

[Shrimati Kishori Sinha]

Sir, Under Rule 377, I would like to raise the following matter. The progress of lakhs of farmers, workers, traders and ordinary citizens of Vaishali, Muzaffarpur and Motihari districts has been blocked due to non-availability of transport facilities. The people of this area have been demanding a railway line for the last 30 years.

In 1912, efforts were made to link Lalganj with Hajipur by a railway line. Foreign traders had also made a demand to the then authorities to provide a railway station at Lalganj. It has been mentioned in the Bihar Gazette also.

Government had conducted a survey for the construction of a new railway line from Hajipur to Sugauli via Vaishali-Lalganj. This railway line will pass through three blocks of Vaishali District, three blocks of Muzaffarpur District and five blocks of Motihari District and it will benefit 1535 villages and 13,44,655 rural population and about 11,000 passengers will travel by rail daily.

With the construction of this railway line, trade links can easily be established with Nepal and other areas.

On 16th August, 1971 a former M.P., the late Nawal Kishor Singh, had also raised this matter in Parliament. On 1st November, 1972 the then Minister of State for Railways along with 18 Members of Parliament had visited Vaishali to make feasibility study.

The proposed railway line has national importance from cultural, economic and other points of view.

While submitting his report to the Asstt. State Transport Commissioner in September, 1969, on Hajipur—Sugauli railway line, the Collector of Muzaffarpur had recommended that this line would pass through Hajipur, Lalganj, Vaishali, Saraiya, Paru, Sahebganj, Kesaria, Govindganj, Paharpur and Sugauli and

would cover an area of 6,23,205 acres and would benefit 1,335 villages and 20,42,655 people.

This railway line will pass through an area which is very fertile and producing about one crore maunds of foodgrains.

This railway line will provide facilities for establishing contacts with big markets etc. and will be of great help to the farmers. It will also facilitate the economic development of the area.

This railway line will be of great importance from every point of view. I, therefore, urge the Railway Minister to order construction of this railway line.

[English]

- (vii) Need to meet the expenditure on shifting the existing railway line from Masulipatnam to Vijayawada

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada) : Sir, the railway line from Masulipatnam to Vijayawada runs through thickly populated area known as Satyanarayanapuram in the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation limits and there are five level crossings, consequently many traffic jams and accidents occur near these level crossings. So, the Municipal Corporation of Vijayawada has proposed shifting of the line to further east of the city. The railway authorities have already laid one diversion line. All express trains and goods trains are routed on the diversion line while the passenger trains are routed through the existing line. The railway authorities have suggested that the cost of removing the railway track which is about Rs. 3.52 crores should be borne by the Corporation and the Corporation should hand over 10.25 hectares of land to the Railway.

I would like to bring to the kind notice of the Government that the finances of the Municipal Corporation, after meeting the establishment expenditure, are not at all enough even to provide the minimum basic amenities to the citizens. So, it cannot deposit Rs. 3.5 crores for removing the track. I request

the Government to sympathetically consider the matter and issue necessary instructions to the Railway authorities to remove the track at their cost. I am confident that the Corporation will acquire and hand over 10.25 hectares land somewhere near the railway line near the cement factory. Though it is a hard task, it will fulfil it in the interest of the lakhs of citizens of Vijayawada. So, I request the Government to immediately take necessary steps in this regard.

12.49 hrs

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
(GENERAL), 1985-86

(i) Ministry of Labour — Contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now take up further discussion and voting on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Labour.

Mr. Ramamurthy.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY (Krishnagiri) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Labour.

I congratulate the hon. Minister for Labour for having efficiently managed the affairs by way of bringing down the mandays lost.

First of all, on behalf of working class of this country, I would like to congratulate the Government, which has been taken over by the young and dynamic Prime Minister, for having announced in the budget proposals about the charge of workers' dues which were all along being neglected. The workers' dues had been given the fourth or fifth priority when an industry or established happened to be closed down. Now the Government has announced that the workers' dues will be

given the first charge on the assets of the company or establishment when it is closed. Also in the budget proposals the Government has announced that upto Rs. 50,000 of the accumulated retirement benefit of gratuity will be free from income-tax. This is also one of the welcoming measures for the working class.

There was also the problem of dearness allowance of the workers of the public sector undertakings. It was fixed some years back at Rs. 1.30. A Tripartite Committee was formed by the then Finance Minister Shri Pratap Mukherjee, but the Committee could not come to a conclusion; there was no unanimity on this issue. So, the Government has taken up this issue and it has announced Rs. 1.65 per point while the politically motivated trade unions have already accepted Rs. 1.50 in West Bengal.

Another welcome feature is the raising of the ceiling amount for bonus. As per the Bonus Act of 1965 the ceiling was Rs. 750. In this year's budget proposals Government has announced that the ceiling has been raised from Rs. 750 to Rs. 1600. Here I would like to point out that already there are two ceilings under the existing Bonus Act of 1965. In the upper House the Government is also moving a Bill for an amendment to the Bonus Act of 1965. Rs. 1600 should not be the lone maximum ceiling. If any worker is getting Rs. 1600 he will be taken away from the purview of the Bonus Act. This is not welcome. I request this and it is the desire of the working class of this country that some higher ceiling as in the existing Bonus Act, say Rs. 1600 and Rs. 2500 should be fixed.

In the recent May Day meeting at Dhanbad our Prime Minister has announced that there will be Shramvir Awards for the working classes of this country. I congratulate him on behalf of the working classes.

Another important feature is that I myself feel sometimes that labour is being given low priority. You are aware the