citizen who is traveling there for a job. I would like to know whether the Protector of Immigrants is supposed to protect the interests of the immigrants. What is the role of the Protector of Immigrants when such contracts are branded as illegal in the countries in which he is supposed to be working? Is there any coordination between the Protector of Immigrants on the one side and the Ministry of External Affairs which issues the passports and the Missions which work there on the other? Is there any coordination? It has also been mentioned in the reply about the country-wise details. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : If you speak more, it will be disallowed. You have spoken more than two minutes. If you want an answer, please sit down now.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : There is complete coordination between the Labour Ministry and our Missions abroad. As I stated earlier, we have been holding the practice of getting all the documents verified by our Missions abroad. But we have suspended this practice for three months to facilitate the repatriation of the workers. Therefore, I assure the hon. Member that every care will be taken about this.

New Railway lines

+
*105. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL :
SHRI DINSHA PATEL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that allocation of resources for creation of new railway lines have rapidly declined during the current Plan period.

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor, and

(c) the steps being contemplated by the Government to ensure allocation of adequate resources for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir. The expenditure in the current plan period has been more than that in the earlier plans.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Efforts are constantly being made to get increased Budgetary Support so that a higher allocation could in turn be made for New Line projects.

[Translation]

SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind Hon'ble Minister that whenever his Department approaches the Planning Commission alongwith proposal for laying new lines in

backward areas of the country, it fails to present its case properly that is why lesser money is allocated. We have got their report with us. Earlier too they have done less work. The funds that are given for expansion of Railway Services are not spent for laying Rail Lines in backward areas; rather the funds are spent for providing latest and better facilities at broad gauge lines routes. The provision of new lines for backward area is being made in the budget for several years but money is not provided as per requirement to complete these projects. I would like to ask Hon'ble Minister as to when as Indore-Godhara line included in the budget proposals?

MR. SPEAKER : You should ask your question in two minutes

[English]

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK : Backward and tribal areas should be given priority

[Translation]

SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : Whenever the matter pertaining to backward areas is raised, nobody pays heed to it. An amount of 13-14 crore rupees has already been spent on this line but as on today, the work is at a standstill. I would like to know from Hon'ble Minister as to why was this project abandoned after spending 14 crore rupees on Indore-Godhara line and when would it be started again?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Hon'ble Member is aware and while presenting the Railway budget, I had stated that for expansion of the Railways the practice had been followed by the Railways was in accordance to the criteria of profitability of a particular line. More attention was paid towards profitable lines. However, this time an effort has been made in the Railway budget not to give priority to profit making lines and instead extend the Rail Line in the backward areas 11 Line of the country. Even if Railways suffers on account of this, the Government should make up for the loss. We want to take up the expansion of Railway from the point of view of development of people. From this point of view, we have tried to connect many backward areas.

It is true that Godhara-Indore Railway line is still incomplete. Work is in progress in Devas-Makasi Section and its total cost is Rs. 48 crore. As hon'ble member has stated and infact he himself has given the reply that whatever funds we get for laying new Rail lines are allocated by the Planning Commission. Whatever amount is spent, comes through budgetary support. Railways does not spend its own money. It does not spend out of its inner resources. We have made a demand that budgetary support should be increased. Earlier the budgetary support was 75 percent which has now come down to 60%. We have made a request to the Government in this regard. I would also like to inform the hon'ble Member that in the Seventh Five Year Plan, the total allocation was Rs.884 crore

against which the expenditure was Rs.916 crore. Similarly, during Eighth Five Plan, Rs.1216 crore were spent against the allocation of Rs.1013 crore. I do agree that even this much is not sufficient and we want to complete all the projects taken up by us as soon as possible but we require four and a half thousand crore rupees to complete them and it does not include the Baramulla-Srinagar-Udhampur line for which we require additional two and a half thousand crore rupees. Therefore, we do lack funds but, as I have stated, we are requesting the Government for budgetary support. If our budgetary support is increased, then all the pending projects would definitely be completed very soon.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : There is no increase in real terms.

MR. SPEAKER : Do you not have the second supplementary question?

[Translation]

SHRI DINSHA PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to ask hon'ble Minister that while replying to the question he has stated that the expenditure in the current plan period has been more than that in the earlier plans and expenditure has been incurred out of Railway budget also. But I want to know as to how many new Railway lines have been laid and the budget provision referred to by hon'ble Minister. The statement made by Shri Shanti Bhai about the budget, has been made on the basis of 14th Report of Railway Committee that lesser progress has been made during 1994-95 and 1995-96. Hence about the budget also I want to know as to what was the target of Railways? Laying of new rail lines is also very important and you should keep aside some funds for laying new rail lines.

[Translation]

Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Minister of Railways, have discussed or contemplate to discuss with the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission for constructing new rail lines and mobilising new resources for this purpose and secondly, whether the Government contemplates to invite private companies for laying new rail lines?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Rs.211 crore have been spent during 1995-96 and Rs. 220 are to be spent during 1996-97. So far as the construction of new rail-lines are concerned, 881 k.m. new rail line was constructed during 7th Five Year Plan while during 8th Five Year Plan, 760 k.m. line except Konkan line — a plan worth Rs.669 crore, was constructed.

So far as the privatisation is concerned, the private companies want to take up the projects which are profit-making but no private company wants to take up the

construction of rail-lines to interior areas which are loss-making. If the private companies are interested to construct rail lines in interior areas, they are most welcome under BOLT Scheme and we also give them incentives.

[English]

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK : Sir, the hon. Minister represents the backward class people and he is fighting for the cause of backward class people also. But my district and my whole parliamentary constituency is deprived of a railway facility; even one inch of railway connection is not there. In general knowledge, there is a question: Which is the district which has no railway line? Shri Srikant Jena has also advocated my cause to the hon. Minister of Railways. I would like to know categorically from the hon. Minister the date and time when work on the Khurda-Bolangir railway line would be started. I also want to know how much money is going to be spent on it because there is no budgetary provision for that at the moment.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this matter, at present, is at policy making stage, therefore, I do not want to say anything about it but I would like to say him that not only the hon. Member but I also had advocated for the said line. We have removed all the hurdles in this matter, be it Planning Commission or any other hurdle. I would like to assure the Hon'ble Member that not only he but I am also equally concerned in this regard.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, once the hon. Minister had said that the railway scheme will be of two types—First welfare railway schemes and second-profit making railway schemes. Lalitpur Singrauli railway scheme is a welfare railway scheme. As per the information given to me by the hon. Minister is that the survey work of Lalitpur-Singrauli rail line passing through my Parliamentary Constituency has been conducted and is at the stage of referring it to planning commission. I, through you, would like to know the present status of the scheme and the time by which it is likely to be announced in the House after getting sanction from the Planning Commission as well as the Ministry of Railways?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is very much concerned about her Parliamentary Constituency and she had also staged 'Dharana' in this regard due to which we agreed upon sending a survey team. The survey has already been conducted and it is being sent to Planning Commission. The hon. Member has same say in the Planning Commission as I have. Therefore, I urge upon the Hon'ble Member to use her good officer. As soon as it is cleared by the Planning Commission, we will take further steps.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Do it in the current Budget

SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know about new rail line from Narkhed to Amrawati. Last time, you had provided Rs.10 crore for that. The farmers of the area are ready to part with their land for this purpose but the Government had no money to provide compensation to them. Rs.4-5 crore have been allocated in the Budget for this new rail line. Last time also, the allocation of Rs 5 crore was made. The then Hon'ble Minister Shri Suresh Kalmadi had assured that the construction of the rail line would be completed soon. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the construction work of new rail line from Narkhed to Amrawati is going to be started soon and whether he contemplates to give compensation to the farmers of the area or not?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : I do not have any information in this regard but I assure the hon. member to look into the matter although we have resource crunch.

SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Last time also, you had said so.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : I assure you to look into the matter and find out how much expenditure is to be incurred on it. We shall do whatever we can.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways has just stated that he is paying special attention to backward areas. A survey was conducted in 1989 to construct rail line from Agra to Fatehabad via Itawa and to link the boundries of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and its report was presented in 1989 itself. When I was speaking on Rail Budget in Parliament, the hon. Minister at that time had assured to accept in the current Budget itself but that could not be given a concrete shape. All the reports of survey are gathering dust in the Planning Commission. I would like to know from him the time by which the said rail line is likely to be completed?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we after getting the survey work done, refer it to Planning Commission. When it is cleared by the Planning Commission it is sent to Expanded Board, an institution which does not fall under the purview of the Ministry of Railway where the matter is thoroughly considered by the concerned persons. I would like to compare our condition with that of a cricketer who has to score good runs as well as save his wicket also. We also have to construct the rail lines as well as keep an eye on the funds too. I, as a Minister of Railway, would like to assure the hon. Minister that I would construct more and more rail lines and I personally want to do it as far as possible. But the Planning Commission has all the procedures and it accords priority to each project. Today, I cannot tell you the exact date when the work is likely to be started and completed but I would like it to be completed soon.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, it is a fact that most of our railway lines were given to us by the Britishers. Since Independence, we have added only eight thousand kilometres through our railway network. Therefore, the problem is very serious. That is why so many hon. Members are standing up to ask questions. Though the allocation made by the Planning Commission has come down in real terms over the years, that is not the only problem. The allocation made by the Planning Commission for the Eighth Five Year Plan is less than Seventh Five Year Plan in real terms and not in monetary terms.

The problem is with the policy of the Railways also. They are all concentrating on gauge conversion, not on creation of new railway lines and not on the safety aspects. Therefore, my question is whether the Railway Minister is changing the priorities in the Ministry to concentrate more on the creation of new railway lines and also on the safety aspect which is not a part of the Ministry of Railways? (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We are going to discuss the Supplementary Budget of the Railway Ministry when you will have enough opportunity to discuss all these things. It is a policy matter and so you cannot ask more questions.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Member for raising a basic point. I do not say that the issues to which priorities were accorded were not worth it but I stated in my Rail Budget about priority sectors like rail lines which were left. Out of total 62 thousand kilometre track, 54 thousand kilometre track was constructed during British period, we have added only 8 thousand kilometers to it. More and more new rail-lines should be constructed. Therefore, rail lines except uniguage were to be rendered useless. I said that rather rendering it useless, we will develop it. Besides, so far as the question of safety is concerned, a seminar is being held in Vigyan Bhavan from yesterday in which representatives of 19 countries are participating. I myself am concerned in this regard. For me wagons are equally important and we have decided to increase the expenditure on it from Rs.2800 crore to Rs.3700 crore. We did not decreased the amount to be spent on gauge conversion. The Government has increased the allocation for wagons and rolling stock. Likewise, we are taking up some rail projects for constructing new rail lines and also incurring expenditure on some national projects. For example the rail line from Baramulla comes under national projects and my colleague says that no amount has been released for that. The hon. Prime Minister has announced Rs.50 crore for this purpose. Therefore, I would like to assure the hon. Member that we are making an uniform policy for every sector on priority basis.