

on the growers to plant more sugar cane in more area.

- (viii) **Need to prepare a twin city development project on both sides of the Ganges to join Howrah with Calcutta and to set up a Howrah Industrial city Development Authority for the purpose**

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI (Howrah) : Sir, the Seventh Plan proposals are taking a final shape and the Prime Minister has expressed his deep concern both for rural development as well as for metropolitan city development keeping ecological balance and purification of the environment from pollution.

Patna city of Bihar and Calcutta have an unique advantage of being at the Bank of Ganges and the development of both sides of the Ganges in terms of city development could generate the idea of twin city programme with satellite counter magnets. After the completion at the 2nd Hooghly Bridge, Calcutta will be directly linked with Howrah which industrially the biggest and otherwise the 2nd biggest in the Eastern India. If in the third phase, the Calcutta Metropolitan Railway (Tube Rail), as sanctioned by 7th Plan, connects Salt Lake with Ramrajatala having underground tunnel through the Ganges and if the 2nd Hooghly Bridge is completed expeditiously, then Calcutta can have satellite cities and counter magnets upto Baruipur, Canning and Diamond Harbour in the south 24 Parganas and upto Uluberia of Howrah. The Kona Express Highway and the link of the Delhi Highway and Bombay Highway, which pass through Howrah, can carry the burden of road transport and goods traffic to the trade centres and commercial centres in both sides.

The South Eastern Railway and Eastern Railway are operating from Howrah and the two major national highways are also connected through Howrah. The industrial burden from the major complexes and other projects and the development burden of Calcutta city can, therefore, be shifted to these areas. This will only be possible after having a twin city development idea on both sides of the Ganges so that Howrah can be expanded and the present Howrah city can be further developed with all modern civic amenities and Calcutta and Howrah can be connected having a complete city character.

Like CMA, an exclusive Howrah Industrial City Development authority should be formed to look into this project.

11.33 hrs.

**RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE
 (AMENDMENT) BILL—Contd.**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up further consideration of the Bill to amend the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957. Shri R. Jeevarathinam to continue with his speech.

[Translation]

***SHRI R. JEEVARATHINAM** (Arakkonam) : Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, On Friday, the 23rd instant I was talking about the compulsions of the Government to increase the passenger fare and the freight rate because of the recurring losses in the pilferage of railway materials and fittings and the consignments in transit. When the Railways lose annually several hundreds of crores of rupees in such pilferage, there is no alternative but to raise the freight rates and passenger fares. This adversely affects the common commuters of the Railways. By converting the Railway Protection Force into an Armed Force of the Union, this kind of pilferage should be stopped. I am happy that this Bill provides for the achievement of this objective. I welcome this Bill and by referring to a few more issues I will continue my unfinished speech.

At the outset I demand that the Director-General of the Armed Forces should be made a Member of the Railway Board. Then only the day to day administrative problems of the Armed Force can be solved expeditiously. The Member in charge of the Armed Forces should also be made responsible for the recovery of pilfered goods. Last year the Railway Board had paid Rs. 30 crores as compensation for the loss of goods in transit. Unless the pilferage of consignments is stopped and unless the drain of railway resources in the form of compensation is stopped, the Railways will not be able

*The speech was originally delivered in Tamil.

to serve the nation in a better manner. The Member in charge of Armed Forces, i.e. the Director-General should be fully empowered to tackle all these issues effectively.

There are 67,000 personnel in the Railway Protection Force. This includes 8 battalions of the Railway Protection Security force also. I hope that the Railway Protection Security Force also would be a part and parcel of this proposed Armed Force. There is no reference to the R.P.S.F. in the provisions of this Bill. I request the Hon. Minister of Railways to clarify this point in his reply to the debate.

Presently, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of thefts and crimes are under the charge of the Government Railway Police Force. The Government Railway Force is functioning under the directions of the State Governments. The Railway Board meets 50 per cent of the administrative expenditure of the Government Railway Force. Besides, 2000 members of the Railway Protection Force are also earmarked for the assistance of Government Railway Force. Consequently the R.P.F. is not able to concentrate on its duties.

In addition to Railway stations and other adjoining railway property there are 2 lakh acres of Railway land all over the country. Out of this, 60 per cent of railway land has been encroached upon by the vested interests. This inhibits the allotment of railway land to the railway employees for constructing houses. The Government Railway Force is not able to prevent encroachment of railway land.

Hence I demand that the Government Railway Force should also be included in the proposed Armed Forces. Since already the Railway Board is meeting 50 per cent of the administrative expenditure of this Force, there is not going to be any additional financial burden on Railways. Then only, all the railway properties, fittings, materials, wagons, coaches, consignments in transit, railway stations and railway land etc. can be protected from pilferage and encroachment effectively. The Government Railway Force must be merged with the Railway Protection Force.

The salary scales given to the soldiers of the Army along with other benefits must be

extended to the personnel of this Armed Force also. The soldiers are protecting the freedom of the country. The personnel of Railway Armed Forces are protecting the important economic activity of the nation. Hence they should be on par with soldiers of the Army. The trained youngsters from National Cadet Corps should be recruited for this Force. Similarly, the Army Recruitment Board should be entrusted with the responsibility of recruiting personnel to this Force. I am sure that our Hon. Railway Minister will look into these suggestions I have made and initiate appropriate action to implement them.

With these words I conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI A. J. V. B. MAHESWARA RAO (Amalapuram): Sir, the Government has taken a very long time to amend this Bill which is more than a quarter century old and was not suited to the prevalent Indian conditions.

The main drawback of this Act was that the Railway Protection Force could not make any arrests and were meant strictly for protection of Railway property only. Even this duty they are not performing honestly and dutifully.

According to me, the Railway Protection Forces have a number of duties to perform. The major ones being :

1. To ensure uninterrupted and secure movement of goods and essential commodities.
2. To ensure protection of Rolling stock and fitting in the compartments.
3. To ensure safe movement of passengers.
4. To ensure safe and secure movement of passengers belongings.
5. To prevent entry of unsocial elements on the platforms such as beggars etc.,
6. To prevent ticketless travelling and to apprehend culprits.

7. To prevent robberies on trains, etc.,
8. To prevent thefts from wagons and parcel offices.

I would like to know from the Railway Minister as to whether this amendment of Railway Protection Force Act does really suitably arm the Railway Protection Force to check all the crimes on the Railways effectively. I have got my doubts about it because there are cases where the R. P. F. personnel collude with culprits and take a share in the stolen goods.

The recent amendment in the Railway Act, has enabled the Railways to take stringent action against persons who in any way hinder smooth running of Railways. The amendment to this Act would no doubt further strengthen the hands of Railways to ensure better service to passengers, but the pity is that implementation aspect is very poor.

I would like to point out that this Act ensures safe movement of passengers but does not say anything about the belongings of passengers carried by them inside the compartments without booking it with the Railways. Many instances have happened when the luggage of passengers is stolen and there is nobody to register a complaint. Such passengers have to get down from the train to register their complaint with Government Railway Police and the train also will not wait for them to enable them to lodge a complaint. They suffer a double loss, that is, lose their valuables and also miss the train. I would like to know from the Railway Minister whether RPF will now register such complaints and prevent much hardships to the passengers who are victims of pick-pockets and thieves on the running trains. I would like to know whether in case of such incidents the train will be detained to enable the passenger to lodge the complaint and strict and deterrent action taken against Railway staff who refuse to cooperate.

The condition of the coaches is horrible. Fans are missing, bulbs and electrical fittings are stolen, seat covers are torn due to the fact that the RPF are not protecting the coaches stationed in yards and in fact collude with the thieves and unsocial element. I

would like to know whether this amendment provides any stringent punishment also to ensure that RPF do their duty sincerely and diligently.

Beggar nuisance on the railway platforms is on the increase. These beggars also steal the belongings of unwary passengers. How is the railway protection force better equipped with this legislation and is going to check this evil on the platforms ?

Then thefts from wagons are a common affair. We have so many times booked coconuts, but the quantity booked never reaches the destination. Always, the coconuts are stolen.

Then, the dog squad is not worth its salt, because of corruption in the ranks of the railway protection force so much so that even the food meant for the dogs is eaten by the railway protection force personnel with the result that because of hunger, dogs go to sleep and railway protection force take it easy. Unless the Act adequately provides for suitable and deterrent punishment, all these amendments are of no use and are only an eyewash. Much remains to be done and unless the railways really mean to improve and are serious, nothing can be done.

In view of these drawbacks, I strongly oppose this amendment.

SHRI K. PRADHANI (Nowrangpur) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir I support the Bill moved by the Hon. Railway Minister to amend the Railway Protection Force Act to empower them with special powers to make the department function effectively and efficiently.

Clause 11 of this Bill deals with amendment of Section 12 of the principal Act. Here, some more clauses have been added to give them special powers. Sub-clause (1) is that any member of the Force may, without an order from a Magistrate and without a warrant arrest any person who voluntarily causes hurt to any person on duty etc. to obstruct the railway protection force in the discharge of their duties, and sub-clause (iv) is with regard to the arrest of any person who commits or attempts to commit a cognizable offence which is likely to involve imminent danger to the life of any person engaged on any work relating to railway

property. The Force can arrest persons without warrant, those persons who commit crime against the property and persons employed in the railways. But there is no provision here in this section to arrest a person who has a design to commit any crime against the property or person. I, would, therefore, suggest that another clauses or sub-clause be added in this clause, just like Section 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code which authorises the police to arrest a person who has a design to commit any cognizable offence. If that is done, the railway protection force will be in a position to prevent more crimes than at present.

Then clause 15 of the Bill proposes to amend Section 17 of the Act. In sub-clause (1), the punishment has been increased from six months to one year. I welcome this idea. But, again sub-clause (3) says that the Central Government may invest Assistant Inspector General, Senior Commandant or Commandant with magisterial powers to deal with offences under this Section. Then, sub-clause (3) of proviso says :

“when it is a petty offence even if connected with the offender’s duties as an enrolled member or the force, the offence may, if the prescribed authority within the limits of whose jurisdiction the offence has been committed so requires, be inquired into or tried by an ordinary criminal court having jurisdiction in the matter.

Here, there is two-way traffic. One is that this Bill seeks to make some of the offences triable by the courts by Assistant Inspector-General, Senior Commandant or Commandant and the other is that it seeks to leave some of the departmental cases to the criminal courts. I admit that it would be harmful in both the ways if departmental cases are tried by criminal courts.

In Criminal Courts, a large number of cases are pending. The departmental cases will be lingering and it will take a lot of time for disposal. Moreover, in criminal courts, these cases can be thrown out for technical objections and the percentage of acquittal will be more. Therefore, I would leave it to the Minister of Railways to consider about this and to examine this point.

Lastly, I would like to say something about the GRP and the RPF. The RPF is mainly meant for the protection of the railway property and the GRP is meant for detection and investigation. RPF people are recruited by the Railways whereas the GRP are drawn from the neighbouring States to conduct the investigation and submit the final report. The crimes which are committed in the running trains are very difficult cases because the offenders always try to escape by the running trains and leave the jurisdiction of the railway police. Therefore, it becomes very difficult on the part of the investigation officers to investigate into the cases. Generally, these officers, who come from various States, do not take much interest because they are not attached to the Railway Department. They are temporarily brought on deputation and after some time they leave the Department. I would draw the attention of the Railway Minister to see that officers of very high standard are brought to this Department from various States so that the investigation work of our GRP will be more successful in this field.

Sir, I would like to quote a sentence from the *Hindustan Times* of yesterday. This is regarding a report of the *London Times*, and quote :

“The most immediate need, the *Times* said in an editorial was to restore the confidence in Indian police force, which has been reduced in stature by indiscipline, low salaries and poor training.”

I draw the attention of the Railway Minister to these three points regarding strict discipline better salaries and training. The police are lacking in training and they should be trained in a better way to give a better performance.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA (Vishnupur) : I stand to oppose this Bill. I have no objection if the Government can ensure better protection of the railway property and its security by declaring the Railway Protection Force, as an Armed Force. But Sir, our experience is otherwise. Those who have been assigned this work of protection of railway property are in collusion with the criminals.

The Railway Protection Force was constituted. I am quoting from the ‘Indian

'Railway Yearbook, 1984' under the RPF Act, 1957. The RPF has a strength of about 67,000 men at present, comprising 38 battalions. There are also Dog Squads in the Railways, which are utilised for patrolling the yards and tracking down the criminals.

Sir, what is the performance of the RPF all these years? Here also I am quoting from the Indian Railways Year Book :

**Properties stolen and recovered from
1979 to 1984**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Properties stolen</i>	<i>Properties recovered</i>
1979-81	92.79 crores	37.30 crores
1980-81	150 crores	54.30 crores
1983	174.07 crores	71.67 crores

According to 1983-84 figures, the number of persons arrested were 21,327 and the cases registered were 80,825.

The consignment stolen in 1984 was 63.21 crores and recovered only 40.77 crores. The number of persons arrested were 5015 and the cases registered were 50,010. Sir, this is the performance of the RPF. How much are you spending for this force? According to Railway Demands for Grants, during 1984-85, are spending 58.64 crores for this Railway Protection Force. But in the Objects and Reasons, you have said so many things. Sir, all these are contradictory. On the one hand you are giving more power to the RPF, declaring them as outmoded; on the other hand you are taking away all their facilities which they are enjoying as RPF. According to the statement of objects and reasons, you will find, the restrictions have been imposed on their right to form an association on the lines of the similar restrictions on other armed forces of the Union. But, as the RPF, they were enjoying some privileges; they could have formed their unions and enjoyed the railway rights which the railwaymen are enjoying now. But you are taking away all these things. So, I oppose this Bill.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to give my whole-hearted support to this Railway Protection Force (Amendment) Bill. This Bill should

have been brought much more earlier. But we have noticed that in case of thefts, burglary, losses to Railway properties, which are taking place in our country, the Railway have to depend only on the RPF and the GRP. GRP is meant to maintain law and order in railway stations, trains etc. But the RPF is there to give protection to railway property. But in the field, we notice that the GRP personnel who are brought in from the State Government services on deputation, are not bothered about the benefits to the Railways or commuters, or about railway property. The RPF personnel present at railway stations and to protect the railway property are so meagre in number that they cannot cope with the anti-social acts which are going on in railway stations.

You might have noticed that at 90 per cent of the railway stations, there is not a single GRP of RPF personnel.

11.52 hrs.

**[SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI
in the Chair]**

My Hon. friends in the Opposition were opposing the Bill. Mr. Choubey specially, while opposing the Bill said that RPF was in collusion, and they were connected with these acts of theft and burglary of railway property. But when the Minister came forward to take some strict measures to make the punishments deterrent, my Hon. friends opposed them also.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore) : What is your experience at Halasore?

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : I suggest that RPF be deployed in all the trains running in our country. I had requested for this during my speech on the Railway (Amendment) Bill also.

Recently, the Hon. Minister of State of Railways has said, during June or July, at a Press Conference that about 10,000 RPF personnel would be employed. But a week back, the Hon. Minister has written a letter to me, saying that due to a ban, the RPF personnel cannot be recruited. I would say that just as the Minister of State has said, a minimum of 10,000 RPF personnel are necessary to give protection to trains, commuters and railway property.

We notice that the Railways are dependent only on GRP to meet the law and order problems. But we have noticed in the field that GRP personnel are deputed by the State Governments to Railways only as a sort of punishment. It means that an officer who is not capable of doing his duty in other fields, is sent on deputation to GRP. Such officers have no interest in work. So, the railway property and the users are the worst sufferers. The GRP personnel do not bother, because they are in the Railways only for 2 or 3 years. They are not part of the regular forces of the Railways.

In my humble opinion, RPF should be given more powers. The Hon. Minister has brought in this Bill. I suggest that more powers should be given to RPF, and without depending on GRP...

I would suggest that the RPF should be entrusted with the law and order problem, giving protection to the commuters as well as railway property.

Whatever cases are pending in the courts—they are going on for years together—for them there should be camp courts and the summary trial, and the cases should be disposed of as early as possible.

On the question of safety, the Comptroller and Auditor General has expressed annoyance and dissatisfaction. Though in 1964, the railways has agreed to adopt railway safety measures in certain sections, it has not been completed in one section. For Southern Railway, about Rs. 1.18 crores has been lying idle and no work is being done. I would request that the question of safety in the railways should be given the top priority than any thing else. I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for deputing one officer in mail and express trains for maintaining punctuality in trains. I suggest that practice should be extended to all other trains also. They should not only look to the punctuality of trains but also railway safety as well as protection to the railway property and also safety of the passengers. My humble submission is that they should deploy RPF personnel in all the trains.

While supporting the Bill wholeheartedly, I would like to quote one sentence from the *Patriot*, dated 17th July, 1985. The heading is: "Avoidable disasters" I only quote the last sentence. It reads as follows:

"The hopes raised by the recent pledge⁸ of the Union Government to show results on the railway front—and by the choice of a person with such a reputation of dynamism as Mr. Bansi Lal to head the Railway Ministry—must not be allowed to belie."

With these words, I support the Bill.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) :
Madam Chairman, I rise to support the Railway Protection Force (Amendment) Bill. When the Railway Minister was introducing the Bill, I was listening to the reaction of some of the Opposition leaders. I observed that Prof. Madhu Dandavate, our former Railway Minister, was also objecting to the introduction of the Bill. Along with him, another leader, Shri Choubey, was also objecting. I want to say something to them today. They must have read the Supreme Court's judgement of 11th July 1985. I want to draw their attention to an extract from that judgement.

In addition to this judgement I would also draw your attention towards the fact that if you allow the paramilitary forces to form unions, then what will happen to the country. Mr. Choubey, you also agree that pilferage takes place but it takes place with the political protection. In all these incidents of theft and pilferage I have read in the newspapers, big shots are behind them. They form a gang and commit dacoities. This you also know. I want to say to you this also that it is not for the first time that this discussion is taking place in the House. Earlier also this subject has been discussed in the House repeatedly. These pilferages take place with the assistance of the people who are in politics. Therefore, Railway Protection Force remains a silent spectator because they have not been vested with adequate powers to act. If someone removes the hose-pipe the Force cannot do anything. Now, I shall read out the judgement;

[*English*]

"In this respect the Police Force stands very much on the same footing as a military or a para-military force for it is charged with the duty of

sure and maintaining law and order and public order, and breaches of discipline and acts of disobedience and insubordination on the part of the members of the Police Force cannot be viewed with less gravity than similar acts on the part of the members of the military or para-military Forces. How important the proper discharge of their duties by members of these Forces and the maintenance of discipline among them is considered can be seen from Article 33 of the Constitution. Prior to the Constitution (Fiftieth Amendment) Act, 1984, Article provided..."

I need not read that part.

[*Translation*]

After this judgement what Shri Madhu Dandavate did during the Janata Party rule if you listen to that you will enjoy that. It is good that Shri Dandavate is not present at the moment and has left in time because he has come to know that it is not good to be present here today. During their rule a bulletin was issued by RPF. I would read certain portions from that bulletin from which you would come to know the position prevailing at that time—"Our deaf and dumb Government, in the name of socialism, is sleeping like Kumbhkarani". You all may be knowing about Kumbhkarani's sleep. You too would have slept like him. I would not repeat Shri Madhu Dandavate's name time and again. The bulletin was released during their rule—"Deaf and dumb Government... March forward, demonstrating like steel." This bulletin from which I have read out certain portions was issued during their strike period. Due to paucity of time I would not read it fully. Shri Reddy, you may also listen. Such an impressive bulletin was issued during the Janata Party's regime. Shri Morarji said that what have you done? If socialist leaders form a union, how will we function? Therefore, what will be the position of the country if a Military Force in which there are 65,000 people, form a union. They had at that time taken out a procession with *safas* tied on their mouths. Atrocities were being perpetrated on them at that time and they had appealed that they would face the Government with firmness and they had given a clarion call. Bulge for struggle was

blown and Shri Morarji's position became shaky.

The importance of the Railway Protection Force is being recognised today through this Bill and it will prevent theft of crores of rupees and the anti-social elements who indulge in activities like removal of hosepipes will be dealt with severely. In 1983, they dealt with the anti-social elements severely but now they cannot do that in the same way as they do not have the requisite powers. These powers, in the Bill have been provided as follows :-

[*English*]

"The following are the principal features of the Bill :-

- (a) Declaring the Railway Protection Force an Armed Force of the Union and consequential changes in the nomenclature of different ranks in the Force in consonance with its changed character as an Armed Force.
- (b) Conferment of additional powers on the members of the Force such as to arrest without warrant . "

[*Translation*]

Today thefts are taking place, there is goondaism, hosepipes are being removed, railway property is being damaged but Railway Protection Force remains a silent spectator because they do not have the requisite powers to act. This Bill will vest them with powers and they will be able to protect the railway property.

This Bill has been brought here after the judgement of the Supreme Court keeping in view the spirit of Article 33. I think this will get support not only from the treasury benches but from the Opposition Members also and they will definitely agree that the Railway Protection Force should get these facilities. The question is to get work from them after the formation of a Union. Therefore, I welcome this Bill and urge that it should be passed with one voice and the Opposition Parties should support it.

*SHRI P. APPALANARASIMHAM (Anankapalli) : Madam Chairperson, the present Railway Protection Force needs many changes. There is no security to the life and property of the people who travel by trains. Especially so in the South Central and South Eastern Railways. There are no amenities for the passengers alright but at least security should be provided for the passengers during the train journeys. Even the goods trains by which valuable goods are transported are not being spared. Pilferage is taking place everywhere. The goods trains are being looted on the way. A regular business of pilferage is going on. No protection is being offered to the goods trains. Our Railway Protection Force has failed miserably to bring all those who are engaged in pilferage to book. This pilferage has been going on for the past 15 to 20 years. Many unwanted things are taking place. But nowhere did the R P F succeed in controlling them. In fact, Railways have practically done nothing to protect the life and property of the people who travel by train. Under these circumstances whether it is advisable to rely on the R P F any more by further strengthening it or is it better to constitute a new force to give protection to Railways, passengers, and goods etc. ? We should think about this question seriously. There is nothing in this Bill to answer this question. What I feel is that the way we have a separate budget, it is better to have a separate Railway protection force. This new force would serve our needs properly.

A murder took place at Elamenchali which is in my constituency. The Railway Police took 3 months just to say that the case do not come under its jurisdiction. This is the efficiency of our Railway Police. You can well imagine the sort of protection they can provide to our passengers. At a marshalling yard some Railway Police personnel have killed their own sentry. They could not catch the persons who are involved in pilferage. Due to the inefficiency of Railway Protection Force, property, both private and public worth hundreds of crores of rupees is being lost every day. They are not in a position to offer any sort of protection. So we should think of how we can improve the quality of our Railway

Protection Force. No thought seems to have been given in this Bill regarding the improvement of Railway Police. Passengers are being robbed openly during broad day light in Rayagadha-Raipur Railway Section. Murders are taking place every day. We hear these news on All India Radio. We read such news every day in our newspapers. But not even a single report speaks about the steps the Railways have taken to control these incidents. No report speaks of the progress made in this direction.

Sir, in this connection I ask the Government to introduce insurance in Railways as is being in the case of air journeys. Irrespective of whether the property is public or private, it should be insured. Unless this facility is provided to the passengers, they continue to suffer. There are thousands of persons who have lost everything during their journeys. These people should have to be recompensated. Insurance is the best way to protect the property of passengers as well as the property of Railways itself. I hope, the Government would soon introduce insurance for the protection of every body. If this is done the Railways will be a success.

Now the Railway Police instead of protecting the passengers are creating many troubles for them. So their function should be well defined. They must have a definite programme to protect the passengers. For that purpose, we must have a separate protection force for Railway. These personnel must be given a good training. Then only, they can do their job well. Now the arrangements made to protect goods in a goods train are not sufficient. There will be only one Guard for the entire train, and he will be sitting in the last wagon. These people are remaining as helpless spectator as the goods are being stolen from the goods train before their eyes. Hence at least there should be protection force personnel present at least in 3 bogies of the train so that they can effectively check the pilferage. If this arrangement is made, every goods train can reach its destination without its contents being pilfered. I hope the Government will take this step.

I hope the Government will take steps to improve the quality of Railway Protection force so that they can discharge their duties

*The speech was originally delivered in Telugu.

effectively and protect the life and property of the passengers. They will also be in a better position to guard precious railway property.

I conclude thanking you for giving this opportunity.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANSI LAL) : Madam Chairman, I am grateful to the Hon. Members who have participated in this debate. Prior to 1957, the RPF was known as Watch and Ward Department of the Railways, and after 1957, when the Bill was passed, it became a disciplined force. But in the 1957 Act not much protection was given to the Railway Protection Force and because of that many vexatious prosecutions took place against the members of the Railway Protection Force. Now we have brought forward this Bill to give them protection from malicious prosecutions. This Bill will practically enable raising the standard of training, efficiency and discipline of the Force, as also restructuring of this organisation for ensuring better command and control. The members of the Force would have adequate legal power, and protection for ensuring better security of Railway property. In the absence of a magistrate or local police officer, the Railway Protection Force officers would be able to deal, on their own, with unlawful assemblies in grave situations where public security is manifestly endangered. The RPF personnel will get protection against arrest and vexatious prosecution for acts done in the discharge of their official duties under the Cr.P.C. So, we have brought forward this Amendment simply to give more protection to the Members of the Railway Protection Force.

Prof. Thomas pointed out that RPF cannot get protection to the passengers. Madam, the RPF's duty is not to protect the passengers. It is the duty of the Railway Police to give protection to the passengers. For that we have been persuading the Chief Ministers of the States to make the police more effective than it is at present.

Shri Narayan Choubey pointed out that there is corruption at high level in the RPF. It is not so. The charge is baseless.

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour) : At which level is the corruption ? Are you saying that there is no corruption at all or the corruption is not at the high level ? What is your contention ?

SHRI BANSI LAL : It is at the Marxist level.

Then he said that the right of union and association should not be taken away. The right of union cannot be given to an armed force. And since we are making it an armed force of the Union, we cannot give them the right of the Union and associations.

Shri Ratnam wanted that the Director General of the Railway Protection Force should be a Member of the Railway Board. It is not possible at all, because if we make the Director-General of the Railway Protection Force a member of the Railway Board, then some other Branch will also come forward and demand that its Head of Department should also be a Member of the Railway Board. So, we cannot do it.

Shri Ratnam also wanted a clarification from me saying since the RPSF is a force, whether it will be merged into the RPF or not. That is already a part of the RPF. RPSF is not formed as a result of an enactment. That is our internal arrangement. So, RPSF will also be a part of the RPF.

Then Shri K. Pradhani referred to the training of the force. The training will be much more better than it had been earlier.

Shri Saha spoke about the Unions. When he says about this, I may refer here to Prof. Madhu Dandavate. That day when I introduced the Bill, he opposed it on the ground that the Union and Association rights should not be taken away from the Railway Protection Force. In July 1979, there was a protest and almost a rebellion in the Railway Protection Force, simply because they had a right to union. I would remind Prof. Madhu Dandavate that an *Ishtihar* was printed, published and was also distributed. It reads like :

[Translation]

“The Historic Decision

of

The All India Railway Protection Force Association. Remember the zero hour on 12 July 1979.

March forward. Remain firm.

Do not be misled.

Comrades,

Remember the zero hour on 12 July 1979 to wake up the socialist Railway Minister of the deaf and the dumb Government from his Kumbh-karan like sleep and we should continue to march forward demonstrating firmly our steel like unity.”

This is being said by the Railway Protection Force.

“Remember that the representatives and you can be harassed in many ways by the administration and wrong publicity can be made through radio etc.

But unless your sector committee gives its signal, you have to unflinchingly do your duty to get your demands accepted and have to wait for the next programme.

Please demonstrate your strength by remaining united and be victorious.

Action Committee,
Delhi Division.”

[English]

Madam Chairman, can you imagine that a disciplined force, an armed force, which has got arms in its possession, should resort to all these things? Should we allow them to resort to these things? Should we allow them to continue such things? Should we allow them to spread indiscipline among the force? Should we allow it?

Professor Saheb was very emphatic. There are many other things also. During the same period by name the pamphlet was issued.

Hamari jeet nischit hai

And then there are names of the office bearers of the R P. F. So we cannot allow all these things to go on like that.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : 1980 is the last time this happened.

SHRI BANSI LAL : 1979, 12th July.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : After that this kind of rebellion did not take place. You are bringing the Bill in 1985.

SHRI BANSI LAL : No. It did not take place. And now we are putting an end to it.

Then Shri Chintamani Jena went to the extent of saying that GRP does not bother for Railway property and passengers. I do not agree with him. GRP is discharging its duty. We are trying our level best to active the GRP. Then he said that 90 per cent of the stations are there which do not have GRP or RPF. On every station they are not required. They are required only at particular stations, wherever sensitive areas are there. Then he said that more power should be given to RPF. We are already giving more powers to RPF. That is why this Amending Bill has come.

With these words I request the august House to pass the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

“That the Bill to amend the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957, be taken into consideration.”

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We now take up Clause-by-Clause.

The question is :

“That clauses 2 to 19 and Schedule stand part of the Bill.”

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 19 and Schedule were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now the question is :

"That Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANSI LAL) : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL
OPEN UNIVERSITY BILL

[English]

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI K. C. PANT) : I beg to move* :

"That the Bill to establish and incorporate an Open University at the national level for the introduction and promotion of the Open University and distance education systems in the educational pattern of the country and for the co-ordination and determination of standards in such systems, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this Bill before the House has, as its background, the educational needs of contemporary society. There is today an unprecedented explosion of knowledge, the frontiers of which are rapidly expanding. The application of communication technology in the field of education promises to open up new possibilities. New methods of teaching-learning are being advocated, which would replace the teacher-centred education. We are awakening at the dawn of a new educational order. The old system of education has become rigid and over-centralised, mainly because of its increasing magnitude. We are, therefore, in search of a system that would be capable of resilience, responsive to the changing needs of today

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

and tomorrow. There is today an increasing stress on education for all as also on life-long education. As a consequence, there is a sharp focus on education. As a consequence, there is a sharp focus on educating those sections of society which have remained for long neglected or ignored. It is being increasingly realised that in the long run it would cost society heavily if we do not attend to the needs of the weaker sections and of the disadvantages. The contemporary tide of education demands of us special efforts to break new grounds. The present Bill is an expression of such an effort.

Madam, the purpose of this Bill which provides for the establishment of a National Open University, is to promote and foster a learning society in which there would be no barriers to vertical and horizontal mobility which is essential for the expansion of the horizons and enhancement of the general and professional capability for all those who have the ambition and the will to do so. Any egalitarian and democratic society demands that opportunities for such mobility are provided and are available to all. There is a vast number of people in our country who are denied the opportunities to pursue higher education mainly because the compulsions of economic factors made them to drop out of the formal system of education. This is particularly important in the case of the poor and the disadvantaged, especially in the rural areas.

Education has so far remained confined to people who can pursue it on a whole-time basis. An open learning system which provides access to systematic education to housewives, to workers in factories and farmers in the rural areas gives a new meaning to the concept of democratisation of educational opportunity. By endorsing this Bill the House would establish an institution which would make it possible to provide continuing education to the workforce, who can avail of learning opportunities during leisure time and contribute to overall modernisation of the socio-economic system.

We all now that the present structure denies the benefit of education to many people, who are knowledgeable but have no formal education, or who cannot, for economic or other reasons, afford the pursuit of higher education on a full-time basis, or who are interested in learning a