

1	2	3	4	5
4.	Construction of a new B. G. line from Apta to Mangalore	300.0	..	Survey in progress.
5.	Construction of a Branch line from Roha to Murud (Janjira) on Apta-Dasgaon Route	5.0	..	Survey in progress.
6.	Conversion of Miraj-Latur N.G. section to B.G.	49.74	..	Survey completed. Exports under examination.
7.	Conversion of Parbhani-Mudkhed-Adilabad M. G. to B.G. and its extension upto Ghagus.		Survey is being carried out at the cost of State Government.	Survey in progress.
8.	Construction of a new B, G. line from Wardha to Katol	12.0	(—)	10 Survey report under finalisation.

Memorandum for Clearance of Konkan Rail Line

*664. SHRI VASANT SATHE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a memorandum from peoples' representatives from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa urging for early clearance of the Konkan Rail Line proposal;

(b) if so, the important facts thereof; and

(c) steps/decision taken in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b). Representations have been received from Members of Parliament, Public bodies and the State Governments of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa for the construction of Konkan Railway.

(c) Final Location Survey from Apta to Dasgaon portion of the Apta-Mangalore rail link, has been completed. Final Location Survey between Das-

gaon and Ratnagiri including spot checks between Ratnagiri and Mangalore is in progress. A traffic survey and financial appraisal of Apta-Dasgaon rail link has been included in the Railways Budget for 1976-77 at an estimated cost of Rs. 85,000/-. The project will be considered for being taken up for construction after the proposed surveys and financial appraisal are completed and also subject to availability of funds.

SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT: The answer is really strange because the Government refuses to say which are the backward areas. Very often it has been admitted on the Floor of the House that Konkan and the entire coastal area is a backward region and I don't know why they are not prepared to accept the position.

Secondly, I should like to point out that several MPs have given a representation requesting the Government to start work on the Apta-Dasgaon section which is part of the Apta-Mangalore railway line. The final Location survey has also been completed, but there is no outlay for this construction of item No. 4 this year. Why should it be so? Why should they not start construction work on the Apta-Dasgaon section at least, if not on the Apta-Mangalore section?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: I fully share the anxiety expressed by the Hon. Member. His question is in two parts. He asked why we have not accepted some criteria for declaring an area as backward. The reply, as mentioned in the Statement, 'does not give the criteria that have been laid down by the Railways because the Railways don't lay down any criteria by themselves. A request has to come either from the Planning Commission or the State Government concerned that 'this is a backward area kindly take up work for having a survey for taking up new railway lines'. This is how, in that context, we have said that the Railways do not themselves declare an area a backward area.

Regarding part (ii) of the question, I would say that: for conducting the survey of this particular section, Apta-Dasgaon Rs. 85,000 were earmarked and survey reports have become available. We are analysing those reports, and as and when resources are available, we will definitely take up that project.

SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT: This is a stereotyped reply that is being given for the last three years—not now, but for the last three years. When are you going to make funds available? For the entire Apta-Mangalore line, the Planning Commission may not be prepared to give so much of money. But so far as Apta-Dasgaon line is concerned, only Rs. 14 crores are required. You may request the Planning Commission to give Rs. 14 crores and take up this work. As a matter of fact, on this line, some work has been done by the State Government also and that is being washed away. This line is necessary in the national interest. Will you start work on this Apta-Dasgaon line at least this year, particularly in view of the fact that survey, etc have been completed many years back?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: No doubt, this work was taken up as a drought relief measure by the State Government, and the State Government, as soon as

those conditions were not there, said, "Now we cannot do this from our side, the Railways have to treat this as a regular project". We approached the Planning Commission, but unfortunately it was not possible for the Planning Commission to allocate the funds that are required for the construction of this line. I agree with the hon. Member in what he has said. He should join us in persuading the Planning Commission.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The first thing that I would like to know from the hon. Minister for Railways is this.—we are not wanting to stand on any local sentiments—do we consider this economically and nationally necessary that the coastline where there is no other communication facility should have a railway line—right from Goa to Karnataka? Once it is felt that it is economically a desirable thing, even to develop that region which has a tremendous potential, why should we allow this to be delayed? How many more years should it take? Now the cost has gone up again. You had provided only Rs. 85,000 for the survey I do not know whether even the survey has been completed or not. At least the Railways should have a complete survey done on their own. For that, you do not need to go to the Planning Commission. You may have to go to the Planning Commission only for finances, and that also can be done in phases. You do not need all the 14 crores of rupees, or whatever the amount may be, at once. A railway line is not built in a day. If we are eager, then what is it that is stopping us from going ahead? You push the ball to the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission throws it back in your court. Where exactly do we stand? Be frank and tell us where the matter really stands.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: It is not correct to say that no survey has been done. Much of the thinking has gone into it. The survey was done with your permission, I will read this out. It has been revealed by the report that

the cost of construction of Apta-Dasgaon section, about 108 kms., excluding the cost of rolling stock, will be Rs. 13.90 crores; the Apta-Mangalore line, which is about 909 kms., was estimated to cost us about Rs. 300 crores. There is no lack of urgency on our part. With your permission I can say that, at one stage, the Prime Minister herself has spelled out in so many words that it is a very important and urgent project and that it should be taken up as early as we can. But, unfortunately, it boils down to this that funds are not available with us. We cannot proceed with this project simply because funds are not available. The Planning Commission is not coming in our way. They have their own priorities, and looking to the overall picture of the financial position of the country, it will be difficult for anybody to commit here that, by such and such a date, we will be able to do this

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I would like to know if any effort has been made by the Railway Ministry to consider the economic feasibility of this project. That means, you invest certain amount, you can take it either from the financial institutions absolutely as an economic proposition or even the world Bank and in how many years the amount can come back. Has the Railway Ministry considered this as an economic proposition?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI KAMLAPATI TRIPATHI): It is a suggestion for action. So far as funds are concerned, we must get the clearance of the Planning Commission for the scheme itself and the funds also. Unless that is done, how can we proceed?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The scheme has been cleared.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: The idea has been cleared.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Now there is a difference between the idea and the scheme. Have you placed the scheme before the Planning Commission for clearance?

SHRI KAMLAPATI TRIPATHI: Yes.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Though the question related to Maharashtra, the hon. Minister has made two general statements. Firstly that the Railways do not lay down the criteria for considering an area as backward, with which I have no quarrel. Secondly, he has stated that the provision of funds is not made state-wise or area-wise. I hope, the hon. Minister will agree that for an overall economic development of the country, creation of infra-structure including taking railway lines to the backward areas is of imperative necessity. May I know, whether the Railways have any policy of linking up the backward regions with railway lines so that there can be economic development in that region. If not, what is the overall policy of the Railways regarding linking up of the backward regions and the industrially under-developed regions, or the Railways have no policy at all?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: As far as part (1) of the question is concerned, I need not repeat what I have already stated. With regard to the policy, the answer is: Yes, Sir. I would like to add that the real conceptual change was made in the year 1973-74 by the then hon. Railway Minister from the orthodox financial criteria for construction of new line in the backward areas and under-developed areas. Certain criteria were laid down and the policy spelt out in which the State Governments were expected to share certain portion of the expenditure. The criteria are:

- (1) Exemption, full or partial from payment of dividend liability to the General Revenues during the period of construction and for a specified num-

per of years after completion and opening to traffic.

- (ii) Participation of State Governments or local authorities, in reducing the cost of construction by giving the land and labour content of construction free of cost,
- (iii) Suitable adjustment upwards of fares and freight structure applicable to the newly constructed line which in common parlance is called inflation chargeable mileage, and
- (iv) Levy of fares and freight on a discontinuous basis so as to be a set-off against telescopic structure of standard fares and freight.

This is a clear policy laid down by the Railway Ministry and there is no much time has been taken?

SHRI RAJA KULKARNI: The Railway Ministry need not lay down any new criteria for backward regions. It is quite clear that where the Government has allowed the industries to grow in rural areas or outside the metropolitan cities, the Railways have not developed. These are automatically backward regions from the railways point of view, because the industries are allowed, but infra-structure facilities like railways are not allowed to grow. In view of this, will the hon. Minister explain why the work on the railway line which was sanctioned for Deva-Basti is not going according to the schedule and the funds have not been allowed for the current year? Similarly, what has happened to the Bombay Metropolitan Railway which was cater to the needs of rural areas outside Bombay and how far that project has made progress?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: The Deva-Bastin railway link is in progress and the upto-date progress is about 23 per cent of the project. A provision of Ra. 3.5 crores has been made in 1976-77 and the work is targeted for completion by March 1980.

SHRI RAJA KULKARNI: What about Bombay Metropolitan railway?

MR. SPEAKER: Is that also a backward area?

Next question—Mr. Samanta,

Demands of Publishers of Hindi Railway Time Table

*649. **SHRI S. C. SAMANTA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the demands of the publishers of the Railway Time Table in Hindi which are still pending;

(b) how long will it take for the Railway Administration to take decisions thereon; and

(c) whether publication of Hindi time table is likely to be discontinued?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) and (b) the matter is under active consideration of the Railway Administration and a decision is expected shortly.

(c) No Sir.

SHRI S. C. SAMANTA: May I know how many years back and by whom this matter was referred to the Railway administration and why so much time has been taken?

SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI: There is a private publishing firm by the name of All India Railway Time-Table Office. This is a firm in Varanasi. They have asked us to give them certain financial assistance and other facilities and the matter is being considered.

We are prepared to help them wherever it is needed and if they continue to publish this All India Hindi time-table, they are welcome to do so.