

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b). There has been some increase in the consumer prices of washing soap in Delhi. The selling price of washing soaps both in Super Bazar and Kendriya Bhandar has increased since their cost of procurement has gone up.

(c) There is no criterion available to ascertain the top five manufacturers of washing soaps and detergent in Delhi. It is not possible to indicate the quantity sold in Super Bazar and Kendriya Bhandar in the absence of name of manufacturers.

(d) The Government has liberalised the import of raw materials and reduced the custom duty on them. These measures are expected to check the rise in prices of washing soap.

[Translation]

Effluent Treatment Plants in Delhi

4130. SHRI RAJESH KUMAR:
SHRIMATI SHEELA
GAUTAM:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposed to set up effluent treatment plants in all the industrial areas in Delhi;

(b) whether any pilot project is being launched in this regard; and

(c) if so, the amount allocated so far for this project under the Eighth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b). The Ministry of Environment and Forests has in 1990 initiated a scheme for the setting up of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) in clusters of small scale units. Under this scheme, the Government has identified two industrial areas in Delhi where CETPs could be installed. They are Wazirpur, and Mayapuri industrial estates. A sum of Rs. 50 lakhs has been released to the CETP at Wazirpur. The other CETP is yet to prepare the feasibility report.

(c) Under the World Bank aided Industrial Pollution Control Project phase I, a sum of Rs. 108 crores was earmarked for the setting up of CETPs in the country during the period 1991-97 and in Industrial Pollution Prevention project Phase II, a sum of Rs. 150 crores has been allocated for setting of CETPs during the period 1995 to 2001. Under this scheme 25% of the cost is borne by the Government of India and another 25% by the respective State Government subject to a ceiling of Rs. 50 lakhs each, and 30% is made available as loan from the IDBI.

12.00 hrs.

ACUTE CRISIS IN WAGON INDUSTRY

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for allowing me to raise a very very important issue. Not only some

industrial units in the country but the future functioning of the Indian Railways as well as the future of 60,000 workers are involved in this matter.

Sir, I am referring to the acute crisis in the wagon industry in this country. Most of them, 80 per cent of the wagon industry, are located in the Eastern India, in the Eastern Region. Sir, wagon building industry was really developed at the instance of the Railway Ministry because Railways will require these wagons. Out of five leading wagon manufacturers two are in the public sector and three are in the private sector, engaging about 60,000 workers.

So for as the Seventh Five Year Plan was concerned, the average yearly take-off had been in the region of 17,000 to 20,000 four-wheeler units. These industrial units were encouraged or rather hedged in by the Railway Ministry to expand or to augment their resources because it was expected that there would be greater and greater requirement of wagons.

So far as the Eighth Five Year Plan is concerned it was envisaged and had been fixed at 1,50,000 wagon units, that is, 30,000 wagon units a year. The industry was specifically asked to gear itself for the purpose of meeting the increased requirement of wagons and they had responded to that. The capacity had been increased. The targets for a minimum period of three years had been fixed in advance. They had proposed to place the orders for three years in advanced so that they could chalk-out their programme for manufacture and could supply them in time.

So far as quality is concerned, there has never been any complaint

about quality of wagons that had been manufactured by these units in this country.

Now the position is this. So far as the Eighth Five Year Plan is concerned—we are now in the fourth year—in the first year, out of the estimated requirement of 30,000 units, it came down to actually 26,261 units and for the year 1993-94, instead of 30,000 units, it came down to 19,500 units. But this year, it has reached a catastrophic situation.

In 1994-95, the requirement of the Railways, according to the Five Year Plans, is 30,000 wagons. During this year, 1994-95, the Railways reduced in the Budget, as it was mentioned by the Railway Minister, to 8,000. Sir, we are today on the 23rd August 1994. Six months have elapsed after the Budget. Orders for only 6,000 wagons to 7,000 wagons have been placed. Whether the hon. Minister agrees or not, these orders have been placed after a good deal of pressure, representations and the Chief Minister's letter. We have met the Prime Minister. An all Party delegation came from West Bengal. All the political parties were represented. This was selected on the basis of a unanimous Resolution passed by the West Bengal Assembly. We met all of them. Sir, except the sweet assurances, nothing has been done. Everybody says, 'We shall look into it'. Now with the order of 6,000 or 7,000 wagons, how can this industry survive?

Now the position is this. A somewhat disturbing situation prevails. Two more new units are sought to be inducted into this industry. One is M/s Southern Structural and the other is M/s Binny Engineering, Madras. They are being asked to gear up our production for construction of these units. So we are

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not against any units for constructing this. But the question is, the existing units are going sick and they are going to be on the verge of closure. Nothing is being done. Sir, the old wagons are becoming old. It is *cadit quaestio* as we say in legal parlance. It is obvious there are 3,35,000 condemned four wheeler wagons and thereby there is an additional requirement of at least 5,000 to 6,000 wagon per annum to carry the increased freights as it was expected because of the economic growth that the Government had projected. Now, therefore, the Railways' minimum order level should be not less than 23,000 to 24,000 wagons per year and the projection of the Planning Commission is 30,000 wagons per year. Now the only plea that is being at least made is the same, that the Railways freight traffic has gone down supposedly to such an extent that even 7,000 wagons are not required.

Sir, there has been serious criticism that today in this country road lobby is taking to predominance using the very costly foreign exchange, because we have to import. This is why this road lobby is increasing and expanding because of the imperfect functioning of the Railway freight traffic. Apart from that fact, there is also a problem. Now the wagon is less procured in number and there are failures. Even there is no projection of the freight to be carried. The Standing Committee has made a unanimous suggestion that a prospective plan has to be prepared. You must have an exercise as to what is the freight traffic your can carry and prepare on that basis. These are your Units. You have asked these units to be set up to be expended for the purpose of supplying wagons. What sort of economic activities are you finding or do you find in this country? And what is the projection of

the Railway Ministry about the future of the economic activity in this country that there is not going to be any requirement of wagon during the whole year? This is more than 6,000 or 7,000 wagons and they say it is an increased figure.

Sir, of course we have made certain comments and suggestions from the Standing Committee. Nobody has looked into it. I have a grievance of that. Our Committee has made a grievance of that. I am not going to raise it here in detail. But, Sir, what is the answer now the hon. Railway Minister has given. Repeatedly the Chief Minister has met him more than once. We have met him more than once. We have met the Prime Minister. We have met the Industry Minister. Now we raise it in the House. The hon. Minister for Railways, Shri Jaffer Sharief says that for about two years, it has been noticed that the traffic offerings to the Railways have not picked up as per projection. What was the projection? What was the actual amount that was reached and as a result of this, the existing wagons availability is more than adequate to handle the current level of traffic offerings and there is no need for any additional wagon? So, what sort of planning are you having in this country?

What sort of projection are we having in this country and what is the decision that has been taken? On what basis was it taken? A requirement of 30,000 was projected. Still, the current Five Year Plan—although we may not have an opportunity or time to discuss it, for which I am not blaming the Chair, we have been trying to discuss it—projects some other figure. What sort of projection is made and is it made in consultation with the Railways? Is this the State of the Indian Railways that when they require 30,000 they order for 7,600 and than they say, "However, to mitigate the hardships to wagon building units, the

Railways have already released orders for 7,600 in terms of four wheelers" — not for requirement but just to be charitable — "In addition, tender for the procurement of 1800 wagons in terms of four wheelers is under consideration and orders will be released after finalisation."

But nothing has taken place. This letter is dated the 19th July and now some good advice has been given by Shri Jaffer that the wagon building units should try to look for alternative methods for utilising their capacity. They say, "diversity".

This is an amazing attitude! For the first time we hear that wagons are not required. Even a contention has been made, a sort of policy was decided that they would ask for 2,000 wagons to be secured from the private sector. But the private sector will also build them here. There are no other modern industries. There are no other units where wagons can be built. But there is no response from the private sector also. They are not placing the orders for the purpose of manufacture.

Sir, 60,000 people are engaged in an industry which is only geared to manufacture wagons. They have been doing it for long, there has been no complaint about the quality, there is no complaint that they have not performed their duties and functions properly. They do not necessarily say that these wagons cannot be utilised for any purpose.

Therefore, it is a sheer crisis of an immense magnitude. Sixty thousand people are involved. They are Indians. They are our citizens. They have not done anything wrong. They are not criminals. They are not terrorists. They want to survive in this country by putting

in hard labour. The Railways are the biggest public undertaking in this country and they do need wagons. How does this Government propose to run the railways? How does the Ministry of Railways propose to run the railway system in this country and carry freight traffic unless there are adequate number of wagons?

Therefore, they are surrendering their right of *courgae*, the opportunity to carry freight, they are surrendering it either to the road lobby or even to private air operators who are coming up now. They can also utilise this opportunity.

Sir, this is my charge that this Government owes an explanation to this House and to the country as a whole. How do they propose to achieve this target which has been fixed in the Five Year Plan? How would they achieve the target of 18,000 wagons which has been provided in this year's Budget in the month of February? In February they could calculate the requirement to be 18,000 and in July how does it become 7,600? What sort of Budget preparation is being made?

Therefore, I demand that the Government has to give its most serious consideration to this. I demand that immediately orders should be placed on those units. Otherwise 60,000 people—almost all of them are in West Bengal—will suffer and the law and order situation is also being threatened. What will they do? Sixty thousand people, for no fault of theirs, are going to lose their jobs because the Government now asks them to try some other types of activity. This is nothing but a joke, it is nothing but a surrender of their responsibility. This is trying to be taking up a holier than thou attitude by saying, "I tried to help you. Nothing can be done. You go

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wherever you like and manufacture whatever you like."

A very critical situation has arisen. I am thankful to you. I know that we have not got that much of time. But I raised it here. I request that the hon. Minister should make an adequate response to this.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore): Sir, on numerous occasions either by way of correspondence with the Railway Minister or during the course of discussions with him I understood from him that it is not—he says that—that they do not require wagons.... (*Interruptions*)

We very much require wagons but we have not got the money. This is what he goes on saying. He has got the money but requirement of wagons is not there. This is what he was saying earlier.

I had written a letter to the hon. Minister of Railways on the 23rd June in which I mentioned that it has come to my notice that the Ministry of Railways which has a subsidiary called CONCOR has floated a global tender for import of 1,500 flat wagons for container traffic and the tender was due on the 15th of July. The estimated cost of these 1,500 wagons is Rs. 200 crores. I do not know what has happened subsequently with the tender and all that. But I am pointing out, Sir, that with modernisation of railway traffic, everybody knows that the containers are coming more and more into use. No modern railway system can function unless it can cater to container traffic. The railway administration in the country is pleading that it cannot give all orders for the old type of wagons from these companies because of lack of resources. This is not my figure. They have themselves floated a tender for

importing 1,500 flat wagons for carrying containers as though flat wagons for carrying containers cannot be made in this country. When Box wagons and other types of wagons can be made, flat wagons which are used for carrying containers can very easily be made. But they are preferring to import. They are importing 1,500 wagons from abroad at the cost of Rs. 200 crores.

The hon. Minister of Railways placed in Parliament the rolling stock programme for 1994-95. There is a provision made for conversion of 2,000 Box wagons into container wagons at a cost of Rs. 30,000 each. So it is obvious that they are in need of container wagons that is flat wagons for carrying containers.

I would like to request the hon. Minister to tell this House today that what is their requirement of flat wagons for carrying containers traffic and how many such flat wagons they want to order this year on our own indigenous factories. If they are not ordering them here and if they are preferring to import at the cost of foreign exchange, then what is the logic behind it and why is this money being spent abroad? That means the jobs of our workers are being exported abroad. Instead of our people getting those jobs they prefer to spend foreign exchange to give these jobs to foreign countries. This is very intolerable situation.

We were told previously about their import programme for wagons. They may be Box wagons or they may be flat wagons. Flat wagons may not always be very nice to look at. They do not have a very modern look about them; because they are used for carrying containers. But the hon. Minister should tell us what is their projection of the requirement of container wagons in another year or two

years or five years. Without container wagons they cannot move container traffic now. When you go along any National Highway you will see that these road transport vehicles are also carrying containers. Containers are of great advantage. These containers are delivered from door to door and the consignee does not have to come and collect his consignment from any railway depot or godown or anywhere. The stuff is delivered at his door. This is the modern system which is being in use in more advanced countries of the world for many years. We have taken to it only recently. These container wagons are easier to make because they are flat-bed wagons. The containers are placed on both of them.

Now they are to be imported from abroad when there is so much idle capacity lying in our wagon manufacturing factories—Braithwaite, Burn and Jessop—which are very old and prestigious factories and whose products were at one time known all over the world. These companies date back from the time of the British days and in heavy engineering and structural engineering, they are unparallel in this country even today. Instead of giving them the orders for these flat wagons for container traffic, they have admitted in their own rolling stock programme that they are going to import fifteen hundred flat wagons this year itself at a cost of Rs 200 crore, and spend some thousands of crores for converting BOX wagons into container flat wagons. All this work can be done here. There is nothing in this which our people cannot do. We have the skilled workers, we have the technical people, we have got the equipment in these factories and everything. So, I want to know from him why, while starving these companies of their legitimate orders, they are going in for this import programme

and also helping to divert the rail traffic to the road traffic. Road traffic is costing us more because of the cost of oil and because of the cost of diesel. Enormous amount on diesel is being incurred by the road traffic. As Mr Chatterjee said, may be there is a very strong lobby working behind the scene. But we want to know why the installed capacity and the manufacturing capacity of our companies in this country is being allowed to go waste and is going to be finished off, and instead of that, they prefer to spend foreign exchange on import of these flat wagons from abroad. He should tell us the truth about the whole matter.

[*Translation*]

PROF PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur) Mr Speaker, Sir, I have also given a notice on the issue raised by Shri Somnath Chatterjee and Shri Indrajit Gupta.

Sir, these units were running under the Ministry of Railways. Out of them four units were in the public sector and the others in the private sector. If orders are placed on them according to their capacity, these industries can be saved from closure. Whenever a demand is made to the Railways, they simply reply that due to shortage of wagons, they can do nothing. A few days back, I had written a letter to them about the requirement of wagons from the farmers of Himachal Pradesh for transportation of peas and some other vegetables from the State to other parts of the country. I was told that there is shortage of wagons but on the other hand, orders are being placed on foreign companies. As my other friends have pointed out, there was a requirement of thirty thousand wagons. The hon. Minister had himself admitted in February that there is a

[Prof. Prem Dhuma]

requirement of 18,000 wagons but now, orders are being placed for 7600 wagons only. As a result, many units in West Bengal are facing closure. It is not only the wagon industry but its ancillary units are also facing the danger of closure. Ultimately, these units depend on this industry. Many private entrepreneurs have set up small ancillary units and they too will have to close down them.

Sir, through you, I would like to request that the orders should be placed on them according to their installed capacity. . . Despite unanimous recommendation of the Railway Convention Committee, the Government is going ahead with the placement of import orders for ABB engine, whereas our own wagon industry is on the verge of closure due to lack of orders. They are being told to look for some other work. Sir, through you, I would like to request that the wagon industry of the country should be saved from ruination and the Ministry of Railways should place orders on them according to their capacities.

[English]

DR. DEBI PRASAD PAL (Calcutta North West): Sir, the crisis in the wagon industry has been pronounced in these days because of the attitude of the Railway authorities not to have the supply from the Indian industries which have grown up, particularly the wagon industry in the Eastern region and in West Bengal. The wagon industry has developed expertise. They have been supplying wagons to the Railways authorities for long number of years and their main customer is the Railway authorities. It is because of continued demand of the Railway authorities that the wagon industry has also expanded their production.

The companies—Braithwaite, Burn and Jessop—are the principal public sector undertakings which have specialised in the manufacture of different types of wagons. The Railways have also been getting the supplies from these different public sector companies. As Shri Somnath Chatterjee pointed out, a large number of employees are employed in this industry. The Railway Minister may kindly explain as to what is the reason why the supply is not being obtained from these industries now. Nobody can question the workmanship of these industries. Everybody knows that the railway bridge in Calcutta, which was constructed with the supplies obtained from these companies, Braithwaite, Jessops and particularly Burn and Co. The quality of work now is equally good. It is not deteriorated. In spite of that, why are the Railways trying to withdraw their orders from these companies? Not only that, but as it has been pointed out, the Planning Commission itself also recommended for about 30,000 wagons. Why has this been squeezed? The entire industry is now in a very critical condition. The result is that the public sector undertakings are not getting any order. The wagon industry's principal customer is the Railways. If the Railways do not place the order for wagons with these companies, then ultimately they have to wind themselves up and the result of their winding up will be that several thousand workers in West Bengal will be completely thrown out of employment.

I will, therefore, request the hon. Minister for Railways to give serious consideration to this matter. There is no reason why the Railway Ministry should have to obtain their supplies from different countries when the Indian industries, the public sector undertakings, are not getting the orders. What may be the reason for this? Why are the Railway authorities

thinking or contemplating to develop new wagon industries in different areas? I do not mind if the demand is higher and if these companies are not in a position to cope with the demand; then certainly the Railway Minister can consider expansion of the wagon industry in some other areas. But why this sort of treatment to the old industry, which has shown such a perfection in their work, should be made?

It is a matter to be given a very serious consideration by the Railway Minister as otherwise thousands of people will be thrown out of employment in West Bengal. I would, therefore, request the Railway Minister to give careful consideration to this matter and also to increase their orders from these public sector undertakings.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Sir, I join the other colleagues to demand that the Railway Ministry should take an immediate decision and place orders on the wagon building industry. There are several aspects of the deep crisis. One aspect is the capacity of the industry. It is admitted that this industry has got a total capacity of manufacturing about 35,000 wagons which includes the capacity of the Railway workshops. In this context, we should also take into account the total requirement. The Planning Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: This is already explained.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: It has been suggested that we require at least 30,000 wagons in a year. It is not only that but it is also our experience that the over-aged wagons are very much in use. It is estimated that annually about several thousands of wagons are to be replaced

because of the over-age. Last year, about 35,000 wagons have been condemned because of over-age. It is necessary to replace them. Therefore, over and above the Planning Commission projection, there is more need for manufacturing of wagons.

It has even been estimated that we require about 5-6 thousand additional wagons annually to meet the incremental freight due to the increased economic activity of our country.

Therefore, Sir, there is no justification for reducing the orders being placed for this industry by the Indian Railways. If this decision is not revised, the impact will be very disastrous. It will lead to cut in employment by way of retrenchment, closure etc.

MR. SPEAKER: These points need not be repeated.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: This will also create transport bottlenecks and lastly, it will contribute towards the slowing down of the tempo of growth of industrialisation in our country. Therefore, the Government should revise the decision and place the order for wagons.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV (Madhepura): Mr. Speaker, Sir, several Members have spoken on the issue of requirement of wagon raised by Shri Somnath Chatterjee. In a way, these industries are the life line of West Bengal. The Ministry of Railways is not placing orders on them for the supply of wagons. It is a very serious matter and in the past, it has been raised several times at various levels. The Ministry of Railway is not serious on this issue. I would not like to

[Shri Sharad Yadav]

go into the details. I would also like to submit that for all the industries in public sector, whether they manufacture print paper, fertilizers or textiles, a definite period should be prescribed. Due to new economic policy and open market policy, lakhs of people have lost their jobs and crores of people are on the verge of retrenchment. Therefore, this issue must be gone through threadbare. A large number of workers are sitting idle. The workers of C.L. Nepa Nagar and other textile industries have been rendered jobless. It agitates our minds in Delhi because lakhs of workers are now jobless. This industry is the oldest industry and it is on the verge of closure.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Railway is the largest and the most prestigious public sector undertaking of India. If we look from the point of view of national integration, it is the Railways which imbibe the whole country.

The hon. Minister should give a statement on this issue so that the future of 60 thousand workers do not get ruined. Further, future debates should cover all the units.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Somnath Chatterjee has raised an issue regarding the plight of wagon industry. There is a unit of Bharat Wagon Industries in Mukama, which falls in my constituency. This unit has been functioning for a very long time. The manufacturing work is still undertaken there and thousands of people are working there. It is due to the liberalisation policy of the Government and the pressures and conditions of the World Bank that the wagons are being imported and the indigenous wagon industry is on the verge of extinction. We would like the Government to ponder over it, otherwise

lakhs of people will be rendered unemployed and the main industry of the country will become extinct. In view of this the existing policy should be changed. Those units, which are still functioning, should be given orders according to their capacities. In case orders less than their capacities are placed on them, they will face closure and many workers will be rendered unemployed."

Sir, through you, I would like to urge the Government that the issue should be considered afresh by the Ministry of Railways. The policy being adopted in regard to import of wagons should be scrapped and the tenders being invited by the Railways should be cancelled. The technology can be improved indigenously by spending less amount. However, fresh requirements can be met by gearing up production accordingly.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Basudeb Acharia wants to endorse what others have said without making a long speech.

[Translation]

Thereafter, Shri Chandrashekhar will speak.

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not only the question of 60,000 workers, but there are also about another 60,000 workers who are engaged in the ancillary industries and these workers are depending upon the wagon manufacturing industries of West Bengal. So, the total number of workers involved in the wagon industry

and also the ancillary industry is 1,20,000 workers.

MR. SPEAKER: That number is already given. It cannot change because you say so.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, I fail to understand this. When the Budget was presented and the Budget was finalised...

MR. SPEAKER: That point was also made.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: No Sir. This is not covered. The Railway Minister did not visualise that there would be a less offering of traffic. When freight traffic was projected in the Budget as 380 million tonnes, how is it after one month the Railway Minister has come to the conclusion that the Railway will not be able to achieve the target of 380 million tonnes of freight traffic? As a result of this the Railway will need 18,000 wagons. Thus he came to the conclusion that Railways requirement is only 7,600 wagons. Whereas every year Railway wagons to the extent of 35,000 are condemned and these wagons are being used. Why the Railway is not trying to achieve its target when these wagon manufacturing units have been depending on Railways. The Railways is spending Rs. 700 crores for import of 3 Phase Electric Locomotives along with that technology. Sir, we are told in this House that there is a massive gauge conversion. This massive gauge conversion is being taken up because there is bottleneck and there will be more and more of traffic. But what is the result of this gauge conversion.*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Acharia please do not dilute a subject which is properly projected.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: 600 kilometres of metre gauge is being converted...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Khanduri not like this, please.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: 1500 kilometres of metre gauge is being converted into broad gauge. Then Railways should need more and more broad gauge wagons.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Mr. Acharia, you please sit down.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, I have a letter. The Minister should reply to this letter. For what purpose the Railway are spending 94 million US dollars. When there is a technology and our indigenous industry can manufacture these flat wagons, why is this global tender being floated?

MR. SPEAKER: You have made very good points. Now, please take your seat.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Not only a statement but the Minister should immediately announce that the Railways are going to place order to the extent of 18,000 wagons which was projected in the Budget to save the industry, vital industry of West Bengal and save 1,20,000 workers.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): Recently, I was in the conference of the AITUC units of these wagon industries. All the points that have been raised here, have already been represented to the Government. I would like to know from the Government that different Railway heads are claiming that they are making huge profits this year

[Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee]

and despite that, how is it that this target is not being achieved?

SHRIMATI MALINI BHAT-TACHARYA (Jadavpur): Sir, recently myself and Shri Sudarsan Raychaudhuri, MP, visited the Angus unit of Braithwaite and we find that the foundry which had been lying idle for two years has been recently re-commissioned at a high cost with the hope that the orders for parts of wagons which are to be made in this foundry are to come from the Railways. But now that the foundry is about to be re-commissioned, one finds that there are no orders. The workers were in tears. They are ready to work. The foundry is there and is ready and yet there are no orders.

I condemn this adhocism on the part of the Railway Ministry and demand that the hon. Minister should make a statement here saying that they would add up to the projection of 18,000 wagons and the order should be put regular on a three-monthly basis or on two-monthly basis.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonla): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issue of import of wagon is going on in this House. The Congress Government has nurtured disliking for every product of India. In my constituency, there is a big railway factory. Earlier, it was proposed to manufacture coaches in this factory, which was dully taken up there but due to some reasons later on that unit was shifted somewhere else. As a result, thousands of workers had been rendered jobless. Now, the Government is going to close down the factory itself. All necessary machines are still there. The Government should make

arrangements for providing jobs to the retrenched labourers there itself. The factory located in Izzatnagar should be saved from closure. The Government should atleast have some consideration for Izzatnagar.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to hon. Members, particularly Shri Somnath Chatterjee who initiated this discussion on this subject. What surprises me is the unfounded allegation that has been made.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Why unfounded?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: What is the allegation?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Today who should bother about the wagons? I can understand if the consumer makes a hue and cry that we have not been able to carry the traffic.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: It is the same argument.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Please bear with me. I have heard you completely. You should also hear me.

I have not heard from any sector that we have not been able to carry the traffic. It is true during every Plan period, certain Plan projections were made. Based on that, orders have been placed.

Similarly, in the Eighth Plan period also, if certain traffic projections were made and the Budget estimates were

made, we generally come before the House and place orders. Unfortunately, we have not been able to generate the traffic which we expected.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: After one month.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: We cannot understand the logic if an industry is penalised even if it improves its efficiency.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: It has improved its efficiency.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: If the Railways are able to utilise their assets intensively and meet all the requirements, why should there be any objections?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Suddenly?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Today let anyone say that they have a traffic, I am prepared to take care of it. I have not said that I am short of wagons, I am just short of locomotives. We have electric traction. We do not have electric locomotives. We are short of diesel locomotives. Other than that, so far as coaches and wagons are concerned, we have enough capacity.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum): Combined with the road transport.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: You must understand my problem.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Why is global tender being floated?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: You must allow me to reply.

You want to say whatever you want but you do not want the version of the other side to be listened to.

So far as the import of wagons is concerned, there is no question of such a thing. Under World Bank aid, some action has been taken by the Container Corporation of India.

It is a subsidiary of the Railways which has floated a global tender which requires about 180 standard international specifications to carry 150 container traffic. That is the global tender where our Indians have also participated. The price offer have not yet been opened. We do not know when the price offer is opened, to whom it goes and what happens. We do not know about it exactly. But the fact remains that it is a World Bank aided scheme. Under the World Bank guidelines, a global tender has been floated.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Is it not floated by the Railways...
(Interruptions)

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: In my reply to the last Budget discussions, I had said about it. If the hon. Members can recollect, there was a hue and cry that we increased the freight and fare. Today, I must repeat and confess that without causing inflation, without causing any burden the common man, we do it. We did not venture to increase either the freight or the fare. So, we presented a need-based Budget. There is an element of doubt that we are not acquiring wagons to encourage production or we are influenced by the road lobby. It is absolutely not so. The road lobby has got grievances against us. The gauge conversion is going to knock away their traffic.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: That is not happening.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: It is going to happen. It is happening. Please bear with me. All these years, the Railways have been dependent on conventional traffic like coal, steel, fertilizer, food-grains, fuel-products and so on and so forth. It is for the first time now we have given a lot of thrust on marketing to carry everything. As Shri Indrajit Gupta has said, I would say that more and more requirements of container traffic are going to be the new pattern of traffic which is going to come into being in India. Therefore, we have asked our coach factories to find out whether some of our wagons could be converted into containers. Three of our own Coach Factories are there. One Coach Factory is in Kapurthala and another one is in Madras—the ICF. Even, we have not been able to place the orders for coaches on them. The orders are less in number. We have told them to divert it. We have asked them as to why they should not take up the manufacture of containers. This is the position.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHARY (Katwa): Have you placed any order for containers?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I was responding the other day when the Supplementary Demands for Grants were discussed in this House, when, unfortunately, our friends from the other side were not present. The same issues were discussed by our own party Members. That is why I said in the course of the Debate that I did not miss them because my own party Members were doing their role.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You have stated that you did not miss us. You do not want us. But what about the workers? What about this Undertaking?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Please listen to me. The workers are not your monopoly. We are equally concerned about the workers as much as you are concerned...*(Interruptions)* It is a very wrong notion to hold that only some people can think of workers and not others. We are equally concerned about the workers.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sweet words will not help. He is making it a party issue. We know very well that this is the attitude of the Government. On an issue like this, he is making it a partisan issue.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: No, not at all. It is absolutely not so. There is no question of any party issue. It is not a question of party issue. Please do not attribute motives that we are ignoring the workers. How can any human being neglect the workers? After all, it is a human problem. We are concerned about their bread and butter...*(Interruptions)* I can understand about Shri Somnath Chatterjee who is the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Railways.

He makes studies. But Mr. Basudeb Acharia is always pats on my back saying that I am doing good work. But here, he is the rival. He cannot understand me...*(Interruptions)* All that I would say is, this wagon industry, under no circumstances, is going to suffer. Whatever is the total requirement, we have been placing orders. Today if you force me to place orders, I can do that. But then in the next two years, there will not be any orders...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: It is a vital issue. I can understand if there is really going to be lesser and lesser number of wagons necessary. They are given advice for diversification. But it cannot be done overnight. I think, still there are units which need proper consideration. And if it has to be switched over, it has to be done gradually. What you will not do in the next two years, for that purpose, you are stopping it this year. The only thing he has not replied to is this. The Planning Commission had set it at 30,000 wagons, you brought it down to 18,000 wagons this year. How does it become only 7000 wagons in February? You tell me, what was your assessment?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: What is the assessment of the demand for the wagon?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: The question is, I am going by the traffic; I am going by the consumer demand and I have enough of idle capacity. It is for you to tell me about it. Whatever expansion of line network we are doing, ultimately, the benefit of it is going to be reaped by the same manufacturers. It is a matter of a year or two. If we get more requirement for line network, who will manufacture it?...*(Interruptions)*

It is a question of how we can meet our requirements in the total allocation of traffic which is being offered. I can tell you that we have taken utmost care in our investment. We have made allocations more judiciously and there is no question of my discrimination against any State.

One point was made about why we are not meeting the requirement of the existing industries and why we have allowed some other new industries in

some other areas. We have not allowed any new industries. Generally, when some more people come to invest in an area, we give them education order. It is only an education order to allow competition. Every sector does it. It is nothing new. Beyond this, I have nothing to offer....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: There are no explanation about the number of orders. Not a single case has been given. A very pertinent question raised by Shri Indrajit Gupta has not been replied as to whether the Government of India is going to spend money to import wagons. What is this? What shall we tell the people of this country? What shall we tell them?...*(Interruptions)* Their fault is that they are labourers. They are working there. They are Indian citizens earning their livelihood by labour...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHARY: Are you satisfied with the reply that he has given... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Not one assurance has been given to me... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: What is your observation?... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: It is a question of livelihood of workers and not a single order has been given... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: He says that the World Bank was compelling them to have a global tender. Now, how did they accept the advice of the world Bank? But the question that he should answer is... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: People in this country will feel that Parliament cannot solve this basic issue of survival of sixty thousand people in this country.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Additionally, they have asked the private sector to own it and run it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Railways and the Ministry of Railways should be congratulated for having a plan for having Uni-gauge in the country. But at the same time it is very difficult to understand when the Planning Commission says that 30,000 wagons are required and this Ministry says that 18,000 wagons are required and they have only ordered for 7,000 wagons? How do they explain this? It is because the requirement of wagons depends on the production in the country, the figures of which are available with the Planning Ministry. Certainly the Railway Ministry which is responsible for carrying the goods also, is applying the mind to this problem and had come to the conclusion that 18,000 wagons are required. How do we explain it?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I have not said about any sector...

MR. SPEAKER: Then why is this big discrepancy? That means the production has not come down. The Planning Ministry says that 30,000 wagons are required. Your Ministry says that 18,000 wagons are required. Who is carrying these goods? If you do not have the funds, one can understand it. But, if you are not agreeing to the figures, how do we accept it?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Sir, there is always a mid-review. In the mid-

review, what the revised requirement worked out was about 10,400 numbers against 18,000. Already, the order placed with the industry was 7,600 wagons... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: If you are interested in talking, you can talk. If you are interested in reply, you should hear, please.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Sir, we generally keep on making review in which we came to the conclusion that as against 18,000 wagons, our requirement came down to about 10,400 wagons.

MR. SPEAKER: How did it come down?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Out of which, already the order placed on industries was about 7,600; Railway Workshops 1,000 wagons; tender floated is 1,800 wagons; total of 10,400 wagons. Apart from this, the CONCUR is 3,750 and Own-Your-Wagon Scheme is 2,205 wagons. This Own-Your-Wagon Scheme is an area where these wagons buliders can go and approach.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Why are they handing over to Own-Your-Wagon Scheme area?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Are you satisfied with the reply? You have asked a very clear question.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I do not know. I think, the Minister has some difficulties and probably he will discuss those difficulties with you and try to solve this real problem, which is a problem which should be solved.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: If there is a surplus of wagon...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: He will discuss with you. Well, I have not understood his difficulty. Probably you have also not. Please have a discussion with him and try to solve it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: He is not prepared. He is shaking his head. You are not prepared to discuss.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I am prepared to discuss with you. I am quite confident to convince them.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Without any result.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I am quite confident of convincing you.

13.00 hrs.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sir, we are grateful to you for your kind intervention. We have really tried to elicit the facts so that the people could be told about them. There is no real response from the Government. Now, he has complicated the issue by referring to purchases from the private sector. He kept it back until you put that question. He has not come out with the facts...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Why should they buy if they have a surplus? Why should they require them if they have a surplus?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I do not know why the purchases from the private sector are required if there is no traffic at all. How does that theory fit in with the fact that they try to purchase from the private sector. With full respect of the House, Sir, I do think we must register our strong protest. With the fullest respect to you, Sir, we must walk out. We walk out.

13.01 hrs.

At this stage, Shri Somnath Chatterjee and some other hon. Members left the house... (Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Let them say that they will not import a single wagon. In his answer, he has not stated anything. In view of his refusal to answer that particular question which you have put to him, we hope you will approve of our walk out.

13.01½ hrs.

At this stage, Shri Indrajit Gupta and some other hon. Members left the House... (Interruptions)

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I have answered, Sir...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): The reply given by the Government is not satisfactory. There I also walk-out alongwith my party members.

13.02 hrs.

At this stage, Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav and some other Hon. Members left the House.

13.02½ hrs.

RE: REPORTED MOVE TO ALLOW
ENTRY OF FOREIGN MEDIA INTO
INDIA

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: May I request Chandra Shekharji to speak? sorry for detaining you for a long time. You can have as much time as you like. Or, would you like to raise it tomorrow? I will leave it to you.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR
(Ballia): I do not need much time, Sir.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards an issue which is being widely discussed for last several days. It is regarding the permission to be given for the entry of foreign newspapers into India...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, please control these people. They think that they have control all over the world.

SHRI MURLI DEORA (Bombay South): He has control over you also.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: You people cannot control us. There must be some etiquette...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the past few days there was a reported move to allow entry of foreign media into India. Today a News has appeared on the front page of a leading Delhi newspaper that the cabinet meeting is slated to be held on the 25th to take a decision in this regard. It has also been reported that the Ministry of Finance has opined to allow entry of foreign media into India. There are some persons who are opposing it, but majority of people endorse the decision of entry of foreign media into the country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a national policy was formulated in 1955 under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Shri Keskar was also included in it. Under that policy it was decided that entry of foreign media into India will not be allowed. "The Statesman" was the only newspaper which was allowed to continue at that time because it had its specific circumstances. But today, the decision is taken abruptly. During the past three years, such decisions have been taken from time to time. So far as the question of policies is concerned these were neither discussed inside nor outside the Parliament and nor the people were consulted in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would not like to discuss the repercussions of the entry of foreign media into the country, but I would like to submit that many countries which have adopted the policy of liberalisation have not allowed entry of foreign media into their countries. As some hon. Members were pointing out the circumstances have compelled the Government to bow before the external pressure.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government is reluctant to discuss with the political leaders of the Opposition. But it should