

[Dr. Prabin Chandra Sarma]

An inefficient person should not be given an award.

The operational ratio has been very bad. I desire that the operational ratio in the next Budget be improved.

Now I come to my own sector.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Madam, I am not taking much time. I should be given some more time.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have already taken ten minutes. Please conclude now.

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : I shall take only a few minutes more.

Now I come to the facilities being given. In this House, there has been rather an applaud and we also applaud the Railway Minister that some projects have been given to the North-Eastern region. But the picture is not that rosy. The Bogibil bridge is now proposed. Rs. 15 crore is the estimated expenditure. But the tenure for completion of the bridge will be about ten years. I request the hon. Railway Minister that this Bogibil bridge be constructed in about five years' time so as to make a positive impact on the people of the North-Eastern region.

Jogigopa-Pancharatna line has not been completed. I desire that this bridge and the railway line from Jogigopa to Guwahati be completed during this year, that is, 1997.

I desire that the gauge conversion from Metre Gauge to Broad Gauge from Lumding to Silchar be completed within about two years. I also desire that the Kumarghat-Agartala railway line should be completed within 3-4 years.

Along with this, I also desire that-

- doubling of the line be done up to Guwahati;
- Guwahati railway station be improved to make it the heart of the North-Eastern region;
- all district headquarters be connected with railway line, as has been requested by Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar;
- the frequency of the Rajdhani Express be increased to at least six days a week;
- direct trains be introduced thrice a week for Mumbai, Pune and Bangalore;
- the speed of the Express trains to Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai and Cochin be increased.
- train-buses be introduced between Guwahati and Nalbari, and Bongaigaon and Dhubri.

Gauge conversion of M.G. line to B.G. line from Rangia to Murkong Chelak and from Kamakshya to Pandu Store Depot may also be completed ... (Interruptions)

I also demand the construction of rail-road bridges in the city of Guwahati, introduction of a circular railway surrounding Guwahati and reintroduction of the M.G. line between Silghat to Chaparmukh and from Chaparmukh to Moirabari. For reasons not within the knowledge of the people, these railway lines had been stopped. In the presence of the hon. Prime Minister, the Railway Minister had made a statement in Silchar that these two new lines would be introduced. I request the Railway Minister to introduce these two lines.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Thank you.

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Madam, I have not been given sufficient time to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have already spoken for fourteen minutes. If everybody speaks for fifteen minutes, many others will not get any time at all.

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Madam, normally I have a habit to end my speech with a Sanskrit verse. I shall take only one or two minutes more.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, you conclude now. Otherwise I shall call the next speaker.

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Madam, you are very kind. You are so kind that you will give me another one minute at least.

[Translation]

Mera Bharat Mahan, hence with a Sanskrit Shloka I conclude my speech :

Purnam idam, purnam idam, Purnam Purnam udishyate,

Purnasya purnamodayoh Purnamev Avshishyate.

[English]

Bharatvarsh is a *mahan desh*. It has got its capacity and it has got its immense resources.

If we all come together, if we put our heads together, probably everything that we - all the Members from different parts of the country irrespective of the Parties that we belong to - our desires may be achieved. I think the Railways can then be a real route to social mobility.

With these few words, Madam, I conclude and I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

16.45 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Eleventh Report

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Ram Naik to present the B.A.C. report.

SHRI RAM NAIK : Madam, I beg to present the Eleventh Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

16.46 hrs.

RALWAY BUDGET — 1997-98
DEMANDS FOR GRANTS ON ACCOUNT —
(RAILWAYS) - 1997-98
DEMANDS FOR EXCESS GRANTS —
(RAILWAYS) 1994-95
DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS —
(RAILWAYS) 1996-97 — *Contd.*

[English]

SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY (Nizamabad) : Thank you, Madam, for giving me this opportunity.

I rise to take part in the General Discussion on the Railway Budget for 1997-98, the Supplementary Budget for 1996-97 and the Demands for Excess Grants for Railways. I do hail from the Nizamabad constituency of Andhra Pradesh which has been a backward district in the Telangana region and which has been neglected by the State Government and, to a certain extent, by the Central Government. Moreover, it has been infested with the Naxalites. It has been lagging behind for years in all aspects like the educational aspects or industrial aspects. It has been prospering in only one sector and that is the commercial crop and trading business. In that context, the transportation and communications become a must. For the past many years, particularly the Railway services have been lagging in my district. The Railway Ministry has sixteen lakh employees and operates 7,500 passenger trains a day and carries eleven million passengers which accumulates up to almost 20 per cent of the passenger load. In addition, it carries more than 425 tonnes of freight every day.

Because of the time constraint, I am not going into the laurels, praises, good things, bad things, merits and demerits of the Budget about which many of my elders, including yourself Madam, I believe, had spoken. But, certainly, I do have to be candid in my discussion and make a few points. It is the perception of the people in this country today that they say that the Budget has been an inflammatory Budget and secondly the Budget has a discriminatory factor in that. They say that the Budget has mostly favoured Karnataka State and Bihar. It is very much evident from the fact that many of the States M.Ps. went outside and stood in front of the Parliament House and somehow, with the conciliatory effort of our hon. Minister of Railways, he could convince some of them. Only the results in the future will tell whether he satisfied them in a constructive way or not.

In this Budget he proposed a 12 per cent hike in the freight rate and 10 per cent hike in passenger fares

as far as the upper classes are concerned and five per cent for sleeper class passengers and 20 per cent surcharge has been levied on movement of parcels in superfast trains.

Our hon. Minister of Railways has described these as, let me quote, "modest and selective". While presenting his maiden Budget on 16th of July, 1996, he had done a similar thing. A ten per cent increase in freight and fares of upper classes was effected and he described it, let me quote again, as "modest and selective adjustment in fare and freight rates".

These deteriorating financial conditions are reflected in this Budget. The per cent ratio of net revenue to the capital has been declining for the last 50 years from 12.2 to 8.9. If this trend continues, it will not be too long before the Railways could become bankrupt. Let me give you a few allocations because the promises tried to please every Member here and to some extent a great per cent of the people of this country itself. Let me give few examples.

For the purpose of gauge conversion or unification, Rs. 996 crore have been provided this year while Rs. 1,021 crore had been provided last year. There is a decline in that aspect. This year Rs. 178 crore have been allocated for doubling of lines while it was Rs. 206 crore last year. There is a decline in that aspect also. For the purpose of computerisation, Rs. 62 crore were provided last year while Rs. 35 crore have been provided this year. By decreasing these allocations, it is not possible to achieve what the Minister of Railways is hoping to achieve neither he is going to fulfil all the pending projects. The hon. Minister of Railways needs more than Rs. 20,000 crore to achieve that. In his Budget Speech, he has not elaborated a single point to convince us the mobilisation of the sources of this money.

As we know, the Railways carries more than 40 per cent of our passengers. I could go on and on but because of the time constraint and looking at your pleasant smile which is giving an indication to me to conclude, I will confine myself to my constituency.

As I said, my constituency, Nizamabad is in Telangana region. All alone, since I became a Member of Parliament for the first time, I have been insisting on the Railway authorities for the conversions of one line, that is, Mudikhed (Maharashtra)-Nizamabad line. This is an 88 Km line and the survey is almost finished. I hope that the hon. Minister would allocate good funds and not just 'funds' because my colleague sitting beside me here hails from Karim Nagar district knows it. The Karim Nagar-Peddapalli-Nizamabad line is about 177 Km long. The total anticipated cost of that project is Rs. 192.22,68,000. So far as 1996-97 is concerned, Rs. 12.70 crore have been spent. This year, there is an allocation of Rs. 5 crore only. With this meagre amount of Rs. 5 crore, it would be very much tough for this on-going project to be completed because time escalation