

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, December 26, 1989/Pausa 5,
1911 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Bojja Venkata Reddy : (Nandyal)

11.05 hrs

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Funds for Pending Railway Projects in Karnataka

*21. SHRIM.V.CHANDRASEKARA
MURTHY:
SHRI V. SREENIVASA
PRASAD:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be
pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have
recently urged State Government of Karnata-
kataka to contribute funds for completion the
pending railway projects in Karnataka State;

(b) if so; whether similar requests have
been made to other States; and

(c) the reasons for asking financial
assistance from State?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Requests were made for
expeditious completion of two Metropolitan
Transport Projects, one each in Tamilnadu
and Maharashtra, but the State Government
did not agree to contribute funds.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASEKARA MUR-
THY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the first part of the
question which the hon. Minister has replied
in the negative is also not true.

His request for seeking contribution from
the State Government has come out in most
of the prominent newspapers in Karnataka
as well as in Delhi. He had also a telephonic
talk with the Chief Minister of Karnataka
seeking contribution for completing the
Konkan Railway Project. In view of this, it
has become very unusual and for the first
time the Centre is seeking contribution from
the State Government to complete their own
projects.

I want to know from the hon. Minister
whether it is the policy of the present Gov-
ernment to seek contribution from the State
Government to complete their railway proj-
ects or whether it is due to paucity of funds.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : The
hon. Member has referred to some newspa-
per reports and also my telephonic talks with
the Chief Minister of Karnataka. It is true that
I did speak to the Chief Minister of Karnata-
kataka. What I suggested to the Chief Minister
was that I would like to have a talk with him
to find out whether Karnataka could also as
the State of Maharashtra has been doing—
this is on an initiative of the State Govern-
ment of Maharashtra itself—to make funds
available for new railway lines and also for
conversion of gauge. There was no specific

proposal that was made. I only said that I would like to discuss this matter with him. The next thing he told the Press was: that the Centre had urged him to do certain thing. There was no urging. There was only a suggestion and that was that I would like to discuss with him as to what had been implemented in Maharashtra.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASEKARA MURTHY: Then what is the policy of the government? He has not answered that.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: As far as I am concerned, I would like to pursue the initiative; which the Government of Maharashtra for instance had taken. If such initiatives come from other States also, I would like to pursue them.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASEKARA MURTHY: The work on this Konkan railways for the development of this Western Coast has commenced in 1977-78 at the instance of the then Railway Minister. But we from the Karnataka side made several efforts to start the work from the Karnataka side also, that is, from Mangalore. But it fell on deaf ears. In view of this, I want to know from the present hon. Minister—he is also interested, sometimes, in the affairs of Karnataka—whether he can use his good offices to start the work from the Mangalore side.

My second part of the question is regarding conversion of Bangalore-Mysore line and also Miraj-Bangalore line into broad gauge. It is pending since decades. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to allocate more funds and complete this project very soon.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: So far as the initiative from Karnataka in regard to Konkan railway is concerned, on the Mangalore-Uduppi sector, some work has already started. Some funds were earmarked and there has also been some increase in the amount that has been earmarked for the current year. But the problem is that land has still not been made available. When land became available near Uduppi, the work

was started in November, this year. Now if the State Government could expedite the acquisition of land and make it available—the total allocation for this particular sector is Rs. 52 crores—then I am sure, it will be possible for us to see that the work on that is expedited.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASEKARA MURTHY: It is for the current financial year.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: No; that is the overall cost of the project.

Sir, may I also answer the second part of his question in regard to the Bangalore-Mysore section? There has been, so far, an outlay of Rs.17 crores for the year 1989-90 on this particular work, which amounts to 20% of the total Plan outlay for gauge conversion which was available for the current year. I believe that this work will be completed by December 1991.

Regarding the Miraj-Bangalore conversion, there was a survey which was carried out in 1984, and the project cost at that time was estimated to be Rs.500 crores—only for this conversion of 1934 Kms. The project was not taken up at that time because it was felt that it was not remunerative; but there have been, subsequently, more requests that have come from the people of that area, and a re-assessment of the whole project, including the traffic potential etc. is currently being done.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : The hon. Minister was pleased to refer to the West Coast Konkan railway. During the time of the then Railway Minister Mr. Dandavate, the railway work had started from that end—from Bombay to Roha. Now it has come up to Roha. From the Mangalore side also—it has been my constituency—the work has been started, as stated by the hon. Minister, in the month of November. The then State Government was not keen in acquiring the land. Now, the present Government is keen to acquire the land, and the proceedings have already been started.

Is the hon. Minister going to start this railway line from both the ends—from Roha to Udipi, and from Udipi to Roha? The total cost of the project is about Rs.850 crores. For this purpose, to seek funds, is the hon. Minister going to think of having financial resources from the Indian Railway finance Corporation which had floated bonds—which could be useful in this work—by setting up its branches in the project area, to collect necessary funds?

The hon. Minister was finding it very difficult to get the funds. There is the resource crunch. There is no doubt about it. Now, to overcome it, he can go in for this also. Is there any proposal? Is there any proposal to construct a railway line between Hubli and Karwar; will he have this railway line in Karnataka?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The hon. Member was a little unkind to the previous Government of Karnataka because this project was cleared by the Planning Commission only in January 1989, by which time things had moved in Karnataka to a point where the previous Government was not able to do much; and the project was included for the first time in the budget for 1989-90—by which time there was no Karnataka Government. It was President's rule there.

Therefore, insofar as the hon Member's information about the previous Government not having done the necessary work to acquire land etc. is concerned, that is not correct.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: This is my constituency.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Therefore, he should know it better than. Then it is all the more reason why he should be more correct and accurate when he gives that kind of information to the House.

As I said, the moment the land became available—and that was for the first time in November—the work has begun. We have

earmarked a little more than what was the allocation in the Budget at the time the budget proposal was first made; and I would certainly seek the hon. Member's help in seeing that land acquisition process is completed, so that next year, we could put a little more money and expedite that particular sector.

Insofar as the other aspect of the hon. Member's question about money being raised is concerned, I would certainly seek the hon. Member's assistance to persuade the State Government to come forward with some initiative in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Mahadik.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: I have referred to the Indian Railway Finance Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: I have already called Mr. Mahadik.

[*Translation*]

SHRI VAMANRAO MAHADIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Since the hon. Minister has made a reference to Maharashtra, I would like to put a question with regard to the railways in Marathawada and Konkan regions of Maharashtra. Have the Central Government permitted the Government of Maharashtra to raise loans for financing the project and if so, the amount thereof?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter was under consideration of the Planning Commission which has cleared the project recently. Since it is a matter between the State Government and the Planning Commission, I am not in a position to say anything in to the amount.

[*English*]

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: I want to know whether it has come to the notice of the Government that in spite of a request from the State Government of Karnataka and me for an early completion of the Harihar-Kottur Railway line in Bellary district

of Karnataka the Government is not in a position to take up the project? They are saying that the project is not feasible. May I also bring it to the notice of the Government that the ore which is being produced in Hospet region is being transported to Madras while the Madras port is not in a position to absorb the entire ore? If this Harihar-Kottur line is completed, I think, half of the ore can be diverted to Mangalore Port. Keeping this in view, will the Government re-examine the whole matter and see that that this line is completed early?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I will look into this matter.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has stated that it will be easier to take up such projects if the State Government could provide some funds. An experiment in this respect has been made in Maharashtra. I want to say that the State Government has also some priorities of its own. I represent Bombay city. No attention has been paid to the sub-urban services in Bombay for the last 10-12 years. Will the Government adopt a policy to raise funds by issuing debentures to the citizens living in Bombay and utilise the same for city's development so that they get their due and the Government is able to raise finance?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has raised a very basic issue. Before I give any reply to it. This point has to be examined thoroughly.

[*English*]

Quality of Edibles for Railway Passengers

*22. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the edibles sold on Railway station between Delhi and Nagpur are of poor quality; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to improve the quality of edibles made available for Railway passengers?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) There have been some complaints in this regard.

(b) Steps taken or proposed to be taken for further improving the catering services include introduction of casserole service and economy meals, modernisation of base kitchens, intensifying inspections and action against the contractors or staff responsible for lapses.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BANSWARI LAL PUROHIT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the new Government can conveniently say that it assumed office only 15 days back and previous Government was responsible for all.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr Purohit, please put your question.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: I have just come by A.P. Express. This train used to arrive at 7 o' clock. When Shri Madhavrao Scindia was the Railway Minister, the trains used to arrive on time. But today the train was late by 2 1/2 hours. I alighted at Nizamuddin Railway Station and I am coming here straight from there. I request the hon. Minister to pay attention towards punctuality of trains. The first thing is that food articles sold at the stations are spurious ones. I would like to cite the example of vendors at New Delhi Railway Station. I purchased a packet of Pan Parag for Rs. 2/- but it was found to be spurious one. It is harmful and the passengers are being cheated in this manner. Earlier, the vendors used to display rate charts, but no vendor at New Delhi Railway Station displays rate charts Now-a-days. I purchased a piece of chocolate for my child. The vendor started bargaining. He started from Rs.8 but ultimately sold the same for Rs. 4.50. There has been sharp deterioration in the quality of eatables. I purchased 'purees' which were fried in oil of