

[Prof. P.J. Kurien]

Vanchinad Express in Kerala it had halts at Changanacherry, Thiruvalla, Chengannur, Mavelikkara, Kayamkulam and Varkela. Now the train takes 4 hours and 20 minutes between Trivandrum and Emakulam. If all the above stoppages are allowed, it will only take additional time of 20 minutes. This increase in running time need not be taken seriously when we consider the fact that the train at present is running with about 50 per cent of the passenger capacity.

The argument that this train is an inter-city train is not tenable because Kerala is more or less a continuous city. The number of passengers boarding the train from Changanacherry, Chengannur or Varkela is not less than those boarding from Kottayam or Quilon.

I also wish to bring to the notice of the Government that this train passes through the districts of Kottayam, Pathanamthitta, Alleppey and Quilon. It has halts at Kottayam and Quilon districts but not at Pathanamthitta and Alleppey districts. There is no reason to discriminate against these districts.

I would, therefore, request the Central Government to allow halts of Vanchinad Express at Changanacherry, Thiruvalla, Chengannur, Mavelikkara, Kayamkulam and Varkela in Kerala.

(iii) Need for early completion of West Coast Waterways work In Kerala

SHRI PALA K.M. MATHEW (Idukki): The development of waterways in the country deserves a new and radical

approach. The National Transport Policy Committee has declared three national waterways for speedy implementation. They are Ganga-Bhageerathy-Hooghly, Brahmaputra system and west coast canal-Kottayam-Kottappuram waterways along with the Champakkara canal, Kallam and Udyogmandal canal. Though the decision was to take up the west coast canal without delay, adequate attention has not been paid to it till now. This canal has to be deepened and widened. The Night Navigational facilities have also to be promoted. The construction of mechanical terminal facilities at Kottappuram, Cochin, Vaikom, Alapuzha, Kayamkulam, Chavara, Kottam etc. should be given top priority.

Sir, out of Rs. 250 crores allocated for this work in the Eighth Five Year Plan, only Rs. 55 crores have been utilised. Considering the cheapness of water transport and other advantages, I request the Central Government that this west coast canal work should be completed at the earliest as a time-bound programme.

(iv) Need to provide concessions to industries for Industrial Development of Bundelkhand Region

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi): Bundelkhand region which falls in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh is quite backward from the view point of industrial development. In the absence of strong industrial infrastructure 18 districts of this region are economically very weak. 60 per cent population of this region belongs to the labour class and they do not own any property. Bundelkhand had enormous natural

resources. But industries based on these natural resources could not flourish in this region because it is not getting economic assistance required to set up industries. The industries set up by getting loan are incurring huge losses and are on the verge of closure. Bundelkhand has a population of around 2.5 crore but it lacks public sector industries. This region has a large potential for industrial development but it is not getting the required economic assistance either from the Central Government or from the State Governments. Poverty and unemployment cannot be removed from this area without speeding up industrial development there.

Therefore, I demand that the Government should exempt the industrialists of Bundelkhand from sales tax and trade tax or concessions should be given to them. Heavy industries should be set up so that small industries could flourish. 24 hours power supply should be ensured on concessional rates. Long term loans should be given by banks and other financial institutions and special grants should be allocated for the revival of closed units.

(v) Need to merge Kashi Nath Seth Bank, Shahjahanpur (Uttar Pradesh) with some Nationalised Bank

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI (Badaun): Banking Operations in Kashi Nath Seth Bank of Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh have been stopped for the last one year. Neither the money is deposited nor withdrawn. People whose money is deposited with the bank are unable to withdraw it and, thus, they are facing a great difficulty. The case of this bank is under consideration with the Central

Government. Management of the bank has refused to run the bank thereby making the situation more critical. Future of the bank employees has become bleak but so far the Government has not issued any order to the RBI regarding this bank. This problem cannot be solved without merger of this bank with any other nationalised bank.

Therefore, I urge the Government to intervene in the matter immediately and issue orders for the merger of this bank with some nationalised bank so that the future of employees is not put in jeopardy.

(vi) Need to provide financial assistance to State Government of Uttar Pradesh for providing relief to the people affected by severe floods in Ghatampur in Kanpur Dehat District

SHRI KESRI LAL (Ghatampur): My constituency Ghatampur which falls under Kanpur Dehat district and other adjoining districts like Fatehpur and Hamirpur have been affected by severe floods which have caused a large scale loss of life and damage to property. Epidemic has broken out in the entire region and the people are not getting the essential life saving drugs. Uncertainty is pervading in the whole region and the people are feeling helpless.

Therefore, I request the Government to make arrangements for emergent financial assistance for this area so that affected people could be given food and medical assistance. If life saving drugs are provided, the lives can be saved. So I request the Government to allocate required funds for this purpose.