

[Sh. Mahabir Prasad]

India is one and the entire country is one. To strengthen the unity and integrity of our country, we welcome each and every individual of the passengers and we want our railway to go ahead on the path of progress to provide maximum facilities to its passengers. I think all the hon. Members of the House who participated in the discussion.

13.13 hrs.

[English]

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the Speaker has received the following message dated the 7th March, 1989 from the President:

"I have received with great satisfaction the expression of thanks by the Members of the Lok Sabha for the Address which I delivered to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on 21st February, 1989".

We shall adjourn now to reassemble after Lunch at 2.15 P.M.

13.14 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till fifteen minutes past fourteen of the Clock

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Eighteen minutes past Fourteen of the Clock

[MR DEPUTY SPEAKER in the chair]

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1989-90 GENERAL DISCUSSION—CONTD.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Ganga Ram.

[Translation]

SHRI GANGA RAM (Firozabad): Mr. Deputy -Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Railway Budget for 1989-90 presented in this august House by the Hon. Minister of State of Railways. I congratulate him for presenting a very good Budget. The performance of the Ministry of Railways is praiseworthy and its credit goes to the hon. Minister of State, the hon. Deputy Minister, officers and staff of the railways. I appreciate them very much for their dedication sincerity and efficiency. This is the fifth budget presented by hon. Shri Scindia which is a rare honour for a minister. Financial position of the Ministry of Railways for the year 1987-88 has been quite encouraging. There has been a surplus of Rs. 84.29 crores as against the budget estimate of Rs. 69 crores. This surplus has been achieved after making a contribution of Rs. 638.86 crores in the general revenues. Passenger fares have not been raised in the budget which has been welcomed by the public. Freight rates are proposed to be increased by 11%. Rates for other goods and parcels are also to be increased by 11%. Although increase in freight rates would mean an increase in prices of essential commodities which will in turn affect the life of the common man, there was no other way out to mobilise finances. The hon. Minister was probably compelled to do so by prevailing circumstances otherwise this year he would not have increased the freight rates by 11%. Somehow the public shall have to bear with it. On the occasion of Nehru Centenary year the budget proposes a concession of 25% in rail fares for renowned sport coaches, war-veterans and aged persons of 65 years or above for the purpose to long journeys beyond 500 kms. It is my suggestion that senior citizens having vast experience and expertise in a particular field should also be given a concession of 50% like the people of other special categories. The distance restriction should also be brought down from 500 kilometres to 100 kilometres. Sir, I have been stressing it because the aged persons rarely travel Chanakya has also spoken about it that journeys inflict strains beyond descrip-