

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed"

The motion was adopted.

To meet certain long outstanding demands South Eastern Railway introduced the following new services serving the State of Orissa from November this year:-

1. An inter-city day time train 21/22 Dhauli Express between Howrah-Bhubaneswar connecting the two neighbouring State Capitals.

2. 47/48 Hirakhand Express introduced in May, 1988 between Bhubaneswar-Sambalpur connecting western parts with coastal areas of Orissa, was extended to Jharsuguda.

3. A direct fast service from Howrah to Tirupati for the convenience of people living on the East Coast north of Bhubaneswar.

4. Trivandrum/Cochin/Bangalore-Howrah/Guwahati group of train services which are passing through the State of Orissa, were augmented by way of increase in frequency to provide a daily service between Madras-Howrah. These trains which were earlier by-passing Cuttack were diverted to pass through Cuttack. Thus, Cuttack has been connected with Howrah-Guwahati on one side and Trivandrum-Cochin-Bangalore-Madras on the other side by superfast services.

Due to constraints of resources these services could be introduced only by rationalising certain services. We, therefore, had to withdraw one pair of passenger trains on Titlagarh-Jharsuguda section, one pair of passenger trains on Puri-Howrah section, one pair of passenger trains on Bhubaneswar-Palasa section, the slow moving Puri-Tirupati Express as well as the tri-weekly Madras-Howrah Janta Expresses. Nevertheless, to minimise inconvenience on this account Railways introduced the following new services:-

(1) A pair of shuttle trains between Jharsuguda-Sambalpur JS-3/

15.15 hrs

[English]

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

- (i) Situation arising out of withdrawal of number of trains by eastern and South Eastern Railways.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA: (Salasora): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Railways to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he make a statement thereon:-

"Situation arising out of the withdrawal of number of trains by the Eastern and South Eastern Railways and introduction of revised timings of some trains resulting in inconvenience to the passengers and the steps taken by the Government in that regard."

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): Sir, Railways undertake a review of the train services twice a year to examine various demands for new services extension of runs, increase in frequency, diversion of routes and provision of additional stoppages etc. As the Hon'ble Members are aware Railways continue to face severe constraints of resources and have to carry ever-increasing volume of freight and passenger traffic. Therefore, the new demands have also to be met by rationalizing the existing services.

[Sh. Mahabir Prasad]

JS-4.

- (ii) A pair of passenger trains 461 / 462 for morning/evening commuters on Kharagpur-Bhadrak section.
- (iii) A pair of shuttle trains between Khurda Road-Puri KP-1/KP-2 with connection at Khurda road for Puri-Tirupati traffic.
- (iv) 47/48 Express made to stop stop at all stations between Khurda Road-Balugaon and between Jharsuguda-Sambalpur.

Neelachal group of trains viz. 175/176 and 915/916 between New Delhi-Puri were re-scheduled to provide a more convenient two night and one day service instead of two days and one night service thus saving a working day of passengers. Also these trains are now arriving at Bhubaneswar in the morning hours and leaving for New Delhi in the evening hours from Bhubaneswar which is more convenient than the previous arrivals in the afternoon hours.

In the end I would like to assure the House that it is our constant endeavour to provide best possible services within the availability of our resources and we will continue our efforts in this direction.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will confine myself only to the statement of the hon. Minister. Sir, with your permission I would like to mention here that the volume of the passenger traffic in Orissa State alone which was surveyed in 1982-83, was 10.75 lakhs. In 1987-88, it has been increased to 16.38 lakhs. It is estimated that by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan, it will reach 2 millions. May I know from the hon. Minister how many such trains

have been withdrawn in other zones particularly in South -Eastern Railway? After that I would concentrate on the statement of the hon. Minister. Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned about the withdrawal of 37/38 Howrah-Madras Janata Express. Sir, you might also be knowing that the passenger train No. 397/398 running between Puri-Asansol has also been withdrawn. So, both these trains have been withdrawn. The reason given for withdrawing these trains was that army was moving in that region, so more trains were necessary. Sir, so far as defence is concerned, it is uppermost in our minds. So, we had not said anything about that and we put up with the difficulties. But in spite of our repeated demands and requests the train N. 397/398 which were serving the common man were not fully restored. Only tri-weekly trains were running for some time. But again they were withdrawn from 1st November 1988. So, you can imagine the difficulties faced by the people in those areas.

Sir, while speaking, the hon. Minister has mentioned about 203/204 Puri-Howrah passenger train. It was a century-old train service and this was introduced first when the B.N.R. was started. These trains were running between Howrah and Puri considering the importance of Puri town and its religious importance also. I am not going to touch other things. But the hon. Minister has said that Train No. 461/462 KGP and BHC has been introduced for which I am grateful to him. But side by side, I wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether he has any information that after this train No. 461/462 reaches Kharagpur there is any passenger train to reach Puri and Howrah. There is no train after this train. After reaching Burdwan at 2030 hours there is no passenger train for 12 hours to reach back, Bhubaneswar, Puri, etc. So, the passengers have to wait at the platforms for 8 or 9 hours to get the express train in the mid-night at 1.00 AM or 1.30 A.M. There is one express train running to Puri at

this time. So, Sir, this is a serious situation. This may kindly be considered by the hon. Minister whether it is correct or not.

Similarly, Sir, as my colleagues from the State are aware, the Train No. 215/216 Palasa-BBSR Passenger train was withdrawn. This is causing much inconveniences and difficulties to the railway users. The people are very much agitated over the withdrawing of this train and they have started so many agitations. Similarly the Passenger Train running between Sambalpur-Titilagarh was also withdrawn.

Sir, the hon. Minister in his statement mentioned that Train No. 47/48 that is, Hirakud Express train, has been extended to Jharsuguda. We are grateful to the Railways. But at the same time, do you know that this train takes about 20 hours to reach Jharsuguda Sambalpur from Bhubaneswar whereas if one travels by road one can reach Sambalpur within 7 or 8 hours. In bus, it takes only 9 to 10 hours. This is the situation with Hirakud Express. Sambalpur-Titilagarh passenger train is withdrawn. Naturally, people are demanding to have stoppages of this Express train. Passengers are prepared to pay Express fare. They are now travelling in a train which takes 20 hours, though it should have taken 8 hours.

The hon. Minister told about the convenience the Railways are providing to the passengers of Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh etc., by changing timings of Train Nos. 175, 176, 915 and 916. You will be surprised to know what time the train Nos. 175, 176, 915 and 916 take though they are Superfast. Now both the trains are consuming more than 2 hours to 2 1/2 hours than the previous timing. Neelanchal Express is also consuming more time. When we are trying to go by Sputnik and jet, the superfast express train is running with a speed of only 60 to 61 kms. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that a policy decision has

been taken that superfast trains should run at least 90 kms. per hour? The people of Orissa and West Bengal are suffering even though the volume of passenger traffic in our areas is much more than elsewhere. I would request the hon. Minister to kindly ascertain from his senior colleague, Mr. Scindia Ji. In the first week of September, we, all the MPs from Orissa met the hon. Minister, Shri Madhavrao Scindia in his chamber in connection with some railway developmental project. In the course of discussion, one gentleman, perhaps from the Railway Board had disclosed that they are going to change the timing with the plea that one working day will be saved. With one voice, we opposed this vehemently. Of course, I am grateful to the hon. Minister, Shri Scindia Ji that he has ascertained from us whether the previous timing should stand. In one voice, we have told, "Yes, the previous timing should stand".

At present, Train No. 175 is reaching Delhi at 21.30 hours. We wanted that its departure time at Puri should be advanced by one two hours so that the train can reach New Delhi at least by evening. Ultimately what happened? Now these two trains are starting from Nizamuddin at 23.00 hours; then it will come to New Delhi at 23.30 hours. Again it will reach Delhi Railway Station at mid-night 0.00 hours and then leave for Puri. While coming back from Puri, it will reach Delhi railway station at 3.00 hours in the midnight and then at 3.30 hours at New Delhi Railway station and then reached Nizamuddin Railway Station at 4.30 hours. This train will reach Delhi at 3.30 hrs. Then it will come to New Delhi at 4.00 hrs. It will come to Nizamuddin at 4.30 hrs. This is the situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Try to conclude

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : You know that if we arrive at New Delhi or Old Delhi Railway Station in the night at 11 o'clock or 11.30 PM, the commuters cannot get transport. They have to travel by buses to their

[Sh. Chintamani Jena]

destinations and buses will not be available. Therefore, the people are suffering every day. The hon. Minister may kindly realise this fact.

The new timings of the trains have created great difficulties to the commuters of West Bengal and Orissa particularly because these two pairs of trains are meant for Orissa. 50% of passengers who avail these two trains are facing lot of difficulties because from Bhadrak, Balasore, Kharagpur, Midnapur, Bankura and Bishnupur and also for Tatanagar, whether they are uptrains or down trains, they have to reach the station in the midnight at 2.00 or 2.30 or 1.00 O'clock. These timings of the trains should be changed immediately. I am confining myself only to the statement given by the hon. Minister.

After 1979 and 1980, Puri-Tirupati Express was withdrawn from Khurda-Puri Section. Nine railway stations on Khurda Road to Puri are facing lot of difficulties.

Tirupati-Howrah Express trains are now running. It is well and good.

The night passengers from Puri to Khurda Road, are facing lot of difficulties due to this re-routing. There are no stoppages for 479 and 480. There should be more stoppages for 470 and 480.

The hon. Minister has said in his statement that 21 and 22 Dhauli Express is a substitute of 203 and 204 Puri-Howrah Passenger. 22 is reaching Howrah at 10.30 PM and it is a day train. But the hon. Minister may kindly go through the time-table. People from Orissa are facing lot of difficulty after reaching Howrah in the midnight. The only solution would be that one more rake should be provided so that simultaneously when it is reaching Bhubaneswar, at the same time, it

will reach Howrah in the day. Simultaneously only one rake is necessary for this train. This may kindly be taken into consideration immediately. The hon. Minister has stated that this is the substitute for 203-204 passenger train. I would request the hon. Minister to kindly go through the time-table. He can see that there are 76 stoppages provided for 203-204 Puri-Howrah train. Also, the 21-22 Dhauli Express is having eight stoppages between Bhubaneswar and Howrah. Therefore, you can imagine as to how the commonman will suffer after the withdrawal of this 203-204 passenger train. Besides, the 17-18 Link Express is also there. The hon. Minister was very kind enough to make a statement that the Railways are looking after the comforts of the commuters. For his kind information, I would like to mention that No. 17-18 Link Express is an Express train. You will be surprised to know that it has been detached in three places and attached in three places. You can imagine the plight of the passengers who are travelling. Sir, the people of Western Orissa as well as the people in two District from Andhra Pradesh are also travelling in that train. They are facing a lot of difficulties. There are many agitations which are going on in Andhra Pradesh also besides Orissa. Therefore, the previous timings of 17-18 Link Express should be restored.

Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that so many trains have been provided for Cuttack. But, you will be surprised to know that the Srijagannath Express is now not touching Cuttack. Cuttack was the previous Capital of Orissa State. The High Court is there. Besides this is a big business centre. The Board of Revenue office and so many things are there. I am not going into all these details. But, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister one thing. I have also got the numbers of certain trains which are touching Cuttack. The Srijagannath Express has been diverted via Narag. The train 203-204 has been withdrawn. So, also the Janata

Express 37-38 has been withdrawn. Does he know that there is no quota from Cuttack Railway Station for those trains which are now touching Cuttack? So, the people of Cuttack are very much agitated. All over the State, in almost all the Stations, there have been agitations against this change of timings and withdrawal of trains. The point is that the magnitude would not have been so intensive if there had not been any harvesting in the State of Orissa. People are engaged in harvest work. I have got the complete information. I would like to inform the hon. Minister that this would paralyse the entire Railway System in the State. Of course, the Railways can say that it is the duty of the State Government to maintain law and order situation. But, if the Railways take such decision and thrust upon the State Government to implement such decisions, how can a popular Government come forward to implement such decisions? Sometimes, arbitrary decisions are taken by the Railways.

I will take only one or two minutes. I would request the restoration of 203-204 Howrah-Puri Passenger train; 397-398 Puri-Asansol Passenger; 37-38 Janata Express; 215-216 Palasa-Bhubaneswar Express and Sambalpur-Titlagarh Passenger. These trains should immediately be restored. Sir, the hon. Minister may be knowing that Western Orissa has got very limited trains. People are demanding for more trains. But, unfortunately, the present Railway Board as well as the Minister decided to withdraw the trains. It will affect people from Western district of Orissa. Train Number 21-22 is running with one rake. It should be given more rakes.

Previously, Train Number 77-78 was called Utkal Express. It used to take 44 hours to reach Delhi. It was one and a half year's back. There was another train called Kalinga Express. Now they have mixed up both the

trains and named it Utkal-Kalinga Express. I request that both the trains should be revived and it should not be mixed up.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh): Mr. Chairman, I join my hon. friend from the other side to express sorry and satisfaction on the statement submitted by the Deputy Minister of Railways. I can assure you that all sides of the House will join me in expressing sorrow and anguish regarding the latest time table and some other changes made by the railway authorities recently. Even I can assure you that Kumari Mamata Banerjee will also join me to strengthen my hands because she is also waiting anxiously.

The problem started because of the recent railway time table and some other changes made with misplaced sense of improvement by the concerned authority and the Railway Board and the Ministry. While making these changes or rescheduling the railway time table the main problem is, we the Members of Parliament are not taken into confidence either by the Railway Board or by the Ministry or any other railway authority. No one thinks it necessary to consult us. When we go back from Delhi, people will start agitating regarding the time table, regarding the withdrawal of the trains. We cannot say anything. They only accuse us. They say: 'why have you gone to Delhi? You cannot do anything. You don't have any calibre.' We are abused by the public because as parliamentarian we have to go to the people and everyone is very much disturbed and dissatisfied with the railway time table especially with the recent time table and with the withdrawal of trains. Last year, the Minister of State Shri Madhavrao Scindia gave a solemn and categorical assurance that the trains which were withdrawn in January, 1987 will be restored. Till date, no restoration has taken place. This is causing a very serious problem.

[Sh. Anil Basu]

Regarding Orissa, I do not want to elaborate much because you know better than I. Recently there was a 12 hours Puri *bandh* against the Railway time table, withdrawal of the trains and rescheduling of the time table. It was not Calcutta *bandh* or West Bengal *bandh*. It was Puri *bandh* spontaneously observed by the people. And here is Mahabir Prasadji, our Deputy Minister. May we expect that he will be Karam Vir Prasad? I know nothing will happen because the reply of the Minister has not touched the problem. He spoke about some of the trains.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Reply will follow; this is only statement.

SHRI ANIL BASU: The statement expresses what concern they show on the problem. But he has said nothing about the problem of the Eastern Railways, the other sectors of the South Eastern Railways and the sub-urban section of the Howrah division.

In his statement there is nothing except telling that such and such trains in Orissa have been reintroduced. What is that? He has said in his statement that they monitor twice in a year. Who monitors and who are the officers? I would like to know whether they consult the people's representatives at all.

You have a divisional consultative committee. How does that Committee function? Why are the Members of Parliament not consulted? You said that there is a constraint of funds. I cannot think that the mere discussion would require any expenditure. You can ask the Members of Parliament in a railway division. You can sit with them and get their opinion because the Members of Parliament from both the sides, whenever give some opinion regarding some problem, they always look at the problem from differ-

ent sides—from the commuters side, administrative side, railways side and from the revenue side also. But it is never taken. Railways never cares to take the opinion of the MPs. So callous is the attitude of those who are running the affairs. It is a very sad state of affairs. (*Interruptions*)

The interesting thing is that five trains were cancelled in Orissa, in South-Eastern railways, in the recent past. They introduced three trains and one of these trains is Dhauli Express. It was introduced as an Express train. After one week, they converted it into a superfast train. Sir, you know what is the minimum fare of a superfast train. Every person has to pay higher price. They extract money from the passengers.

The trains which are running through Chota Nagpur area have been withdrawn; but no new trains are introduced there. These are the areas where tribals, SC and ST people are living. They are mostly agricultural labourers. You have withdrawn the passenger trains and now you have given a superfast train in lieu of five passenger trains. People will get agitated and an agitation is already going on all over Orissa. Another most serious thing is that although the number of passengers is increasing hundred times yet the number of passenger coaches is coming down. So what amenities can you give if you cannot even increase the number of passenger coaches, rakes, diesel engines and electrify the tracks?

Sir, the train which was running between Howrah and Delhi- Janata Passenger has been withdrawn. Further from the suburban section at Howrah and have withdrawn many trains during Sundays and holidays. I do not know the reason thereof.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now. I am calling the next Member.

SHRI ANIL BASU : The salaried people

who go to Calcutta they do not remain in their homes during the holidays. Most of the people go to Calcutta with their families and relations on Sundays and holidays only but during Sundays and holidays you have withdrawn many suburban trains. In the Seal-dah-Lakshmik antapur section some trains have been withdrawn and people are getting agitated over it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your seat now.

SHRI ANIL BASU: You see the problem. There is canal by the name Katkandi on Howrah-Burdwan main line and the Railway bridge at Bhadrashar. The state Government has paid Rs 3 crores as per the estimate of the Railways two years ago. Very slow progress of work is going on there. Now here there is no constraint of money. Money has already been taken from the State Government. Then why is work not progressing there?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please resume your seat now.

SHRI ANIL BASU: What is the reason for re-scheduling the time-table for Puri-New Delhi train? Neelachal train has become a problem. Members from both sides of the House met Mr. Scindia. We told him regarding the new time-table in respect of Neelachal train. We were told that it would be brought to the previous time-table but it has not been done of far.

There is another problem. Umaidpur Katwa metre gauge line should be linked to broad-gauge. Two trains of the Umaidpur-Katwa line have been withdrawn. They should be restored and linkage of metre-gauge with broad-gauge should be done on this line

Regarding BD railways, trains have been withdrawn. Only one train is running.

More trains should be introduced. What is the problem? You should tell us.

Regarding extension of railway line from Tarakeshwar to Arambagh, your predecessor Minister, presently known as 'Stengun Khan' went to Arambagh, which is my constituency. He told that within a month the railway line will be constructed there. Now the people are agitating about that.

SHRI AJOY BISWAS (Tripura West): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have gone through the statement. Actually, it is the most irresponsible statement that has been made by the Minister. I am quoting one sentence from that:

"Due to constraints of resources, these services could be introduced only by rationalising certain services."

What does it mean? It means that if you want to introduce any service, you have to withdraw another service. Is that your point? You rationalised certain services. I am opposed to this view because this will not actually help the common passengers. It will entail serious problems for the poorer passengers.

Every year, we see that the railway budget is being increased. But for the last five years there are no appointments. So, I think, this attitude should not be there. The train services, which have been withdrawn should be restored.

I am giving some instances. One first-class coach and a second-class three-tier coach were attached to the Darjeeling Mail. The people of that area were happy for that. But those two coaches have been withdrawn recently. As a result, the people of that area are suffering very much.

Another point is about the Sealdah station. I want to tell the Minister that the Seal-

[Sh. Ajoy Biswas]

dah station is the busiest station in the world. During the last five years, the number of passengers has increased. But the number of trains has not been increased. If you go to the station during the office time, you will see how the office-goers are facing serious problems to reach Calcutta. So, I request the Minister that particularly those trains, which have been withdrawn, should be restored.

You have mentioned only a portion of the South-Eastern Railways. How many trains have been withdrawn from the South-Eastern Railways? You have not mentioned about that in the statement.

16.00 hrs.

You have only mentioned the trains which are running in Orissa; you have not mentioned how many trains have been withdrawn in the Eastern and South-Eastern Railways. You have mentioned about the so-called rationalization of certain services.

Will you change your attitude? If you want to introduce any services, do that, but you must not withdraw any trains from anywhere, because only that would be helpful for the people of the country.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI (Bhadrak): Mr Chairman, Sir, I stand to add my voice to the voice of my hon. friends who have already expressed their sentiments on this issue. Though there has been an overall improvement in the Indian railways since independence, and for which we are proud, unfortunately, the authorities, of the Indian railways have not paid any attention to remove the regional imbalances which is the main thrust of our socialism. If sufficient attention had been given to Orissa, with its rich mineral resources, apart from its own economic growth, Orissa would have played a very vital and important role in the eco-

nomic progress of our country. But we the representatives of Orissa and the people there in general, are ashamed to see the position of Orissa in the railway map of the country.

Since my joining as Member of Parliament and taking an oath here, I as also the other hon. Members from Orissa belonging to both the Houses have raised these issues on the floor of the House, in the Consultative Committee, have written letters individually and have met various Ministers in groups, but not much progress has been made. We have raised issues like providing more funds for the on-going project to complete them within the shortest possible time, laying new railways line etc., but no to avail. We have been asking for survey and inclusion in the 7th Plan the Khurda-Bolangi railway line, which is a very important line. It passes through the district of Phulbani, a very backward district, where there is not an inch of railways. Mostly the inhabitants are scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. As I said, we wanted this to be included in the 7th Plan, but that has not been done.

Then, we have been raising the issue of shifting the South-Eastern railway headquarters or open a branch thereof at Bhubaneswar. As you know, South Orissa is the heart and soul of the South-Eastern Railways. There was a unanimous resolution in the State Assembly requesting the Government of India to shift the South-Eastern railway headquarters to Bhubaneswar, and also provide funds for the projects which have been sanctioned, but nothing has been done.

We have also been requesting for recruitment of youths from Orissa and give employment opportunities to them in the South-Eastern railways, but nothing has happened. Orissa youths are doing extremely well in the all-India competitions, but as compared to others, they are not getting

opportunities to join the South-Eastern Railways. I do not know the reasons. It is perhaps known to the officers. We have also raised questions for introduction of new trains for the convenience of the passengers. All our efforts have been ignored and the interest of Orissa people has been ignored. Instead of introducing new trains, instead of giving special favour to a State like Orissa, the Indian Railways have withdrawn eight Passenger trains. These passenger trains were mostly used by the poor people and weaker sections of the society. Sir, they have withdrawn 203, 204, 215, 216, 331 and 332 w.e.f. 1st November, 1988. Before that they have withdrawn two trains, i.e. 398 and 397. Besides this, four Express trains have also been withdrawn from the South-Eastern railway, i.e. Orissa. These are 37, 38, 79 and 80.

The Link train was the only train which was connecting the backward areas of Orissa, Andhra, Madhya Pradesh to our national capital. The inhabitants of these places are mostly the SC and ST people. This train was introduced in 1978-79. Unfortunately this was also withdrawn some months before.

203 and 204 trains are running since the pre-independence days. It is not that these trains were started just two or three years back. These trains were serving the needs of the weaker sections of the people but these were withdrawn. Mr. Scindia in a reply to 377, said that these trains are not popular trains. I do not know how these trains are not popular. These are running since hundred years and they cater to the needs of the poor people. We do not know how these are not popular. In the same reply, Scindia ji mentioned that we have introduced a group of Express trains which will serve the need of the Orissa people. Some of these Express trains are Guwahati-Trivandrum, Guwahati-Cochin, Howrah-Trivendrum and Howrah-Tirupati. May I know from the Hon. Minister

as to how many stoppages do they have in Orissa. Are you issuing tickets within the distance of 5 km? If it is not, then how do you expect that these will serve needs of Orissa people? So, this is how the railways is looking to the interest of the people of Orissa.

The Commercial Manager in the South Eastern Railway has made a statement that 203, 204 Puri-Howrah passenger trains are cancelled due to the introduction of 21 and 22 Dhauli Express. Do you know, that these 203 and 204 passenger trains were having 76 stoppages and were having a passenger fare but this Dhauli Express is having super-fast fare charges? So, may I know how these common people, poor people will get the benefit out of them?

As regards the timings of the trains, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister. I am sorry that Shri Scindia is not here. But Shri Mahabir Prasadji is here and he must remember that in the meeting of Members of Parliament of both Houses from Orissa, regarding the rescheduling of timings, all the MPs requested the Government not to implement the timings as proposed and urged the Minister to see that the timings remain as they were. But I am very sorry to state that all our requests had been kept aside due to the callous and arrogant attitude of the bureaucracy in the Indian Railways.

As you may be aware, there is a widespread feeling of anger among the people over the injustice meted out to them by the Indian Railways. I am constrained to say that the authoritative Indian Railways have forced our peace-loving people of Orissa to start a wide-scale agitation and a rail-roko movement and hunger strikes and so on. I am sure the hon. Minister must be receiving many memoranda and representations from various associations from Orissa. Sir, I request the hon. Minister and urge the Government to restore all the withdrawn trains be-

[Sh. Ananta Prasad Sethi]

fore the situation worsens further and takes a violent turn.

I urge the Government to restore the 203/204 Puri-Howrah Passengers; restore 398/397 Puri-Asansol Passengers as day time train in the belt between Bhadrak-Cuttack-Berhampur to start from either end at 7 AM; restore 37/38 Howrah-Madras Janata Express or run 979/980 Howrah-Tirupati Express at the timings of 37/38 and stop at the stoppages of 37/38. I also request the Government to extend the Paradeep-Cuttack Passenger which is remaining idle at Cuttack for ten hours upto Bhadrak.

I also request that there should be a re-scheduling in the timings of the most prestigious trains of Orissa - 915/916 and 175/176 in such a manner that the passengers coming from Orissa are in a position to reach Delhi early in the morning and passengers going from Delhi can leave Delhi at 5.00 PM. These timings will be very convenient and this change will certainly serve the interests of the people.

[Translation]

*SHRI HARIHAR SOREN (Keonjhar):
Mr. Chairman, Sr, I would like to speak in Oriya. You are sitting here. You can understand Oriya very well.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please speak in brief.

[Translation]

*SHRI HARIHAR SOREN: I will not take much time of; the house, because my friends from Tripura, West Bengal and

Orissa who have preceded me, have given a detained description about the plight of the people following the withdrawal and change of timings of some trains. The people of Orissa, West Bengal and other affected states are now very much in distress on account of this. The Honourable Minister of Railway is also aware of the agitations which were being organised in the State of Orissa and West Bengal.

Sir, a serious situation has arisen following the withdrawal of a number of trains by the Eastern and South Eastern Railways and also due to the introduction of revised timings of trains. This has resulted in inconvenience to the passengers. By this act it appears that proper justice has not been done to the people of Orissa. The rail users depend on 175/176 Neelachal Express and 915/916 Nizamuddin-Puri Express are the most sufferer on account of the revised timings. A strong protest; was made by the Chief Minister of Orissa, two Central Ministers from Orissa and the Parliament Members from Orissa and West Bengal against this decision of the Railways. We had pleased for the suitable revision of train timings and for ; the re-introduction of passengers trains which have been withdrawn in the State. I would again like to like to make a fervent appeal to the Honourable Railway Minister; to take immediate steps to fulfil the genuine demands of the people of Orissa. I would like to give suggestions in that regard.

1 - New Delhi - Puri Express and Neelachal Express should leave Puri in the morning and should arrive at new Delhi before evening.

2 - The old timings of 8 Down Puri - Howrah express should be restored.

3 - The Puri - Talcher Passenger train should leave Puri at 6 a.m instead 4 a.m., i.e.

the departure time

Road-Balugaon)"

4 - The 203/204 Puri-Howrah and Howrah-Puri Passenger trains which have been withdrawn should be re-introduced.

5 - Sir, I welcome the introduction of Dhauli Express and Hirakhond Express between Howrah and Bhubaneswar and Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur respectively. The Hirakhond Express has been subsequently extended to Jharsuguda. It should be made a fast express.

Timings of Dhauli Express should be rescheduled in such a way so that the people of Calcutta can reach at Bhubaneswar before the office hours and the people of Orissa can reach at Howrah at 10 O'Clock and they can attend to the official work at Calcutta. An additional rake should be attached to Dhauli Express.

6 - The Bhubaneswar - Palasa passenger train which has been withdrawn should be re-introduced.

7 - Neelachal Express and New Delhi-Puri Express should have a stoppage at Jajpur-Keonjhar Road.

8 - Kalinga Express should be re-introduced. I hope the Honourable Minister will consider my suggestions sympathetically. With these words I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak and conclude.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, before the hon. Minister replies, I want to seek one clarification from him.

In your statement on page 2, under point No. (iv), you have mentioned the following:

"47/48 made to stop at all stations between Khurda

Some hon. Members have already started that next to Balugaon, there is one important station and that is Kalikot. This is in one district. Kalikot is gateway to Ganjam and Phulbani where there is not even an inch of railway line and there is no justification for making this train to stop at all stations from Khurda Road-Balugaon. There is no use of stopping this train at all minor stations. Why not stop this train at Kalikot? A great agitation was going on regarding this. There was a rail roko agitation on this score. It is mainly because you have converted particular express train as a passenger train for a particular station and left important stations. You please reply to this.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank all the hon. Members who participated in the discussion on this calling Attention Motion - (Interruptions) - The hon. Members are learned persons. I, therefore, agree with their views and I am grateful to them as I am first a Member and only then a Minister.

Our learned Member, Shri Jena pointed out that the Railway department has discriminated against Orissa. It is true that some of the trains in this region have been cancelled while some changes have been effected in the schedule of some others. The decision of cancellation has taken place only after a detailed discussion on it.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: With whom it was discussed?

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Acharya ji, you are a wise man. Please listen to me first. I have noted down the views expressed by our hon. Members like Shri Jena, Shri Basu, Biswas ji, Sethi ji, Soren Sahib and above all by our Chairman.

[Sh. Mahabir Prasad]

With the cancellation of 203-204 passenger train running between Puri and Howrah, 35-22 Dhaul Express was introduced and it is a welcome step. But it wouldn't be appropriate to mention that it stops at a fewer stations. As the above mentioned train covered the rail section from Puri to Bhadrak at night, so a new passenger train 461-462 was introduced to operate between Bhadrak and Kharakpur, but ... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: These trains were not introduced within 2 or 3 years. They were introduced much earlier, they are there for the last 15 days.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Sethi ji, listen to me please. I know that you go furious. But afterwards a train 79-80 was cancelled and 979-980 Tirupati-Howrah fast express was introduced in its place.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: What was the reason for the cancellation of the earlier train.

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Acharya ji, first you listen to me, please. I would talk to you separately because you did not participate in the discussion. First, I would prefer to reply to those who participated in the discussion.

An Express train 215 up and 216 down was suspended and then cancelled between Palasa and Bhubaneswar beyond Madras. In order to make some alternative arrangements in lieu of the above cancellation, 21 up and 22 DN Dhaul Express from Bhubaneswar to Howrah, 979 UP and 980 DN train from Thirupati to Howrah and train No. K.P.I.

Up and K.P. 2 DN from Puri to Khurda road have been introduced... (*Interruptions*) What I mean to say is that we have introduced shuttle service to meet the requirements of the people. This shuttle service operates between Khurda Road and Puri. Besides, in order to remove the difficulties of people travelling between Bhubaneswar and Balugaon we have extended 47 up and 48 DN express train which was hitherto operating between Sambalpur and Jharasuguda. This train halts at every station. Apart from this, one more pair of train bearing No. J. S. 3 up and JS- 4 DN has been introduced between Sambalpur and Jharsugada to serve the needs of the people. In spite of all these, I appreciate your sentiments and with the kind permission of the chair I would like to say before the hon. Members of this august House that in order to find an amicable solution to this problem let us sit together and consider the matter. .. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Ura): We held a meeting with you also held talks. We had also given a memorandum but of no avail. We went together and met... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: As many as 40 M.Ps from Orissa and Madhya Pradesh met you, but our meeting did not yield any results (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: I have listened to your views patiently, you may also please listen to my views ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ANIL BASU: Immediately after the talks are over, you withdraw one train.

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Today you have become a great sympathiser of the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, you may please talk to me separately. The Indian Railways considers all aspects and works for the benefits of

all the passengers. There is no such feeling at all in the Indian Railways. It works with a united spirit by treating the entire country as one unit. In reply to the question put by Shri Sethi in which he has alleged that discrimination is being made against Orissa, I can say that I am always with you. If you manage adequate funds for us from the Planning Commission, we are ready to do the needed. If we get more funds we are prepared to lay more railway lines. Instead of doing some positive work, if you go on making such allegations, it would not serve any purpose.

[English]

SHRI JAGANNATH PATNAIK (Kalahandi): We are afraid, that if we talk another train will be withdrawn. That is our apprehension.

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: The more we talk the more trains will be withdrawn.

[Translation]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: The new train introduced by you is a good one.

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Achariaji, I understood that this has provided strength to congressmen... (Interruptions)

SHRI ANIL BASU: You are Mahabir, a great warrior, at least you should speak at a low pitch.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

16.30 hrs.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. Only the Members who have tabled the Calling Attention should speak.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: Please excuse me. I can speak at a more higher pitch than you. I am giving the reply, please listen to me. I am in agreement with the views of the hon. Member but I totally differ on the point that a number of meetings did not yield any results. Because, we have to do everything within the precinct of the rules and in order to arrive at a decision, we have to sit together a number of times. I shall sit with you and officers of the Railway Board will also hold talks with you. We will also exchange views with the Co-ordination Committee which has been constituted for this purpose. Apart from this, we shall hold meetings with the committee which is preparing the time-table of various trains. (Interruptions)

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI: If we go far holding talks, you will withdraw more trains (Interruptions)

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: I would like to submit to the learned hon. Members, Shri Sethi and Shri Jena that whatever problems have been cropped up due to agitation and if there are disparities in any other form, then we will... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Only the Minister's speech will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD: I listened to the views of all the hon. Members and also noted down their suggestions. I also invite more such suggestions from them and as-

[Sh. Mahabir Prasad]

sure them that we will consider all their suggestions and see what could be done if they give them in writing. (*Interruptions*). I shall myself consider all your suggestions provided they are meaningful and conform to the rules. While fully appreciating your sentiments I conclude. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister informed that he is going to consider it ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: As a protest we are walking out of the House.

SHRI JAGANNATH PATTNAIK: As a protest we are walking out of the House.

Shri Basudeb Acharia, Shri Jagannath Pattnaik, Shri Anil Basu, Shri K.P. Singh Deo, Shri Ananta Prasad Sethi and some other Hon. Members then left the House.

16.35 hrs.

(ii) SAD PLIGHT OF COTTON
GROWERS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE
COUNTRY

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:-

"Sad plight of cotton growers in various parts of the country and the steps taken by the Government to provide relief to them."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): Sir, Cotton crop is grown in an area of about 75 lakh ha mainly

in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The production of cotton has risen in the country from 69.5 lakh bales in 1971-72 to a level of 87.3 lakh bales in the year 1985-86, the highest achieved so far. The current year's production is estimated at an all time record of 95 lakh bales not withstanding the natural calamities like flood, excess rainfall and pest attack in some parts of the country.

In order to improve production and productivity of cotton as also its quality, an Intensive Cotton Development Programme has been in operation in the country since 1971-72. Under this Scheme, subsidy is provided on production of quality seeds, laying out demonstration trials, etc. Minimum support price is also fixed by the Government of India every year to ensure a fair price to the growers. As regards its procurement, apart from state level agencies, the Cotton Corporation of India has been procuring cotton at support price in the interest of farmers. The Government is continuously increasing the support price of cotton. The support price during 1985-86 was in the range of Rs. 340 to Rs. 900 per quintal. This has been increased to Rs. 415 to Rs. 960 per quintal during the current year. The procurement operations has already been started by the Cotton Corporation of India and Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation and upto first week of December, 1988, a procurement of 77,000 bales has been reported. Further procurement is going on to ensure that the farmers receive fair price for the crop grown by them.

The reports received from State Governments indicated that a cotton area of about 3.27 lakh ha was adversely affected by floods/heavy rains in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab. These states have been sanctioned input subsidy of Rs. 2.25 crores, Rs. 2.26 crores and Rs. 2.52