

"That the time appointed for the presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill, 1987, be extended upto the first day of the last week of the Hundred and Forty-seventh Session of the Rajya Sabha."

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Idukki) : We want to express our views.

MR. SPEAKER : Why did you not give Calling Attention ?

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : No one prevented you for giving a notice for Calling Attention Motion—If you could not, then what can I do ?

Calling Attention. Mr. Suresh Kurup.

[English]

12.06 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

[English]

Strike by Employees of Delhi Transport Corporation

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) : I call the attention of the Minister of State of the Ministry of Surface Transport to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The situation arising out of the strike by employees of Delhi Transport Corporation."

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT) : I made

a statement on the Floor of the House on 17.3.88 regarding the strike by employees of the Delhi Transport Corporation. In that statement I had briefly mentioned the reasons why the DTC Management has not been able to accept the demands of the workers to extend to them the benefits of the 4th Pay Commission. I shall, therefore, not go into the grounds already covered in my statement of 17th March, 1988.

The strike which began on 17.3.1988 is still continuing, much to the regret of Government. I had assured the House in my statement on 17.3.1988 that the DTC Management and Government have taken necessary steps to face the situation created by the strike and alternative arrangements dealing with the strike situation have been made. These arrangements have been strengthened since then and a large number of buses drawn from various sources are operating in the city. I am aware that the level of services provided by these alternative arrangements is not adequate. But they have, by and large, averted a breakdown in the transport arrangements for the citizens of Delhi. The number of buses and other vehicles operating in the city during the past few days have been about 3000 and we have offers from transport operators in the neighbouring states to make their buses available for operation in Delhi. I am also happy to inform you that from 20th March the DTC has been cutting down on an average about 200 buses a day in various routes. I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate my hope and expectation that the inconvenience caused to the commuters will get reduced, if not disappear altogether, in the near future.

It is also a matter of some satisfaction that barring some incidents, the strike has not led to violence. Unfortunately there have been instances of intimidation of loyal workers as well as of families of loyal workers and also of damage to buses. I would like to appeal to all concerned to desist from such acts.

In order to deal with the strike situation, as an emergency measure, we had permitted the transport operators to charge

a flat rate of Rs. 2/—per ticket. This has inconvenienced the commuters and Government are fully aware of this. I would like to assure the House that a solution to this is on the anvil.

As already indicated by me in my earlier statement, necessary steps will be taken for reorganisation of the present transport system with a view to giving to citizens of Delhi efficient transport services.

I am aware of the concern which Hon. 'ble Members of the House have for a speedy solution to the strike. I would like to reassure the House that the concern is fully shared by Government and by me personally. The strike is not of our seeking but has come about despite our efforts, hope and expectation that it will be averted. As this House is aware, the Supreme Court on a Writ Petition filed by two unions of DTC had in its Order dated 15.10.87 observed that they are tentatively of the view that the employees of the DTC are covered by the reference made to the High Power Pay Committee and that the Petitioners should do well to appear before the Committee to represent their case. On another petition filed by one of the unions, the Supreme Court in its Order dated 11.3.88 directed that 20% of the basic pay should be given to the employees of DTC as interim relief subject to final adjustment and withdrawal of strike notice. The dispute was also taken in conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 by the Delhi Administration

In view of these factors, Government had hoped that the unions which have given the strike notice would see their way to desist from the move but unfortunately to our regret they went on an indefinite strike from 17.3.9188 inconveniencing a large number of school children who are to sit for the examination during this period and also the citizens of Delhi who have a high degree of dependence on the DTC as their means of transport. Resort to strike, and that too in an essential service, is not a desirable way for pressing the demands of the unions. I am hopeful that in public interest all those who are on strike will rejoin duty and restore

normalcy in the DTC as early as possible.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Suresh Kurup.  
(Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Sir, we want the Government to do everything possible to cause no inconvenience to the public.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji) : This may be converted into Discussion under Rule 193 Sir. We would like to express ourselves. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The Rules do not permit.  
(Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Earlier Calling Attention were converted into Discussion under Rule 193

MR. SPEAKER : That was with the consensus of the House. The House is supreme.  
(Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : You are the custodian of the House. You can decide.  
(Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Sir, the consensus of the House is for Discussion under Rule 193. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Not allowed.  
(Interruptions)

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) : Sir, I never expected autocratic tendency and anti-worker attitude are hiding behind the pleasant exterior of our young Transport Minister because the way in which he deals with the strike forced me to tell like that.

All the major unions representing forty five thousand employees of the DTC, including three Congress Unions, are on strike for the last eight days and Government refuses to talk with the representatives of the Unions.

[Shri Suresh Kurup]

The only major demand the Unions are raising is regarding the implementation of the Fourth Pay Commission. Now, the Government argues that because DTC is a public undertaking, they cannot implement the recommendation of the Fourth Pay Commission as it was implemented to the Central Government employees. Sir, last time the wages of DTC employees were revised according to the Third Pay Commission Report. The Minister has cleverly evaded that thing in the statement issued by him on 17th March and in this statement also. In 1983, DTC Management and the Government of India gave a written assurance to one of the major unions of DTC, led by late Shri Lalit Maken, who was a Member of this House, that the recommendation of the Fourth Pay Commission will be implemented to the DTC employees. This written assurance was given in 1983, and an interim relief of Rs. 70 was given to the employees also.

Sir, now strangely the Government is going back on its assurance given to that Union and also later on when a hunger strike was going on by one of the Congress Unions, which was led by one Shri S. S. Dagar. If I understand correctly, the Transport Minister himself gave him a written assurance that the demands of the DTC employees were genuine and he will consider implementing the Fourth Pay Commission report to them. Now the Government is taking such a position that public sector undertakings cannot be given the wage revision recommended by the Fourth Pay Commission. Why then in 1983 Government gave a written assurance to the union representatives that they will implement this report? In so many other public sector undertakings, the Government has implemented this report like the International Airport Authority of India, Nuclear Power Corporation, Videsh Sanchar Nigam and so on. Why then this treatment to DTC employees in spite of the assurance given to them? If the Government, which is the major employer in this country, take this sort of anti-worker attitude, then what will be its position while mediating between workers and private employers? If a

private employer goes back on his assurance, what will be the credibility of the Government in front of the workers and other private employers in the country? Will they allow any private employer to go back on his promise like this? An unprecedented thing has happened. From the first day of the strike, the Government has been recruiting fresh hands for breaking the strike. They have displayed prominent advertisements calling for drivers and conductors to break this strike. This has never happened in our country.

DR. DATTA SAMANT (Bombay South Central) : Government is the major strike breaker in this country.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : The Government has assumed the role of a major strike breaker. Hundreds of workers have been arrested and put behind jail. Above all, using this as a shield, they are going to privatise 40 per cent of the routes in Delhi. If anybody accuses the Minister and the Government that they are prolonging this strike to privatise these routes through backdoor, can that be wrong? Earlier some private organisations were operating some buses when the Central Government intervened and completely nationalised the transport system in Delhi. After that in 1967 some proposals came and Government did not accept it. Now, they are going to provide exclusively 40 per cent of the routes to the private hands. This is most objectionable. It is the responsibility of the Central Government to look after the transport system in the capital city of our country, which is directly under their control.

In dealing with the strike, I find a definite pattern. Whenever the workers and other sections of the people go on strike, this is exactly the same way Government deals with them. When the University teachers went on strike, Mr. Narasimha Rao took the position that he was not going to talk with the teachers and he was adamant to break the strike. When the junior Doctors went on strike, even though it was such a vital sector of the country, they refused to talk to the doctors. This is the attitude they are taking towards the lawyers' agitation and

towards the coal workers' agitation. Now towards the DTC employees also they are taking the same attitude. They will have to repent for this and they will reap the consequences of this attitude. They cannot accuse the workers for the loss in the DTC. It is because of the mismanagement and corruption in DTC. They are plying buses on certain routes, but on certain other routes where buses are most urgently needed, they are not plying the buses. There are complaints like that. They have to take into consideration all these things.

Lastly, I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the statement made by the father of the late Shri Lalit Maken, who is leading the agitation. This was published in yesterday's or day before yesterday's *Hindustan Times*. He says: 'I am a Congress-man and I want to say that the Surface Transport Minister, Rajesh Pilot is bent upon destroying the Congress in Delhi.' This is what a Congressman and the father of the late Shri Lalit Maken publicly accused. So, they should not make the workers scapegoat. If they have some internal differences between them—inside their party and inside their organisation—and if they want to finish off some organisations and some union leaders they should not make the public and the workers scapegoat. So, I would like to know from the Minister whether he will call the representatives of the workers for discussion and settle this matter amicably, and also why Government is not ready to honour the Commitment they had made in 1983. It was given specifically as a written assurance that the Fourth Pay Commission's recommendations will be implemented to the DTC workers.

Lastly I want to know whether they are going to privatise the Delhi transport system.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Ajit Kumar Saha. Five minutes for you.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA (Vishnupur) : Why only five minutes, Sir ?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You can

put so many questions within five minutes, that is why five minutes...(Interruptions)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA : Sir, the strike is called by the Congress(I) unions but we are supporting them.

As you know, Sir, the DTC buses are out of roads for about ten days, causing great inconvenience to the people at large. Only few buses are plying, the people are over-charged, the rates have been raised, and some school examinations also have been postponed. What is their demand, This demand is not a new one Already my previous speaker has said that the DTC authorities are committed that they will implement the Fourth Pay Commission's Report. They are demanding the implementation of the Fourth Pay Commission's Report.

The Minister had the audacity to let loose the reign of terror on the workers. Sir, parallel permit for all the DTC bus routes has been issued unauthorisedly. When the demonstrators with their leaders went to the Transport Ministry to meet the Minister, the Police had beaten them. Even those who were on the foot-path were harassed by the Police. Sir, in the newspapers it has been mentioned that one employee of Telephone Nigam was asked to produce the identity card and even after his production of the identity card, the Police slapped him. This is how the reign of terror is going on there. Sir, I cannot understand when the Government has taken the DTC strike as a prestige issue. Here I would like to quote a few sentences from the 'Hindu' paper :

• The leaders accused Mr. Rajesh Pilot, Union Minister of State for Surface Transport, of making the strike look like an internal matter of the Congress(I). Similarly, the Mafia group of the DTC management was treating it as an internal matter of a private limited company. They said that Mr. Pilot was also using the Strike to crush a Congress-I Union opposed to him. This

[Shri Ajit Kumar Saha]

Union had been founded by the late Congress-I MP Mr. Lalit Maken and was now led by his nephew Mr. Ajay Maken."

Sir, this is the state of affairs prevailing there. Here, I have a ticket issued by the private transporter in Delhi. In this ticket, there is nothing mentioned like the Ticket No. whether it is transferable or not, stages, etc. Here it is not written that it is not transferable. Instead of mentioning the cost of the ticket, here it is mentioned 2-G. What does this 2-G mean? No is mentioned in this ticket. If anyone wants to go to Shastri Bhawan and if he has to change the bus to reach Shastri Bhawan, he has to pay Rs. 4 and again if anybody wants to go to some other place by catching two or three buses, then he has to spend Rs. 6 on one side. Sir, all the Government Offices are in Krishi Bhawan, Shastri Bhawan, Udyog Bhawan, Rail Bhawan, etc. and many office-goers have to reach their offices in time. If they have to change the buses, then they have to spend a good amount on bus fare.

So, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is thinking to nationalise a part of the DTC Transport system and whether it is a fact that the Ministry has asked the DTC authority to invite applications for the recruitment of Drivers and Conductors.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore): Sir, I must congratulate the hon. Minister and the Government for taking speedy steps to redress the grievances of the commuters of Delhi. The hon. Minister has made alternative arrangements for the convenience of the lots of Delhi commuters by plying more than 3000 private buses and also running 24 more trains in the suburban areas of Delhi. In the last eight days the public in Delhi are facing lot of difficulties and troubles. I would request the hon. Minister that he may kindly "forgive and forget" because whatever happened in the past, let him forget and forgive and also

follow the Government's policy of consultation and coming to an amicable settlement. In this connection I would request the hon. Minister to issue some guidelines. I know this DTC is running in huge losses because the transportation charges, I mean, the fare etc. charged here in Delhi is the lowest compared to all the metropolitan cities. (Interruptions) Besides, I must congratulate the hon. Minister that after he took over this Surface Transport Ministry, the DTC losses are coming down. But unfortunately the employees of the DTC are not coming to the negotiation table which is really a disgraceful matter. I would request the hon. Minister that from the Government side and the DTC side he should ask them to come for discussion and settle the matter amicably.

Sir, I am sorry that some of the hon. Members in the Opposition are making a political issue out of it telling that this is Congress (I) organisation. This should not be there because the difficulties and inconvenience experienced by the Delhiites and lots of commuters in Delhi are a problem and crisis for all of us. I know that his distinguished predecessor has assured the DTC employees that the Fourth Pay Commission's Report will be applicable for the DTC employees. (Interruptions). Sir, the financial benefits and emoluments paid to the drivers and conductors of the DTC are much more than that of an U.D.C. in the Central Government. The employees are not willing to accept the Supreme Court's recent guideline that 20 per cent of their pay etc. will be given to them at the moment, which would give the financial benefit of Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 to each employee. But in the case of application of the Fourth Pay Commission's Report, they will have to get in between Rs. 5000 and Rs. 10,000 each. So, that is another reason why they are not accepting the Supreme Court's directive. So, you will kindly appreciate that without the mutual discussion, this will create a further problem. Besides, as the hon. Member in the Opposition has already told and it has come out in the press also, that 40 per cent of the routes in Delhi are going to be privatised, which is contradictory

to our transport policy. Therefore, this should be taken into consideration. After the privatisation of the 40 per cent of the routes, about 6000-7000 employees will be retrenched. The daily labourers and wage-earners will not have the scope to be made permanent. Besides, the promotional aspects of the DTC employees will be stopped. So, in this connection, I would request the hon. Minister to kindly re-think about this before taking any decision.

Regarding the difficulties of the commuters of Delhi, I would like to bring to the kind notice of the hon. Minister that late in the nights no buses are plying on the roads. Previously, the DTC buses were plying during late night hours. This should also be taken into consideration. Further, the commuters have to pay more than what they were paying while they were travelling in the DTC buses. This should also be taken into consideration.

Sir, the behaviour of the conductors and drivers and the other employees of the private buses are not very cordial towards the commuters. The commuters are suffering a lot. I have seen with my own eyes that the private buses do not stop in the approved bus stoppings. Commuters have to run a long distance to catch the buses. Therefore, this aspect should also be taken into consideration.

Lastly, I would request the hon. Minister to kindly consider these matters. Our hon. Prime Minister and our dynamic leader is always for conciliation and consultation. By this method, many of the acute problems could have been solved. In this connection, I would request the hon. Minister to follow the path and policy of our dynamic leader, the Prime Minister. Before I conclude, I would only request that this deadlock be stopped under the able guidance of our hon. Prime Minister.

With these words, I conclude.

DR. SUDHIR ROY (Burdwan) :  
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the dynamic leadership of our Prime Minister,

the Government is savagely dealing with the striking employees of the DTC. They have taken to a very legitimate trade union movement and strike. Strike is the last weapon of the workers. They have started the strike after the prolonged agitation because they were given assurances time and again by the previous Minister Shri Z.R. Ansari and by the Pradesh Congress Committee President, Delhi Mrs. Tajdar Babbar that the DTC employees would get payment etc. according to the Fourth Pay Commission's recommendations. But, instead, the strike has been declared illegal. More than 700 employees have been detained under ESMA... (Interruptions) Even the stadium has been transformed into a jail. All sorts of threats are being made. In the buses, hooligans are harassing the ordinary passengers as was the practice during the dark days of Emergency. People who have got passes, they are being harassed and thrown out of the buses. Children cannot go to schools even for examinations. This is the sad plight of the commuters. This dynamic Government can hold out the olive branch to the TNV killers who killed innocent women and children. This Government can hold out the olive branch to the Punjab extremists. But they cannot negotiate with the striking employees of the DTC.

In a democratic country, workers have a right to strike. They have a right to struggle. It is a legitimate struggle. But this struggle of theirs has been declared illegal under ESMA. Not only this, it has been further alleged in the newspapers that Rs. 1 lakh has been collected from each private bus owner. They have been assured that forty per cent of the DTC routes would be privatised. I do not know that. From roof-tops the Congress (I) leaders and the Government have criticised public sector from the commanding heights of the national economy. But you are all going in for privatisation. Therefore, I would like to know from the Minister... (Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) :  
Don't you have private operators in West Bengal ?

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Minister will take care of that. Minister is there. Don't worry.

(Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : But he is making allegations. (Interruptions)

DR. SUDHIR ROY : I would like to know from the Minister whether he is ready for a negotiated settlement for the DTC employees. I would like to know from the Minister whether.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore) : He is contesting that they have not taken Rs. 1 lakh... (Interruptions)

DR. SUDHIR ROY : They have taken more, in fact. (Interruptions)

SHRI AJAY MUSHRAN (Jabalpur) : In communist countries, there is no right for workers to strike. There is no right. (Interruptions)

DR. SUDHIR ROY : I would like to know from the Minister whether he is trying for a negotiated settlement with the Delhi Transport workers and whether private bus operators who are harassing commuters. (Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour) : Today itself you should start negotiations.

SHRI ANANDA PATHAK (Darjeeling) : Sir, the DTC employees have been demanding implementation of the recommendations of the Fourth Pay Commission. Government is already committed to that. But it has heavily come down on the workers and large number of DTC employees have been arrested and lathi-charged. They are being harassed in many ways.

On the other hand, millions of commuters are suffering like anything. They are not getting conveyance. And the private bus operators are fleecing the purse of these commuters. They are facing lot of difficulties. This Govern-

ment is standing on false vanity having made it a prestige issue. Employees had visualised that the Government would make it a prestige issue when they submitted their memorandum. Already it has been mentioned by other members and I will not repeat it. These are the things.

The main reason for this situation is mis-management, anti-people policy, anti-workers policy and corruption. These are the main reasons for this present situation. Therefore, I think, when we are discussing something here, we must find out ways and means of solving this problem. Therefore, I think, if the Government is serious enough, sincere enough, I would put some of the suggestions which have already been put forward by my friends. Immediately negotiate with the unions and settle the demands of the employees; release all the arrested DTC employees; withdraw all the criminal cases against the employees; stop the policy of privatisation and withdraw all the licences given to private bus owners. If privatisation is allowed in Delhi, it will spread over throughout India. It is a dangerous tendency of the Central Government.

There are some real grievances. Due to unwise and unintelligent policy of the management what we are finding is that while for East Delhi and Tilak Nagar there are so many buses, every minute people there get a bus, in Rohini which is the biggest colony of Asia there is no bus. Hardly after three hours one bus goes there. I would like to know whether the Government will look into this matter. This is a genuine grievance of the people.

I would also like to know whether the Government is going to consider the main points which I raised above. fulfil them and come forward to solve those problems. (Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I take you back to the last two years of my tenure as the Surface Transport Minister and answering questions in the same House. I am happy

that I had been getting firing from them that DTC was not functioning properly, DTC management was not good, workers were not behaving, workers did not talk properly to commuters, workers cheated the people. These are all on record by way of questions and supplementaries here. (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I cannot allow this, I have not permitted others. Nothing will go on record. I cannot allow anything else to go on record. Only the Minister is called upon to speak. Minister alone can speak, No interference, that is all.

(Interruptions)\*\*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : Let them give me a chance. I had been listening to them.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I request the Members to let the Minister speak first. Why are you going on interrupting the Minister? If you go on interrupting, he cannot say anything (Interruptions). You refute it afterwards. Why are you interrupting in the middle? So many Bills are there, Grants are there, at that time you can refute this, you have every rights. I won't allow anyone to interfere.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : I had been replying to them, I had been admitting here that 'yes, there is a shortfall in the management, there is something wrong, there are loopholes where the management is not able to react'. I have been accepting it on the floor of the House. I am not running away from that. But I have also been promising to this nation and especially to the Delhi commuters that Government will improve the system of the present DTC. I have been assuring that in this House.

I am very happy that... (Interruptions)  
I am open. If anybody asks me questions, I would reply. If he is not satisfied he can repeat the question and I will reply to that also.

I fully share their feeling. We have

not been elected here to take away the employment of the people. We have been elected here to create more avenues for employment. If the Hon. Members want to really go to the depth of the DTC problem, they can go to the workers and ask them as to how much efforts we have made. As a Minister I had been going to their bathrooms to check up whether the bathrooms are properly maintained for the drivers or not. I had been seeing whether the hot water is available in the month of December or not, whether tea is proper or not. Today they are telling us that we have no welfare of the workers at heart and they are the only champions of them? That is not the problem. The problem is that you don't consider the situation.

When this strike notice was given to us, we told them 'look, we have been finding out some ways as to how to solve your problem, the Government never said that they don't give you the 4th Pay Commission's benefits, you please give us sometime because there are 72 such Public Sectors which are involved. By the way, you people had gone to the Supreme Court, you had made this appeal to the Supreme Court'. Supreme Court has given the decision which is the highest court of the land of the nation. You have to follow those instructions also. So please give us some chance. When they called on me I told them that you have complicated the whole matter. Please give me some time to find out. Personally I have been telling these leaders upto-date progress in the matter. You can talk to them how much open I had been to them that the stage is so and so. I told them to hold on 'or a month or two. Examinations of school children are coming up. Please have some patience. They said for not more than 15 days. They had a discussion with the Secretary and they gave in writing that on 17th we have got to go on strike. You should have talked to them and told them when they had waited for 15 days Government is talking to you. You should not be that adamant. They said we will not listen to the Government and we will go on strike on a particular day. (Interruptions)

Let me explain the whole thing. I did

[Shri Rajesh Pilot]

not leave it to this degree only. I thought may be the Union leaders may not communicate to the workers and the workers may be kept in-between. *(Interruptions)* After this I went a step further. There was an accident free record function. We have started a scheme that any driver who has accident free record for one year we give him Rs. 1000/- as cash at the end of the year so that he goes home and carries some sweets for his children. I went there and I said let the workers be there. I will also tell them directly that I am trying my best to solve their problems so that it is direct communication to the workers and the workers tomorrow may not say that this feeling of the Government did not reach them. I started speaking on the stage but they started shouting slogans 'Fourth Pay Commission. Fourth Pay Commission'. With folded hands I told them that I have come here to discuss with them. Let a room be opened and I will sit with them and talk to them. They did not listen and even a bad incident took place. When I was coming out they threw stones on the transport and police had to come and intervene. Still lot of bad incidents took place but that is immaterial. As a public representative I did not mind that. After that I again sent a message. Please go slow. We are trying our hard. We will try to solve your problems. When they gave ultimatum as a responsible Minister and as responsible Government we had to take some alternative measures. I had to reply to my 50 lakh commuters. I cannot tell them since I could not persuade them so you also do bad things. After that we made alternative arrangements from different States. *(Interruptions)*

My heart is clear. There is nothing to hide. I am open to the House. If you feel I have done anything wrong I will say 'sorry' here.

On 17th the strike took place. On 16th evening they deflated the tyres of 1600 buses. We had experience of the last strike. What they did was that when the buses were coming to the depots they

damaged all the engines of the buses. They parked the buses in such a way that they blocked the traffic of the whole capital on four crossings in 1983. The whole traffic of the whole Capital came to a standstill and there was firing. So we took precaution. Still they damaged 1600 buses. They deflated the tyres and took out the timer which is between the carburator and fuel pump. I would like to ask the Union leaders who are present in the House and who are not present in the House. I will quote an example of the strike and Union peoples' behaviour in other countries. I was in Air Force. Some of my colleagues went to Canada to ferry cargo aircrafts from there. It was Dehiveland company. There was a notice board saying that factory is on strike and there was a poor chap sitting at the gate. These pilots went there and saw the board that the factory is on strike and thought they need not go inside because there may not be any flying today. One of them said we must go inside and sign the register. We must mark present so that it is there that we have reported for flying. When they went inside, the whole factory was functioning and they were surprised. When they came out, they asked those workers: Why you people are putting a board and then working? He said, look, production is a national requirement. Every day, for one hour in the morning, we beat our chests against the Government, shout slogans against the Government. But during a strike, our production goes high. This is the mentality those workers have got and those union leaders have got. But our union leaders..... *(Interruptions)*

DR. DATTA SAMANT : That is that Government, not Indian Government. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : I have just quoted an example. Why did you get excited? *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : As you have got a right to speak, he has a right to reply also. Why are you getting agitated? *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Nothing

goes on record; only Minister's reply.  
(Interruptions)\*

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** We should start such intentions in our country because ultimately it is country's loss. (Interruptions) I have said, demands are pending because of the action on the unions' part. Why should they go to Supreme Court? Hon. Members are pointing out, I have said in my statement..... (Interruptions)

**SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) :** I always go on telling not to speak like this. They are arguing. (Interruptions)

This is not the place for arguing like this. If you want to raise, you can raise at the proper time.

**AN. HON. MEMBER :** Minister's reply to the question.....

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** I will take care of that. (Interruptions)

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** I wish even our union leaders would have also gone through what was the ruling of the Supreme Court for interim relief. How much a worker was benefited even by that? The Government did not go to the Supreme Court. It is the unions who went again. In 1987, they went. On 11th March, again they went.

Now about interim relief—minimum with the Fourth Pay Commission. I am going scalewise like a Government driver and DTC driver. (Interruptions) Chau-beyji, listen. It might benefit your knowledge. I am comparing a DTC driver and a Government driver. What Government driver has got after 4th Pay Commission and what DTC driver would have got with interim relief only? Government driver is on Rs. 1,369 in a minimum scale and DTC driver on interim relief is getting Rs. 1,398.

As I have mentioned in my earlier statement that in 1983, the same unions

demanding higher scale than Central Government. They got it a gap of Rs. 70 to 90 and here the problem has started. They themselves went out of the Central scale in that strike. This is one of the conditions, therefore, that you raise our scale from the Central Government by Rs. 70 to Rs. 90. So, I have explained very clearly that this seed of the problem has been started that day onwards.

Going to the Court every year has complicated the problem for the Government to take a decision. So, you must bear it with us that we are not to go in confrontation and fight against the workers. We are for their welfare. But you must also see some rules and regulations which you have framed. It is the Parliament which has framed the rules permitting the Government to function in that limit.

Some of my colleagues have pointed out a few points. Generally, I have told you that Government is not for any confrontation. Government is not against the welfare of the people. (Interruptions) I am coming back. Just let me finish some of the points. I know your people want to say that we have told them to negotiate. So, they are negotiating. That is the problem. You see, it is not a correct approach.

**DR. DATTA SAMANT :** You initiate.

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** I will carry on doing my duty as a responsible person of the Government and also as a public representative. I will not let any class down on this.

13.00 hrs.

My young colleague has pointed out a few things. Some of them I have started explaining. Another thing is about privatisation. There is nothing new. In Delhi there are already roughly 1080 private buses running. The approach paper... (Interruptions)... They are under DTC but the private operators are working on some conditions. Those conditions are changeable.

**SHRI SURESH KURUP :** It is under the control of DTC.

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** It is under the control of DTC but on some conditions. So, already private buses are operating. So, the Seventh Five Year Plan document approved by NDC, given by the Planning Commission has openly said that Government must change over to 40 percent privatisation in the transport sector in Delhi. This is Planning Commission's document and it is approved by NDC. So, we are not going against anything. We are following those policies which have been agreed by the House, which have been agreed by the Planning Commission. We are not going for privatisation as they are apprehending. I will ask one simple question. You are all shouting for privatisation. Can any one of the CPM Member say what is the percentage of privatisation in Calcutta transport? I will sit down and you reply. *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) :** It is gradually being reduced. It is not increasing. It was 40 per cent. Now it is only 10 percent. It was there in the past. It is still there. *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** We must look into ourselves before pointing out fingers to others.

**SHRI SURESH KURUP :** The point is from the beginning, in Delhi the transport system is completely controlled by the Government of India. Now what prompted you to think that at least 40 percent route should go to private persons?

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** The Planning Commission Report is already there... *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** I have already said that the approach paper is passed by this House. It is not mine. It is Kurup's signature. Parliament has passed. My question is not replied, I also have the privilege as a Member of this House. What is the percentage of privatisation in Calcutta? Some hon. Members,

specially the leader of the CPM must reply. Is it 80 percent or 50 percent, etc? *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI RAJESH PILOT :** For the information of the House, it is 80 percent in Calcutta. I am the Transport Minister. I have the figures. *(Interruptions)\*\**

I will also inform the House why things are going wrong in DTC. I would not keep anything away from the House. As I said, the management is to be blamed up to a certain degree and there have been some lapses on the part of the management. They should have been more strict in certain respects, but they were not able to do that due to some reasons.

For the information of the House, I would like to mention a small problem of DTC. A driver reports for the morning duty at 0530 hours and he works till 1400 hours on depot duty. There are two duties; one depot duty and the other one is line duty. At 0530 hours he comes for the depot duty and he goes off at 1400 hours from the depot duty. They depot duty is to park the buses, to reverse or start the bus if the mechanic says to do that for checking etc. At 1400 hours he goes off the duty and then he gets on to the line duty and he does that duty till 2100 hours. Next day again he does the depot duty and line duty. He has done four duties. In other words, while in the Central Government there is a restriction on the overtime, there is no such restrictions in DTC. On the first day, one duty, one overtime, on the next day one duty, one overtime and on the third day he is off. For three days he has done like this and for three days he goes without pay. In other words, he has already earned his pay by overtime on two days. These are the people who are destroying the whole discipline in DTC and they are manipulating. They have been beating the depot managers. They says to them to follow this policy, or they will take care of them. Under such circumstances, does my colleague want me to improve the system or not? This is how they are doing. He is doing one duty one overtime continuously for two days. He is not losing anything... *(Interruptions)*

\*\* Not recorded.

Another thing that I will tell the House is what is not common between the Central Government and the DTC. There are a few benefits which are only in DTC not in the Central Government. They get overtime as I have mentioned and it comes to roughly Rs. 17 lakhs. Then, they have cash compensation, that is, if on a holiday they work, they get cash compensation. Then, leave encashment is there.

It is in DTC, not in the Central Government. They get night duty allowance also. I do not think in Central Government you have this, but in DTC, we give night duty allowances... (Interruptions)

If it is there, I stand corrected.

Then, we have washing allowance, canteen subsidy ... (Interruptions) These are the benefits which are allowed in the DTC, not in the Central Government. When you have an undertaking with the Central Government, the Government has to take a total picture. (Interruptions)

I have accepted in my speech earlier that there have been some lapses on the part of the management and we are trying to improve it. Today, you go to the commuter and ask him how much discipline has come in the DTC today. It is due to the management that today people are travelling in buses, otherwise the whole traffic would have come to a halt. Have you not seen the other three strikes? How did they behave in the last three strikes? This is the first time that the management have taken a firm stand and we are successful in that.

Then, I share the feeling of the House that the flat rate of Rs. 2 is becoming a burden. If a person has to change a bus, he has to spend Rs. 2 plus Rs. 2 and after adding the charges for the return journey, it comes to Rs. 8. It is a big burden on a person earning Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 per month. I also accept that the private operators are not honouring the passes to some extent & we have received some complaints also. I am not denying that, I share the feeling of the House. We are trying to evolve a system whereby

our commuters will not be taxed because of the strike. We will soon come out with a scheme which will see that, till we sort out the problem of the DTC, the DTC routes are taken up by the private operators also. So, we are coming out with this scheme. We are also making some effort to see that the private operators should honour the passes issued by the DTC. They must honour the DTC Passes. So, we are also evolving a scheme so that our pass holders should not face any problem or discomfort.

Some of the Members have said that money has been collected. (Interruptions)

Give me a chance, I am also one of you.

Sir, it has pinched me. It has really pinched me because I am heading this Ministry. If some such rumours are floated somewhere, then it is certainly my duty to go and check as to who has done it and why it has been done. But, Sir, I am afraid that some of the Opposition Members started ringing me;

[Translation]

"Engage at least our two buses engage 5 buses of a particular party."

I only hope that they have not collected it. If they say that the people have collected the money, I only hope that none of my... (Interruptions)

As a Minister, I cannot say that nothing has gone wrong. But I assure the House that I will get it checked and no corruption shall be allowed in the transport system in Delhi. I seek the cooperation of the Members for two things.

There is a cause today. The cause is that the Government, whether headed by you or by us, must function. The 50 lakh commuters...

SHRI AJAY MUSHRAN (Jabalpur): Sir, may I interrupt for half a second... (Interruptions)\*\*

\*\* Not recorded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No, I cannot allow you to interrupt during the Calling Attention.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Mr. Pilot, you please finish your answer.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : I would like to assure that 52 lakh commuters who are dependent on this transport system as there is no alternate transport system in Delhi—it is not like Bombay or somewhere else\*\*\**(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please order.

*(Interruptions)\*\**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No, it is not allowed.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : I assure the House that we will do our best to improve the transport system and we will keep the expectations of the people who are totally dependent on the road transport system. We will make every effort that the services come to their satisfaction and we will also try to increase the number of buses...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Why did the Government give the assurance ?*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DATTA SAMANT : The pay revisions are pending since long.*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He has already answered it.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT : With these words, I once again assure the House that the Government is fully aware of the situation and we will do our best to solve it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : We shall adjourn for Lunch to re-assemble at 14.15 hrs.

13:15 hrs

*The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch at fifteen minutes past fourteen of the Clock.*

*[English]*

14.18 hrs.

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

[SHRI SOMNATH RATH in the Chair]

#### MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

*[English]*

- (i) Demand for a secondary switching area for Idukki district in view of inadequate telecom facilities there.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Idukki is a backward district and telecommunication facilities there are quite inadequate. Most of the telephone exchanges in the district are not functioning properly and there is a long waiting list in all the exchanges.

The development of Telecom facilities in the district is stalled because of the fact that this district is included in the Telecom district Ernakulam with Ernakulam as headquarters of the secondary switching area.

Annexing a very backward district with a developed district like Ernakulam in the matter of Telecom facilities is to the detriment of Idukki district. Public agitations with the cooperation of the elected representatives of the people have been held demanding secondary switching area for the district.

Already a number of representations have been submitted to the Government demanding formation of a new secondary switching area for Idukki district. I urge upon the Government, in view of the fact that Idukki is a backward district and Telecom facilities are quite inadequate, a secondary switching area may be formed for Idukki district.

- (ii) Demand for declaring 14th April, the birthday of Late Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a National Holiday.

SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD (Chamarajanagar) : Fourteenth April is