

have been made or proposed to be made by the Govt. for the survival of those families in which children are the only earning hands for their dependent old mother, grandmother or grandfather?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Do you have any programme to compensate the earnings of those children who have been removed from the work?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, we have a 'National Project on Elimination of Child Labour'. Under that scheme, those children who have been taken out from hazardous industries, have been paid a subsidy at the rate of Rs. 100 per child.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri A.C. Jos. One sentence question, please.

SHRI A.C. JOS : Sir, nothing is moving in this country regarding elimination of child labour. Wherever there is child labour, they are still in persistence.

In this regard, public awareness is very much essential. Is the hon. Minister or the Central Government ready to involve the trade unions as well as non-governmental organisations to give publicity to eliminate the child labour? Is there any scheme with the Government to get the involvement of public, the trade unions and the non-governmental organisations in this regard?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Yes, Sir, we are including the trade unions and the non-governmental organisations.

Recently the Supreme Court had given a verdict in this regard. We have to go through that judgement thoroughly and I think after that, we have to re-look the entire issue.

Objectives of BOLT Scheme

*406. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) the objectives of own your wagon scheme and BOLT scheme launched in 1992 and 1994 respectively;

(b) whether the schemes have had very poor response in attracting the private investment;

(c) the details of achievements of the schemes and reasons for poor performance; and

(d) the reaction of the Government about further implementation of these schemes?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) The objective of 'Own Your Wagon' and 'BOLT' Schemes is to supplement the resources of the Railways for expansion of rail transport capacity through private sector participation in funding.

(b) The response to 'Own Your Wagon' Schemes has been, by and large, encouraging. The response to 'BOLT' Scheme has not been encouraging for fixed infrastructure projects.

(c) and (d). Since inception of 'Own Your Wagon' Scheme in August, 1992, orders for 11580 wagons (in terms of four wheelers) have been received and 7043 wagons (in terms of four wheelers) have been procured till November, 1996. Under the 'BOLT' Scheme, 2 gauge conversion projects (Mudkhed-Adilabad and Viramgam - Mehsana) and one rolling stock project (for 3050 wagons in terms of four wheelers) have been awarded. The poor performance of 'BOLT' Scheme for infrastructure projects is attributable to high cost quoted by the bidders and inadequate response to the Scheme. However, on the experience gained, efforts are made to make the schemes more attractive.

[English]

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Sir, the objective of the wagon scheme is to free the railways from investing in the procurement of wagons, acquisition of rolling stock and expansion of the railway network into the backward areas, and to attract the small private investment in the industrial and commercial activities and in new railway lines so that overall development in the railways could be accelerated.

But only 7043 wagons have so far been procured during the five years of inception of your own wagon scheme. It shows the failure of the scheme to attract private investors.

Therefore, Sir, I want to know from the Government as to what specific measures are being taken to attract private investment in the railways so that the railways could be free from investing in wagon and other developments.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Member has rightly said that the scheme was started in 1992 under 'Own Your Wagon Scheme'. Since we do not have enough resources to meet all the requirements, hence own your wagon scheme was launched in 1992. Our target was to acquire 5 thousand wagons every year there from but the scheme did not prove very successful and did not evince special interest. So improvements were made in the scheme. The lease charges which were initially 14.5 percent for ten years in 1992, were hiked to 16 percent for 10 years in 1994. Besides, we have also provided several exceptions which inter alia means that

such leasing company was also included which was not there in the last scheme. Design loan and service charges which were 6.5 per cent were reduced to 3 per cent. In case of direct procurement, these charges were reduced to 1.5 per cent from 2.5 per cent. We have also said that if Railways would fail to provide prescribed number of wagons in time, then it will pay compensation Rs. 4 per tonne. It proved very effective. In 1994-95, we had orders for 797 wagons and in 1995-96, we received orders for 4572 wagons and up to November 1996-97, we received orders for 4650 wagons. I think that this trend is very encouraging and we have been successful in attracting the investors.

[English]

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : There is poor maintenance in regard to the cloak room, provision of bed rolls in mail and express trains in Rayagada, Langigarh road, Kesinga, Titilagarh, Kantabanji, Khariar Road, Sambalpur, Rourkela Stations. So, I would like to know from the Government as to what specific steps are being taken to improve the maintenance of the above mentioned railway stations and what amount has been provided so far for this purpose.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are mainly two parts of the scheme. One is 'Wagon Scheme' and the other one is 'BOLT'. Hon'ble Member has said about maintenance. This issue was deliberated in the supplementary budget of Railway till one O'clock in the night yesterday and we have explained this position in this regard. We are keeping a close watch with regard to maintenance. So far as bed rolls etc. are concerned, we have categorically stated that there would be no shortage in AC II Tier and so far as maintenance is concerned, special cells have been set up for this purpose. We are strictly taking action also. I assure hon'ble Member that so far as two parts of maintenance is concerned—one is maintenance of bed rolls etc. and the other is maintenance of coaches—we are improving the maintenance of coaches and bogies. We have shortage of sufficient number of coaches, but we are improving the condition of coaches that are available with us, by getting them repaired and through other means. Besides, we are also seriously talking measures to overcome the shortage of the coaches.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 407, Shri V.M. Sudheeran - not present. Question No. 408, Shrimati Vasundhara Raje - not present. Question No. 409, Shri Anant Kumar Hegde - not present. Question No. 410, Shri George Fernandes - not present. Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey - not present.

Question No. 411, Dr. M. Jagannath.

DR. M. JAGANNATH : Question No. 411, Sir.

Government Policy on Pvt. Telecom Operators

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*411. DR. M. JAGANNATH

SHRI GOPALKRISHNA T.

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Government Policies throttle Pvt. telecom operators', appearing in the Economic Times dated November 21, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and reaction of the Government thereon;

(c) whether telecom regulatory body has been constituted; and

(d) if not, when it is proposed to be constituted?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The news item emphasises that refusal of the Government to permit long distance service, the ceiling on tariff set by the Government, the arbitrary fixation of interconnect and port charges and the limit on the number of Circles that an operator can implement have made private investment in basic services unprofitable. The parties which responded to the tenders were aware of the Government's stand on long distance service, the ceiling on tariff and also the number of Circles in which a private operator would be allowed to operate as these were clearly spelt out in the tender documents. The Government, therefore, do not agree with the contentions made in the news item. The prospective operators, however, have drawn Government's attention to the problems that have arisen on account of the non-transferability of the licence and also expressed the apprehension that their projects will not be financially viable. These problems are being looked into by the Government.

The Bill for constitution of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has been introduced in the Lok Sabha and was referred to Standing Committee on Communications whose report has been laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 21st Nov., 1996 and on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 26.11.96. Further action is being taken in the matter.

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH : The IIM, Bangalore has said that private operators would not get more than 2.5 per