

The question is:

"That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms:—

'That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 18th February, 1983.'

*The motion was adopted.*

16.10 hrs.

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1983-84—GENERAL DISCUSSION.

MR. SPEAKER: We now take up General Discussion on the Budget (Railways). The ex-Minister.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): I rise to initiate discussion on the Railway Budget for 1983-84.

At the very outset let me go on record that as far as Railways' performance is concerned it has to be judged in the background that we have a very vast network of Railways and, therefore, there are lot of difficulties that are to be faced in managing the operation of Railways. We are probably the second largest railways managed by a single management... (Interruptions). There is too much of disturbance.

MR. SPEAKER: They are in pandemonium. Are they going to get into the train?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I can understand accidents in the Railways, why accidents in the House?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. If you want to go out, go quietly and do not make it a railway platform.

All right, now start.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I feel highly honoured that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra State is also present on this occasion.

16.11 hrs.

*At this stage Shri Vasant Rao Patil left the House.*

MR. SPEAKER: Dada, are you staging a walk-out?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Jadavpur): I am on a point of order. Is it desirable that a Minister of another Government should be here inside the House?

MR. SPEAKER: As long as he is a Member of the House.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I am not questioning. I am raising a question of principle.

MR. SPEAKER: Before you have taken objection, he has already gone out.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please look into it.

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: As far as railway operations are concerned, they are to be judged against the background of the vast expanse of the Railways. We have almost 61,000 route kilometres of the railways which almost covers 7,000 stations in the country and we have the trains which are hauled by about 10,000 locomotives and it is to the credit of the Railway system that every day about a crore of passengers travel by the Indian railways on 61,000 kilometres and 60,000—70,000 tonnes of freight is carried by the Indian Railways. Such being the expanse of the Railways, we being the second largest railways under single management. I wish that the Railways are managed and handled in a manner by which the efficiency of the Railways will be augmented from time to time and it will be inkeeping with other sectors of our economy.

As far as the railway operations are concerned, they do not begin from the time our new Railway Minister has taken over. Fortunately, he has the legacy of good achievements on the part of the Railways and only because persons managing this portfolio happen to belong to another party, I cannot discord the good work that the Indian Railways, the workers and officers have put in.

Over the last few years there have been certain achievements and there have been certain failures. When the new set-up came

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into operation in 1980, it is very interesting to find out how the traffic pattern has grown and how also the commensurate burdens have been thrown on the commuters and other railway users.

Sir, in 1980-81, the tonnage that was moved by the Indian Railways was 195.93 million tonnes. In 1981-82, I am glad to find that the tonnage moved to 221.20 million tonnes. In 1982-83, it went to 227 million tonnes and I share the optimism of the Railway Minister that in 1983-84, the movement is likely to be of the order of 241 million tonnes. So, when the tonnage moved has gradually grown and I must say that if the tonnage has grown to that particular extent, in that case, the credit must go to certain innovations that have been introduced in the Indian Railways and as a result of that, we find that certain changes have been brought about. I am very happy to find that as far as the infrastructural facilities and their performances are concerned, there are certain important observations made in the Economic Survey for 1982-83. It has been rightly pointed out in the Economic Survey that improvement (I am referring to the past performance) in the Railway performance have largely resulted from managerial and operational innovations introduced towards the end of 1980. Those innovations include segregation of the conventional wagon fleet from wagons fitted with roller bearing and centre buffer couplers, segregation of covered wagons fleet equipped with roller bearings and centre buffer couplers into jumbo rakes, integrated end to end running of trains, formation of fixed-train-consists to cater to specific streams of traffic, optimisation of trailing loads and rationalisation of loco hauls. The railways also resorted to loading in block rakes wherever feasible and this strategy has substantially contributed to the increase in total traffic throughout railways.

Sir, while appreciating this continually increasing load that has been moved by the Indian Railways, you will find that there has not been a commensurate relief to the commuters and the railway users.

In 1980-81, the increases in the freight and fares have been of the order of Rs. 200 crores. In 1981-82, the increases in the freight and fares are Rs. 366.26 crores. In 1982-83, the increases in the freight and fares are of the order of Rs. 264 crores and in 1983-84, the new Budget which the new Railway Minister has put forward he has proposed increases in the freight and fares of the orders of Rs. 488.99 crores. Our new Railway Minister always believes in doing the thing in a gigantic way and if he wants the movement on a gigantic scale, he also wants the financial burdens on a gigantic scale. And, here, he has proposed a record levy of the order of Rs. 488.99 crores. Therefore, if you just combine all these increases right from the installation of this new regime in 1980, from the financial year 1980-81 to the proposed Budget for 1983-84, all these budgets, the total increases in the freight and fare burdens will be Rs. 1,309.16 crores. This is the burden that has been thrown. I quite realise the difficulties of the Railway Minister. Because, while formulating the Budget, he had to take into account certain recommendations that have been made by the Railway Reforms Committee, by the various committees that were appointed earlier and also he had to take cognizance of some of the recommendations of the Railway Convention Committee. I do concede that the Depreciation Reserve Fund has been increased. The Pension Fund is increased. The dividend liability has increased and to some extent, they have contributed in increasing the burden on the Railways.

But, Sir, it is here that I would suggest to the Railway Minister certain constructive proposals so that it is not merely by making the manipulative arrangement of the freight and fares that he will be able to bear the necessary financial burden and he will be able to raise the necessary financial structure but I would suggest to him that merely depending upon the freight and fares for the adjustment of the finances, will mean only an accountant's budget. I would like the hon. Minister to succeed in his portfolio and, therefore, I would like him not to have a Budget which is merely an account-

tants budget. I would like his to have certain financial innovations. I would like him to change the entire financial structure of the railways. Some steps have already been taken. But I would like him to pursue those steps so that further fundamental changes in the structure of the railway finances can be introduced, so that a greater elbow-room will be available so that he himself will be able to put through many schemes which he wants and, at the same time, the backward areas will be able to have an infra-structure which they desire.

As far as the present structure is concerned, it has a certain legacy of the British Government. In 1924, the finances of the Indian railways were separated from the General Revenues i.e., the general finances. But you will be surprised to know that right from the year 1924 upto 1977, the capital structure of the Indian railways completely remained unchanged. I do not want to refer to any particular individual in the railways. But when I had the occasion to talk to certain financial experts in the railways and I asked them a plain and simple question, "In 1924, the railway finances were separated from the general revenues, how is it that the capital structure has not been changed till 1977?", the reply given by the experts was, "It just happened like that and it remained unchanged."

Just by the initial inertia that was developed through the British regime, we became the inheritors of that particular inertia; we refused to convert inertia into momentum and, as a result, from 1924 to 1977, the capital structure of the Indian railways remained completely unchanged. You will be shocked and surprised to know what was the capital structure till 1977 for various operations of the Indian railways. We are required to borrow capital from the general revenues. We are required to pay 6 per cent dividend which has been fixed by the Railway Convention Committee and which is actually given the task of deciding the rate of dividend and, at the same time, deciding ancillary matters.

Now, in the new recommendations, they have insisted that it should be changed

from 6 per cent to 6.5 per cent. I will come to that particular proposition at a later stage. What happened previously? We were drawing the capital structure from general revenues and paying 6 per cent dividend. Whenever the railway finances were in the red, the railways were having the loan from the general revenues to pay the dividend liability and that loan carried interest. It was something like having a loan with interest and again interest on that. So, it was something like a compound interest. I could never understand and relish this kind of capital structure. Therefore, a Capital Structure Committee was set up. They were given certain parameters; they were asked to go into depth of the problem of capital structure and they were asked to go into the problem of past liability, consider the question of dividend liability and to find out whether they can write off the entire interest that was due in the past and in the future and declare that in the future no loans will be drawn whenever railways were in the red and no interest to be paid on loans taken from the general revenues to pay the dividend liability.

Fortunately, some changes were introduced in 1977-78 and implemented in 1978-79, that house Council all the dividend liabilities of the railways would be treated as only deferred liabilities for the future and, therefore, if the railways are in the red at any particular time, in that case, they are not allowed to borrow loans with interest to meet the dividend liability and, therefore, all dividend liabilities were treated as deferred liabilities.

This is only one dimension that was introduced in the capital structure of the railways. I would propose to my friend Mr. Abdul Ghani Khan Chaudhuri that he should go in depth about this problem of capital structure and make further changes.

There are other aspects of the finances which are related to the rate of dividend and also capital structure of the Indian railways. Unlike in other parts of the world, the Indian railways are having eno-

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rmous social burdens and these social burdens are not of the making of the Indian railways. For instance, the Indian railways are carrying on quite a number of commodities below the operating cost and that cheate actually certain social burden of the order of more than Rs. 100 crores. There are other coaching services which are in losses. There are uneconomic branch lines which might be uneconomic from the point of view of the railways, but from the point of providing the infrastructure for the development of the backward areas, they are a must. Therefore, these obligation have to be borne. But the question is why is it that those social obligations and burdens should be thrown on the shoulders of the Indian railways?

16.25 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Then there are a number of relief materials that are carried by the Indian railways at concessional rates and they are completely free and there are subsidies for social cost in foreign countries. And, at the same time, on the dividend rate which was supposed to be 6 per cent — I think the Railway Convention Committee this time has suggested that the rate of dividend should be increased from 6 per cent to 6.5 per cent — the Railway Convention Committee has got the full freedom to increase the dividend rate from 6 to 6.5 per cent or reduce the rate that was existing some years back. My quarrel is not merely with the quantum of dividend rate that is decided. My quarrel with the Railway Convention Committee is that they are trying to tackle the problem of dividend rate in isolation with the social burdens. You say that 6 per cent dividend rate is too low and, therefore, it must be increased to 6.5 per cent. But, at the same time, you forget the reality that the Indian railways are performing the great social task of bearing a great social burden of lifting the commodities below the operating cost. Actually, they are bearing so many social responsibilities and I may challenge this House that in the rest of the world, all these social burdens are lifted by the general

revenues of the Governments concerned. It is only in a few countries like India that all social burdens are thrown on the shoulders of the Railway Ministry and as a result of that there is not enough elbow room in which they can operate their finances and, therefore, I would demand that while the Railway Convention Committee has full freedom to increase the dividend rate from 6 to 6.5 per cent, let them not do it as an academic proposition or just as an arithmetical network in which they try to increase it mechanically from 6 to 6.5 per cent forgetting all the time that it is the Indian railways that are bearing the greatest social burden. I would not call it a social burden but social obligation. What is the punishment awarded to the Indian railways for bearing the social obligations? They are told that they are doing a wonderful job of having the social obligations and lifting the social burdens and for that they are sentenced to increasing their dividend rates from 6 to 6.5 per cent. That is the sentence awarded to our poor Railway Minister for the good task, that he is performing of lifting the social burdens and I would like him to be relieved of his additional burden which is a social burden and in that case, instead of increasing it from 6 to 6.5 per cent, even if the Railway Convention Committee increases it to 7 per cent. I would not mind. But on the one hand you do try to increase the dividend rate and on the other, you allow the social burden to be increased and, therefore, it is really dual hammering that is done to the Indian railways and I think that this particular problem also has to be tackled.

It is not my proposition that to start with, the social burdens must be lifted. But somewhere a beginning has to be made and, therefore, the Government can decide to what extent the social burdens lifted by the Indian railways can be taken over by the Indian Government, by the general revenues and, to that extent, a greater elbow room can be provided for their developmental activities.

The Union Minister has given a new slogan. It is a commendable slogan. He said Safety, Security and Punctuality, is

the slogan. I do not agree with all the slogans of the railways. For instance, you might be aware of the fact that one of the slogans was "Drown the West Bengal Government in the Bay of Bengal." That was one of the slogans. In fact, I was opposed to it for a different reason. I said "Mr. Minister, Don't drown the West Bengal Government in the Bay of Bengal because the Bay of Bengal may become Red Sea."

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI): I have never said this. What I have said is this: If any Government misbehaves, the people of West Bengal will throw them into the Bay of Bengal.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I am sorry. Let me correct myself. The Hon. Minister was speaking on behalf of the people of West Bengal. I will correct myself. The people will throw. That is all right. Reference to West Bengal was correct. Those who are to be put into the Bay of Bengal, that is also correct. My interpretation is that the Bay of Bengal will become Red Sea and that is why I do not want that particular proposition.

Coming back to the slogan it is a very good slogan. The Hon. Minister said that "I stand for Security, Safety and Punctuality." I am very happy about this slogan. I hope the hon. Minister will take some of my comments lightly and do not take them very seriously. When I make certain references only the serious aspect of it he should take seriously....

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara): He is not serious.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I myself said it. So, when I make certain comments about you, you should also take them lightly. I have to make some comments about you also.

I was pointing out to you that he made certain statements in the Press Conference. Certain statements are very welcome. As far as their net results is concerned and as far as the ultimate product is con-

cerned, I am not that happy. He wanted railway safety, security and punctuality to be properly maintained. Further on one occasion he said: Why are accidents taking place? He has publicly said at the press conference that because the locomotive drivers drink, the accidents take place. That is what he has said....

16.31 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH CATTERJEE in the Chair]

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: Please listen....

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: At every stage would you reply?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It may help you. He has yielded.

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: What I have said was that I am told that some of the drivers drive under the influence of liquor.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I have only a request to you that I am the last man not to yield to any one. I must yield to the Railway Minister. Therefore, I do not mind sitting down every time after three minutes, but if he wants to give a reply to me here and now, no material will be available for his reply at the end. Therefore, in the interest of his final reply, I will request him not to intervene. But at any moment you want, I will yield and sit down....

SHRI KAMAL NATH (Chhindwara): That way we will miss your good points. Please do not do that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: So I was seriously raising this issue. It is not with a view to cast any aspersion, because after that statement, he says, 'I am told....' What has been told has also been told by the Press to the people. Therefore, the general impression develops that probably accidents take place because locomotive drivers are drunk. I would like to remind the Railway Minister about a very interesting anecdote regarding accidents in the days of Viceroy, Lord Curzon....

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA: That is one of the reasons.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Why do you bring such light-hearted comments?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: It is not a light-hearted comment. Why does he want to put on a grim face? He is a young man.... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anecdotes are not necessarily bad. Please don't disturb him.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: It is a very good anecdote because it has a certain policy frame-work. I do not want to refer to any humour unnecessarily. I find in that piece of humour there is a certain policy frame-work which the locomotive drivers could understand in the days of Lord Curzon. When Lord Curzon happened to be the Viceroy of India and once he was travelling by a special train, his Secretary and staff went to the locomotive driver and said, 'Don't drink. Be more cautious in driving. Do you know that the Viceroy of India is travelling by the train?' And the locomotive driver told the staff of the Viceroy, 'Hell with your Viceroy. I am not concerned only about Viceroy's safety. I am concerned equally about my own safety. If I drink and try not to be cautious about driving, not only the Viceroy's life will be in danger, even the lives of others also will be in danger and my own life will be in danger. Therefore it is very necessary for me to drive very cautiously.' Sir, the moral of this particular anecdote is this and from experience I can tell you and from the various statistics that are available in the various railway accidents that have taken place, I can tell you that the maximum threat is always to the life of the driver and the fireman who are located in the engine. Therefore, deliberately no locomotive driver will try to be negligent at all. He has to take care of his life and along with his life he has to take care of the life of the passengers and the VIPs travelling by that train. Therefore, it would be very wrong to put the entire blame merely on a few locomotive drivers.

Sir, I will now come to a more constructive aspect of the problem. I would suggest to the hon. Minister that if the problem of safety is to be handled in a proper manner.... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would request the hon. Members not to interrupt Prof. Dandavate in his speech.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, as far as the safety aspect is concerned. I would like to point out to the hon. Minister some concrete factors which are responsible for the disturbance of the safety and if they are taken care of properly then in that case the accidents can be minimised.

Sir, while he is quoted to have laid that blame on the locomotive drivers he himself in his speech has said that in a limited span — since his taking over — the accidents have been reduced by 26 per cent. I congratulate the Minister if the accidents have been reduced by 26 per cent. He should be happy and, as such, need not unnecessarily cast aspersions on the locomotive drivers. On the contrary he should win their confidence. So, I am making some concrete suggestions.

Already the previous Government has signed an agreement with the loco running staff that they will not be put to more than ten hours of running duty. That agreement should be very vigorously and effectively implemented because if the loco running staff is exhausted and make to work beyond ten hours then in that case they are likely to become absent minded and thus commit mistakes. This ten hour duty rule should be vigorously implemented.

Sir, there are a number of through formation trains which travel large distances. Recently, it has been found that due checks at intermediate points have been discarded. As a result of that there is threat to the security of those trains. I suggest that checks at intermediate points should be restored.

Sir, only in times of emergency particularly in steam engine where firemen are working and if gangsters attack the railway driver and if he is killed the train is likely to go astray. Therefore, for emergency situations the firemen are given training in driving. Taking advantage of that a number of firemen are made to drive the steam engines in this country. I think it is very dangerous and I would request the hon. Minister to discard allowing the firemen to run the steam engines.

Sir, there are a number of goods trains which are run without the railway guard. It is a dangerous proposition. I would request the hon. Minister to discard this practice and see that on every goods train a guard is there.

Sir, where sabotages take place by removing fish plates they are the worst type of accidents. There is a certain modern technological device by which the fish plates can be completely done away with. I want the fish plates to be eliminated by the railway administration by long-wended and short-wended rail in which the fish plates are altogether eliminated. If it is done then in that case the accidents by sabotage can be totally eliminated and, I hope, the hon. Minister will concentrate on this.

Sir, there is need of primary renewals of the track. The Economic Survey has pointed out that as on 31-3-81, 14,000 railway tracks need primary renewals. If the primary renewals are not taken up, they are likely to undergo multiple fracture. Just as we have multiple fracture of bones, we have got multiple fracture of rails. A number of accidents are likely to be there. Therefore, I would urge this upon the Government. And here I stand by the side of the Railway Minister. I make this request to the Central Government and the Planning Commission. Since in the coming Five year plan the total renewal of the rail track is to be completed, I would support the Railway Minister in his demand for better allocation for renewals of the

track, so that better safety can be ensured.

The automatic signalling system, especially of the suburban railways, has become very much out-dated or out-moded and they need complete re-hauling. I hope and trust that it will be taken care of the Railway Minister so that safety can be ensured. The automatic warning system was working very well. In the ground, in that automatic warning system, certain devices like magnets etc. had to be fitted up on the railway track but these have been stolen by thieves and robbers and that system has been dispensed with. I would like that the automatic warning system should be introduced especially on the high density lines. In the Howrah-Burdwan line it has already happened; the automatic warning system was operating on the Howrah-Burdwan line. Not a single accident or collision took place. I would request the Minister to spend a little more for the automatic warning system, to see that accidents by collisions etc. are completely eliminated.

The Railway Enquiry Committee has made certain recommendations. There are certain recommendations in which the staff is deeply concerned. It has been stated that the recommendations of the Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee in respect of recruitment, training and promotion policy, improvement in signalling and inter-locking, improvement in coaching and goods rolling-stock and motive power have not so far been implemented. These are the recommendations of the committee set up by the Government itself. If these recommendations relating to staff and relating to equipment are effectively implemented, better safety can be brought about.

There is one more point regarding which I would like the hon. Railway Minister to bestow his attention. There are very many accidents which are taking place in the unmanned level crossings. I would request the hon. Minister to go through the statistics of the last so many years. He would see that in one year 100 railway accidents had taken place in these unmanned level crossings. What

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is the difficulty? Why are they not being transformed? They are not being converted into manned crossings. Why should it be so? The reason is this. There is a certain statutory provision made by the Railways. It says that a substantial part of the provision of the expenditure involved in manning unmanned level crossings and the recurring expenditure have to be borne by the local bodies. It is the experience of the Railway Administration that though this is the statutory provision, no municipality, no gram panchayat, no Zilla parishad, comes forward to bear the burden of this expenditure. As a result, unmanned level crossings continue to remain unmanned and therefore, I would like to make a concrete suggestion; do not go into technical guibbling over this problem; try to find out statistically all the unmanned level crossings in the country which are vulnerable to accidents and collisions. Try to get them enumerated; take cognisance of them; and take a decision that the Railways, from their own finances, would find this amount so that accidents of the order of a hundred a year due to unmanned level crossings could be avoided. All your the past statistics show that on an average 100 accidents take place, per year, due to unmanned level crossings. So, if this problem is taken care of, this rate of accidents will be completely eliminated, and that is a step in the right direction.

There is one more thing which I would suggest and I hope and trust that the Minister will take it in the proper light.

It is very necessary that if the monitoring by the railways—particularly by the Minister — is to be improved, there has to be a rapport between the Railway Minister and the various trade union organisations, the Railway Minister and the Officers' Association, the Railway Minister and the various experts, the Railway Minister and the Members of the Railway Board, the Railway Minister and the persons in charge of the finances of the Indian Railways, and so on. There has to be a proper rapport with all of them. There has to be harmonious relationship between the various

wings of the Indian railways. I can tell you this on the basis of my experience in the Indian Railways. There are three railway wings where such harmonious relationship has been completely disturbed. They are Traffic Wing, the Mechanical Engineering Wing and the Civil Engineering Wing. The harmonious relationship between these three Wings is absolutely necessary. It is a must for the efficient functioning of the Railways. Over the past few years and past few months, the harmonious relationship between the 3 Wings has been completely disturbed. I do not want to throw the blame on any individual. I do not want to throw the blame on the Railway Minister. But I want to give him a friendly warning that unless this conflict between the 3 important Wings of the Indian Railways is resolved, a more harmonious relationship is established, you will not be able to carry forward the heritage of the efficiency that has been there for the last few years and the movements would not be kept up, the finances would not be kept up and therefore harmonious relationship between all these is absolutely necessary.

Sir, one very important point I will again raise in the context of a very important statement that the hon. Railway Minister has made, with the best of intentions. I do not want to attribute any motives. In one of the Press Conferences he said something about the Railway Board, the Members and the officers and some other employees. He was very much disturbed and rightly disturbed by the cancellation of certain trains in Andhra Pradesh and in connection with the cancellation of the trains he said "I am not going to tolerate the cancellation of the trains". Sir, I had raised this question during the Question Hour and the hon. Minister gave a demagogic answer that in the democratic country, it is the people who are sovereign and they must decide which trains should be run. It is as if the entire administration and the working of the railways are carried on by holding public meetings and asking them which particular trains are to be run and which are to be cancelled. Sir, knowing fully well — the working of the mechanics of the Railway Ministry, I can tell you that as far as the priority of



the railway movements are concerned, it is no one individual that decide the priority of the movements; the Prime Minister does not decide the priority of the movements, the Railway Minister does not decide the priority of the movements, Railway Officers do not decide the priority of the movements but it is the Railway Ministry that decide the priority of the railway movements and in turn they are confirmed by the Cabinet of the country. Then it is given to the Railway Operators that these are the priorities. What are the priorities? The priorities are given to Defence, movement of the foodgrains and also the movement of the coal for the power stations in the country because if these are disturbed, then the very population will suffer, passenger movement will suffer. Therefore, high priority is given to the Defence, movements of foodgrains and coal for the power stations. It is the Ministry that has to decide the priorities; poor officers only implement them. It is very easy for the Minister to call a Press Conference and tell the officers "I am not going to tolerate because you have changed the priority". It is not the officers who change the priorities. You and I can get up in the House and face each other and reply to each other's argument. But the Officers in the Railway Board and officers in all the Zonal Operations and at the Divisional level and other Railway workers have no voice; they cannot come and publicly express their opinion; their mouth is shut, but Madhu Dandavate's mouth is not shut, he can raise his voice as vociferously as he can during the Zero Hour and now also. The Minister has got the right to reply to the points raised by us but the officers have no voice. They only listen to the policies and formulations of the Railway Ministry. Again the Railway Ministry and the Railway Board are not different. There is a statutory provision that the Railway Board functions as the Ministry with the Minister at the helm of affairs. That means the Railway Minister is part and parcel of the entire Railway Board structure. He cannot say that it is your empire and it is my empire. It is a common heritage of the entire railway machinery right from the Railway Minister upto the lowest level in the Railway Organisation. It is all common Min-

istry and they are all to function there and therefore the Minister can never take the posture that 'heads I win and tails you lose' and if there have been any failures, it is the officers who are to be blamed. When I say this, I am referring to the Budget presentation of those days when I had presented them to the House. I used to assure all the officers of the Indian Railways "I shall bear the responsibilities of all the failures in the Railways and I shall never throw them on the shoulders of the workers and the shoulders of the officers because 'heads I win and tails you lose' has never been my philosophy. I would like the Hon Minister to follow not that motto, but the motto that successes are common and failures are also common. Like the family the entire Ministry and the Railway Board has to function. That is the way the entire thing has to be carried on. Therefore, priorities are not Officers' priorities. They are not Officers' priorities, they are not the Minister's priority. I don't blame also the Minister. These are the priorities of the Ministry as a whole and Officers are to implement them. Don't try to make them scapegoats because they have no voice in Parliament.

Sir, I will only briefly say something about the problems of the Railway employees. Sir, the Minister claims that there is industrial peace. I do not say that the peace that exists is an ideal one. I would like that the industrial peace climate should grow still more. But he says that as far as the Railway problems are concerned, we have no problem because the permanent negotiating machinery is taking care of all the grievances of the Railway employees. Probably he does not realise that as far as the Railways are concerned, the permanent negotiating machinery and the Joint Consultative machinery have broken down because the Railway Ministry has not implemented the agreed conclusions of the 13th and 14th Report of the Cadre Structure Committee meetings held on 6th January and 8th January and 15th January and 25th January 1982. That is why both these machineries have completely crumbled. Sir, here are some of the trade unions belonging to the inter-cadre

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as well as other organisations of the CITU and the AITUC. They will bear out the fact that as far as these two instruments are concerned, they have completely broken down in the Railways. Sir, those instruments will have to be restored. Sir, as far as the classification tribunal in Railway is concerned, interim recommendations were already given. Those recommendations were implemented in 1978. But before the final report of the classification Tribunal came, this particular tribunal was already dissolved and there was some residual work left undone. As a result of that we find that a very important aspect about the re-classification of the Artisan staff has been left uncovered and unimplemented. So, the Government and the Railways will have to decide that because the Tribunal has been dissolved prematurely what will be the modalities to be introduced to see that the reclassification of the artisan staff is also completed.

Sir, the 20-Point charter of the railwaymen is there. I feel that you will start negotiations with them and will be able to settle the problem amicably. The Railway employees have given evidence more than once that given the opportunity to negotiate, they would like to avoid confrontation. They would like to settle the issues at the negotiating table. So, I would like the Hon. Minister not to have confrontation with them or threaten them, but to settle the issues.

Sir, the on-going works, no matter whoever has taken them up, whoever has introduced them, should be completed. When I am demanding this from the Hon. Minister, I quote my own precedent. When I took charge of this portfolio, the first announcement I had made was that no matter whether the Congress Government had introduced those projects, I would like to give consent on those projects and give them more allocations and complete them first and then go on to the next project. That is the approach which I had liked to adopt and I would like the Hon. Minister to continue the same approach. Only because certain projects were started in somebody

else's regime, don't adopt a step-motherly attitude over them. In that context our friend from Marathowada, who raised the issue, said that there is *Rail Roko Andolan* going on in Marathawada. Sir, the Congress (I) men are participating, the Opposition Members are also participating. The entire Marathawada is agreed that already the project was cleared by the Planning Commission. It was introduced in the Budget; increasing allocations were granted; but all of a sudden, allocations were cut down to Rs. 1/- crore. Those allocations are not sufficient. Therefore, whether it is Marathawada, Manmad-Parbani Project, Latur Project, Samastipur Project, West Coast Project, that will affect all the States right from Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and ultimately to Tamil Nadu and Kerala Sir, all these projects must be taken up and priority should be given to all these backward areas.

In conclusion, I will say as far as the Indian Railways are concerned, they are not merely the infrastructural facilities for development, but they are also the most important pivotal aspect of the entire development of the economy in the country. Therefore, I find that today there is lack of coordination between the various economic Ministries like Energy, Power, Steel and also the Indian Railways.

I would like the coordination to be improved further; and if this coordination among all the economic Ministries strengthens, railways will become not only strong from the point of view of infrastructure but we wish and hope that the Indian railways with their efficiency will contribute their might to see that India's economy becomes more prosperous, more stable, so that a healthy, free and developed India can be built on the infrastructure of the Indian railways. Thank you.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD (Hingoli):  
Mr. Chairman, for the first time, in this Parliament I felt that a teacher was sitting and correcting the answer paper of a Minister. I am really happy that very constructive suggestions have been given by my predecessor. When I rise I know the challenges that our railways have to face today. Renovation of the

track, phasing out of steam locomotives, modernisation and so many things are there. Paucity of fund is our limitation, but still I must say that our Railway Minister has done a commendable job in trying to mop up all the resources possible and trying his best to give most efficient services in the next year.

When I rise here I cannot forget the agitation that has been going on for the last 15 days in the region of Marathwada in Maharashtra. You already know that Marathwada was part of the erstwhile Nizam State. This particular Marathi speaking area was completely neglected, as far as road development was concerned, railway construction was concerned, as well as irrigation was concerned. For the first time, these projects were taken up when we came to bilingual Bombay State. Since 1957, all of us—Mr. Shanker Rao Chauhan, who was then the Deputy Minister and later on became the Chief Minister—have been pressing that not only Manmad—Aurangabad line but Manmad-Parbhani line and further up to Adilabad should be converted from metre-gauge to broad-gauge. In the year 1978, this work was started by Prof. Madhu Dandavate. It was an assurance given by the Minister that this work would be completed by 1984, but I am sorry to say that till today we have spent hardly Rs. 4 crores. Not only that, to add insult to injury, last year, the officers who were posted there in charge of the conversion were transferred from Aurangabad, not only that, even the stores that were sent for conversion were also shifted from there. You cannot neglect the people. As Prof. Madhu Dandavate had said and as the Railway Minister had said in his speech, if we take up the work, let us complete it. In fact, the government should have taken that attitude, but the government completely neglected it and that is how today we have to face this agitation.

On this occasion, I would request the Minister that he should make all possible effort to give as much fund as possible for conversion of this line and see that this line is completed by at least 1984-85; then only this agitation would come down; otherwise, it would be difficult to do it

My friend has suggested that the planning Commission can do it. What can the Planning Commission do unless the Railway Minister asks for it? The Railway Minister has to ask for it; then only they will give it. Now he cannot do it *suo motu*. When I asked an oral question I had said that the railways had their own way of expressing things for themselves.

17.00 hrs.

Sir, I will give you two instances. On the 17th of December, 1981, the then Deputy Minister of Railways, Shri Mallikarjun said that "the Parbhani-Mudkhed-Adilabad gauge conversion will be surveyed. It has again to be re-surveyed and final location survey will be conducted next year and it will be included in the Sixth Plan." This was on 17th December, 1981. Subsequently, when this news item appeared in newspapers in Marathwada, some people approached the Railway Board and the Secretary of the Railway Board informed the Secretary, Sachkhand Huzur Sahib, Nanded, that there is no such proposal and so there is no question of any assurance; I do not know what they mean by it. Do they want to create discontent among people? When the Minister has made a statement categorically where was the necessity for the Railway Board Secretary, to write to the Secretary, Sachkhand Huzur Sahib, saying that there is no such proposal? I do not know why these things are done in this way.

There was another occasion, when I had asked about the collusion of two light engines. You have worked in the labour field, you know when light engines are sent. These engines are sent when the signalling system completely fails. On Mudkhed-Adilabad section two light engines were sent because the signalling system had failed. The General Manager accepts that there was a complete failure of the mode of communication. But what is the source of communication? The source of communication is signalling. He does not accept that; I want to know why such things are done by the Railway people. Do they want to annoy the people or do they want to create bitterness among the people? Why should the Railway

[Shri Uttam Rathod]

Ministry people intervene and write to the Secretary of the Huzur Sahib so irresponsibly?

Sir, another instance I must give here. Bombay-Howrah line, as you are aware, is most important. Bombay to Bhusaval line is electrified and on the other side Durg to Calcutta is electrified. But it appeared in the Press that offices which were opened in Ajnui near Nagpur and stores were also sent and there is a recent report that all the material including the officials have been shifted to Itarsi to electrify that line. I do not know why the Railways get involved in such things which create unnecessary bitterness among the people. I request the hon. Minister that they should refrain from doing such things.

While speaking on this, there are certain things, I want to mention. There is the GRP. This GRP is under the State Government. Last time when we toured Calcutta it was brought to our notice that this GRP is not under the control of the Railways and they do not listen to them and that they do not work properly. We are told that 50 per cent of the salary is paid by the Railways and 50 per cent is borne by the State Government. I want to know why they cannot be brought under the control of the Railway Department. Is there any necessity to amend the Constitution or some Act? If that is so, it should be done.

I will quote one example. Recently, only two months back in Solapur one ticket checker went and asked some people for tickets. They were some Railway Police people travelling in civil dress. They asked him "Who are you?" He told them, "I am the Ticket Inspector. Please show me your tickets." Then, they asked him, "Do you not know who we are? We are Railway Police." When they did not show the tickets, he went and brought his officer to ask them for the tickets. When the officer came, not only the Ticket Inspector but the officer also was beaten by the Railway Police! It is a serious matter. I want that Mr. Gani Khan Chaudhuri, who is a good man, will take some decision about this and do some-

thing, which will help the railway people in running the administration efficiently and will not disrupt the railway administration.

There is a long standing demand about a Division at Purna. Last year also, I had asked for it. This time again, I am asking for it. I want a Division at Purna comprising only of metre-gauge. You would be surprised to know that there are two Divisions in Secunderabad of South Central Railway. Officers told us there are two zones in Calcutta and two in Bombay. Why can we not have two Divisions in one place? Let us not quote precedents. Let there be more efficiency. If the officers go to places where the trains are running, it will increase efficiency, as was done in the case of Jullundur.

Since I come from Marathwada I must say something about the Ellora train. This train was inaugurated by Shri Shankarrao Chavan, some time back when he was the Chief Minister. The object of operating this train was to give a quick connection to Bombay. These people go and reach Manmad at the early hours. They bring luggage which cannot be kept in double decker coaches. Unfortunately, ordinary second class in Panchwati Express. The people from Marathwada or those who come by Ellora Express, are asked to go by double decker coaches. Last year, I had brought it to the notice of the hon. Minister. But, perhaps, he was busy in other matters and so, he could not look into my demand. I would request the Minister now to give a suitable reply which will be befitting to the sentiments expressed here.

I am extremely grateful to the hon. Minister for taking the survey of Parbani-Muthked-Adilabad conversion and Adilabad-Piplekhuti broad-gauge, out of turn I will only suggest that he gives more funds for Marathwada especially for Manmad-Aurangabad section so as to complete it by 1984-85. In this way, the agitated people will feel satisfied that attention is being given to their demands and the frustration which has already occurred, will not continue.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura):** Once again, we are getting an opportunity to discuss the health of Indian Railways vis-a-vis Indian economy.

At the outset, I would like to say that there is a serious crisis in the Railways. The Railways claim to be the largest employer in the country. This year, they have taken a massive loan from the World Bank but with some conditionalities. Installation of third and fourth generation computers will not only stop further employment in the railways but will cause retrenchment of thousands of casual labour like gangmen and engineering staff. The process of job reduction and reduction of job potentialities has been further enhanced by the administrative policy of increasing the workload and employing retired persons even on daily wages. The Government have taken a policy decision to phase out all the steam locomotives and to close down loco sheds, steam loco sheds particularly. With the closure of these loco sheds, thousands and thousands of coal and ash handling workers who are engaged for the last 15 or 20 years will be thrown out of employment. There is no planning and thus the Railways are passing through a very serious crisis. In the *Economic Survey* that has been supplied to us, it has been shown that there is still idle capacity in the Indian Railways. As far as the production of locomotives in Diesel Locomotive Works and Chittaranjan Locomotive Works is concerned, the capacity of these two locomotive works has not been fully utilised. Further, decision has been taken to import 20 electric Locomotives. A report has come out some time back in *Telegraph* paper. I am quoting from that newspaper report. "Now that the Indian Railway has committed itself to importing at least 20 AC electric locomotives to choose one for manufacture and foreign collaboration. The whole business of importing AC electric locomotives began in 1978 when Railway Ministry requested the World Bank for funds to place orders for electric locomotives on its own production unit at Chittaranjan. This request was turned down and instead the World Bank offered finance for purchasing ALCO or General Motors Locomotives for setting up manu-

facturing facilities under foreign collaboration". Though the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works have their capacity to produce electric locomotives still 20 electric locomotives are being imported. Why are they being imported? Why was CLW asked to drop its programme of manufacturing diesel electric locomotives in September, 1981 after Rs. 52 lakhs had already been spent? The original plan for this programme envisages the development and manufacturing of 25 diesel electric locomotives of 1350 HP at the cost of Rs. 3.7 crores. RDSO and CLW were working continuously to try and upgrade the operational parameters of these locomotives until an abrupt order from Railway Board halted the programme on its track. You will see in the Year Book that the number of wagons on lines declined from 391 thousands in 1979-80 to 379 thousand in 1981-82. The total wagon capacity in billion tones has declined from 11.14 in 1980-81 to 10.97 in 1981-82. This cannot be claimed as highly satisfactory performance by the railway.

Now I will come to the Corporate Plan, which was started in the year 1976 for 15 years. At that time, the estimated passenger kilometers for 1990-91 was set at 174 billion, whereas in 1981-82 itself the passenger kilometers went up to 176 billion. Thus, the whole Corporate Plan has gone haywire. Once in a committee meeting I referred the report on coach augmentation but the Government did not appreciate this part of the report. As a result, the travelling public are facing serious difficulties due to ever-crowding, particularly in the suburban section where during the period 1950-51 to 1981-82 the number of passengers increased by 571 per cent whereas the number of coaches has increased only by 478 per cent. In the non-suburban section the problem is more serious because whereas the passenger kilometers has increased by 195 per cent, the number of coaches has increased by only 70 per cent.

The Railway Minister has now given a new slogan : Safety, Security and Punctuality. Let us see how serious he is about this slogan. In the *Economic Survey*

[Shri Basudeb Achria]

that has been supplied to us it has been stated that the satisfactory performance in the railways is due to operational innovations towards the end of 1980. At that time the Railway Minister was Shri Kedar Pandey, who is no longer in the Cabinet. What was that innovation? At that time, the freight-oriented psychology was started in the railways. In that year, the year prior to 1982-83, what was the remarkable performance of the railways? You will notice that 436 persons were killed and 552 persons were injured in that very year as a result of train accidents. Is this a remarkable performance? Last year, while participating in the discussion on the Railway Budget, I mentioned in this very House that a person who desires to commit suicide need not lie on the railway track, because there is no guarantee that the train will come, rather he should travel in the train so that he can be killed in an accident. I had also sounded a warning that due to the poor condition of rolling-stock and backing in the track renewals, it would be dangerous to run a long train with multiple engines. You may be knowing that on 2nd December 1982 there was an accident near Jaraikele when 5-Howrah-Rourkela Express collided with Bandamunda Special. How did it happen? Bandamunda Special was running with multiple engines. The train was split into three parts, the first part was with the engine, the driver did not know because there was no sign in the vacuum. So, he went with the first part, and the Howrah-Rourkela Express came and collided with the rear part of Bandamunda Special and as a result of this, 9 persons were killed and several passengers were injured. Our Party leader, Comrade Samar Mukherjee, demanded a through inquiry. If it was done, many things would have come to light. In this way the safety rules are being violated. That particular goods train was running without brake van. That train was running even without a guard and in this way the safety rules are being violated; and the Government of India set up several committees to examine the causes of accidents and safety in the Railways. Three Committees were set up, the first Com-

mittee was A. Kunzru Committee, then the second Committee was Wanchoo and then Sikri Committee. And they examined the whole thing and gave some recommendations. And the Railway Reforms Committee, a high-powered Committee, recently submitted its report. Now, I will quote from the Report of the Railway Reforms Committee which made some observations regarding implementation of the recommendations of those three Committees, as follows :

“These Committees have gone into the entire gamut of railway working relating to accidents and safety, made several recommendations to improve railways’ safety performance. The recommendations of high-powered accident committees have not received any attention as they deserve. These would be illustrated from the manner in which recommendations are processed in the Railway Board. To quote an example, the Sikri Committee had observed that having laid down a yardstick for workload for signal must take urgent steps to implement them within the shortest possible time.’ The Board has stated: “The instructions had been issued to the zonal railways to implement the yardsticks for determining the strength of signal and telecommunication inspectors in consultation with Finance”, adding that ‘in view of the tight financial position of the Railways, the complete implementation of recommendation has to be done only in stages as and when resource position improves.

17.25 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

“A number of recommendations both Wanchoo and Sikri Committee though accepted have remained unimplemented. In a number of cases while directions have been issued by the Railway Board or by the Zonal Headquarters, action has not been taken at the lower levels. Obviously, safety aspects cannot be ignored unless serious efforts is made at all levels to implement the recommendation. The methodology of

acceptance and implementation of the recommendation pertaining to safety definitely requires improvement. Many recommendations suffer because of procedural delays."

They also recommended that all Locomotives should be provided with speedometers. This is the observation of the Railways Reforms Committee :

"The Wanchoo Committee had recommended that all locomotive trains must be equipped with speedometer and that steps should be taken to see that a more suitable and reliable type of speedometer or speed recorder is manufactured indigenously and brought into use".

The Sikri Committee's observation reads:

"The recommendation of Wanchoo Committee accepted by the Railways still not been implemented and the Railway Board's claim in this regard is not corroborated by the information supplied by the Railways. The Railway Board must ensure that speedometer and speed recorders are provided on all locomotive working trains. No locomotive switched to work on the train, leaves the shed or the yard without speedometer and speed recorder working in order."

This is the observation made by the Railway Reforms Committee.

It is a fact that the number of accidents have been reduced this year. It is due to the fact that the speed of most of the trains, especially the suburban trains has been reduced. The policy has not been changed in regard to giving preference to Goods trains. The policy of giving preference to goods trains to the passenger trains is still continuing. It is due to this reason that even a prestigious train like the Rajdhani Express is running late often.

PROF. N. G. RANGA: Goods movement is also very urgent.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: But we should not neglect the passenger train.

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: That was the statement of the Railway Minister.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: The Railway Minister himself said that passenger train should get preference. The policy adopted in the year 1980 to give preference to goods train is still continuing.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the goods train is delayed, then you will not get the supply of rice in time.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Both should be considered. It is not only the problem of West Bengal....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Any State.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): Your State first.

SHRI BASUDEO ACHARIA: Your Chief Minister went on hunger strike.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Rice must be given importance than the passenger train.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Send it by plane.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Now I will deal with the Budget proposal — rise in freights and fares. The Budget proposals are nothing but squeezing the travelling public and the common man.

Let us once again refer to the Economic Survey. In the Economic Survey, you will see that the price of most of the essential items like foodgrains, vegetables, milk, milk products, eggs and fish has been increasing. The Railway Minister has chosen to increase freight on these essential items. The result of increase in the freight and fares will be the price-rise. He has also chosen to increase the fares of second-class passenger trains and suburban passenger trains. In the case of sub-urban passenger trains, the increase will be of the order of 130 per cent. So, the conditions of sub-urban passengers will be worse.

Once there was a proposal that some contribution should be made by the employers because the employers fail to arrange accommodation and transportation. You know, there is always accommoda-

[Shri Basudeb Acharia]

tion problem in big cities. So, the workers prefer to reside in the sub-urbans. There was a proposal to levy some contribution from the employers' who fail to arrange accommodation and transport facilities for the workers.

Now, the fare of the sub-urban passenger trains has been increased abruptly without considering or examining the above-said proposal. Now, a ceiling has also been imposed. This will create a problem. Mr Ananda Gopal Mukhopadhyay will bear with me that hundreds of passengers from Asansol and Durgapur travel daily to Calcutta and most of them are employees who are working in different industrial concerns located at Calcutta. Now, due to this 80-k.m. ceiling, hundreds of (I stand corrected), thousands of passengers from Asansol and Durgapur who generally travel with monthly season tickets by Howrah Express and Coal-field Express will not be allowed to travel on the monthly season tickets.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Minister to consider this case kindly and withdraw the ceiling of 80 k.h.s and extend the sub-urban trains up to Asansol which we are demanding for the last three years, so that they may travel on the monthly season tickets. In fact, I would request him to extend the trains up to Chittaranjan. I think, Asansol is more than about 130 kms away from Howrah. The employees are coming to Calcutta even from Raniganj, Durgapur, Asansol and Chittaranjan. So, I would request him to consider our proposal to extend the sub-urban train services up to Asansol or Chittaranjan or withdraw the ceiling of 80 kms.

**SHRI ANANDA GOPAL MUKHOPADHYAY (Asansol):** The berthing facilities will be better at Chittaranjan.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:** Now, I would like to draw the attention of the Railway Minister to a very important aspect, that is the question of opening new lines. During the last 21 years, only 7,644 kms. of new lines have been added to old ones. If we compare with China, you

will see that 60 per cent of new lines were added after 1949 in China whereas in our country, out of 61,244 kms. of railway track, only 7,644 new lines have been added. The progress is very slow. It is very disgraceful. How could any Government talk of fulfilling the aspirations of the people when new lines added to old ones are only 246 kms. a year?

The pace of electrification is also very slow. The Railways have taken a decision to phase out all the steam locomotives whereas the pace of electrification upto 1981-82 is only 9 per cent of the total railway track. This is a very slow progress. I would urge upon the Government to allocate more funds for the opening of new lines. Otherwise, the type of movement which has been started in Marathwada may start in other parts of the country, specially by those which are backward regions.

The Railway Minister in his Budget Speech has stated that there is a very cordial industrial relation and that industrial peace has been maintained throughout the year. It is also admitted in the *Economic Survey* that certain changes were brought about during the latter half of the year 1980. What were the changes? In November, 1980, a secret circular was issued by the Railway Board to withdraw the facility of negotiating with unrecognised union or association.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** Earlier, this concession was given.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:** Earlier, this concession was given to all the unrecognised unions or associations. From that time, from that moment, the industrial relation has deteriorated. It was virtually after the withdrawal of negotiating facilities and going back on an earlier agreement with the Loco Running Staff Association that the industrial relation has suffered a set-back. There was an agreement with the Loco Running Staff Association in the year 1973 that the Railway Board will meet them and discuss with them their problems. But after the issue of that secret circular, this facility was withdrawn and the industrial relation, the industrial peace, in the Indian railways has deteriorated.



Even the International Labour Organisation, while dealing with various complaints which were forwarded to them, have said that such withdrawal of collective bargaining results in large-scale victimisation and cuts at the very root of freedom of association itself. Therefore, I would like to know what steps Government have taken in this regard.

This is not at all peace. This is a lull that comes before a storm. This peace has been established by victimising thousands and thousands of workers of both recognised and unrecognised unions.

It is surprising that in one case the Railway Board wanted to know from a zonal railways whether a show cause notice was served on an employee before his removal under Rule 14(2). The fact is that the officials at the lower level are removing the employees under Rule 14(2) without even giving them an opportunity to show cause. And the officials even go on contesting up to the Supreme Court. Several such cases are pending in the Supreme Court. Can there be any justification for imposing break in service and denying the payment of gratuity and pension to a worker simply because he could not put forth his labour for a few days for justifiable reasons? If the Administration will not grant the pay even for the period of his work also, such break-in-service becomes a double penalty.

The Administration can go to the extent of even withholding the retirement benefits of an employee on the ground of his participation in strike. Hundreds of railwaymen who have retired during the last one or two years have not yet been granted their retirement benefits.

You, as trade union leader, will realise the gravity of the situation. Although there is an Order from the Railway Board that even in cases where break in service is finally imposed and not reviewed after retirement, the employee concerned should be granted gratuity and pension on the basis of his longer period of service, the order is not implemented.

As the law stands, if an employee is retrenched, he should be granted retrenchment compensation. This should be con-

sidered and I urge upon the Railway Minister to hold consultation with both the recognised and unrecognised unions where there are 5 lakhs of workers in the recognised federations alone.

The Railway Board and the Railway Minister should hold discussions with the unions to sort out their problems and to bring peace in the railways especially in view of the fact that the All India Railwaymen's Federation, in its Bikaner Convention have taken a decision to mobilise railwaymen on 5th April and they are going to organise a strike ballot.

Now I will deal with some of the problems of our State of West Bengal. We have been demanding since long for an express train from Purulia to Howrah. Purulia is one of the backward districts of our country. When you visited Purulia, you also categorically told and assured the people that you would introduce a fast day-time train, but we do not find any provision for such an express train in the Budget proposals because there is a problem — the problem of terminal facilities at Purulia station and these terminal facilities are to be provided. I therefore urge upon the Railway Minister to consider this request and provide a fast train. Thousands and thousands of people of Purulia organised a *padayatra* from Purulia to Calcutta covering 283 km recently to highlight this demand and I request the Minister to provide a fast express train at an early date.

Then, Sir, Adra-Kharagpur section should be electrified as that will solve the problem of administrative delay as well as it will open the big market of Calcutta and its suburbs to the people of Purulia.

The Railway administration will not be able to shake off its responsibility in rousing up the regional feeling of deprivation among the people of the region so far as development of railways is concerned. The Bihar portion of Ranchi-Purulia narrow gauge section has been converted into broad gauge while the West Bengal portion remains as it was. The conversion of this portion will ensure a better communication between the major steel complexes of Bokaro, Durgapur and Tatas.

[Shri Basudeb Acharya]

**Construction of Bankura-Raniganj line:** when you were Energy Minister you submitted a report to the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Railways wanted a report from the Ministry of Energy. So this line from Bankura to Raniganj should be taken into consideration.

There is a periodic overhauling workshop of diesel engines stationed at Siliguri. The Railway Board has issued an order to close down this section at Siliguri and shift it to Ajmer and Golden Rock. The order of the Railway Board to shift this section has far-reaching consequences because there are about 250 diesel loco staff. They will be thrown out of employment. It is stated in the said letter that the locomotives will go and come back by working trains for attending POH schedule both at Ajmer and Golden Rock which will lose much time and money as per Railway Schedule. Moreover the conversion of Katihar-Barauni and Katihar-Siliguri from metre gauge to broad gauge will consume more transit time. A few crores are going to be spent for the said centralising POH work shop at Ajmer and Golden Rock for diesel locomotives when this can be done with less cost at Siliguri junction with the already present infrastructure. A few days back in the West Bengal Assembly there was a unanimous resolution passed for retention of this POH at Siliguri.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** The Minister should take note of this unanimous resolution passed by West Bengal Assembly.

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:** Now, I would like to say a few words about the construction of circular railway. In the

year 1947 Girhwalla Committee was constituted and that committee examined construction of the circular railway in the city of Calcutta. The surface transport system in the city of Calcutta and its suburbs has reached a saturation point and the number of commuters is increasing day by day which in the future will reach a staggering figure of 85 to 90 lakhs. The present road capacity in Calcutta is only 6 per cent whereas in Delhi, Madras and Bombay it is 21 per cent. The tube railway when it gets completed will only provide transportation to one million passengers per day and there will still be sizeable number of commuters without any means of transportation. The idea of circular railway had been under study since 1947 and since then there have been as many as three committees who have examined construction of circular railway and upto 1977 their recommendations were not given effect to or persuaded but in the year 1977 when Left Front government was installed in West Bengal they took up this matter with the Union Government and engaged RITES — Rail India Technical Economic Services and a Government of India Undertaking — who in their report has said that link line to be built for circular railway including the line from Princess Ghat to Dum Dum is technically feasible. The Section from Princess Ghat to Majar Ghat has not been covered in the RITES report. With the introduction of this section the circular railway as conceived by the earlier committees if installed in full that would be only able to deal substantially with the traffic.

Sir, you earlier showed some interest for this. I urge upon you to take up the matter because all the committees which examined the feasibility of this circular railway have recommended the construction and introduction of circular railway to cope up with the traffic problem of a city of Calcutta.

Sir, there was one Howrah-Amta line. In this year's budget only a stolen provision of Rs. 2 crores has been made. It should be given priority and along with this Howrah-Siakhal metre-gauge line should also be taken into consideration.

Before concluding, I would urge upon the Minister to consider the need to improve industrial relations, to restore the peace, which has deteriorated. I urge upon the Government and Planning Minister to allocate more funds. Rs. 11,000 crores is the amount demanded; it is the minimum need-based amount which the Railways demanded from the Planning Commission for its rehabilitation work, for its track renewals, for its replacements, for extension of new lines, etc. I urge upon the Minister that the amount should be granted so that Railways can take up works like new lines, it may be enabled to take up and complete all essential pending projects.

With these words I conclude.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR (Hamirpur): I rise to support the proposals made by the hon. Railway Minister in the Railway Budget for the year 1983-84.

Sir, Railways are the sinews of the nation; if the nation is on the move today, it is because the Railways have been functioning, our steel plants have been functioning, our thermal plants have been functioning. Therefore, we have the impression that the nation is on the move, is on the march.

Sir, the Railway Minister has to work under certain parameters. He is in the unfortunate position of having a separate Budget, but not having the actual control over the finances or the resources which are allocated to him. The capital expenditure is governed by the Planning Commission. The recurring expenditure is governed by the Ministry of Finance. The Railway Minister governs the rails! The result is, he has to suffer the criticism on both these scores. This can very well be imagined.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The only privilege is that he presents the Budget separately.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: That is the only privilege, Sir. This situation can be well imagined.

In the beginning of the Sixth Five-Year Plan, Railways demanded Rs. 11,000 crores outlay. They were given less than 50 per cent of the amount, that is, Rs. 5100 crores. That too has now got depreciated because money value has gone down. You can very well imagine the situation. We are all making demands on him. But, what is his position?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: His position is very pitiable.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: The Railways demanded Rs. 1920 crores. Now, out of the Annual Plan, they were given not even Rs. 1500 crores; they were given only Rs. 1342 crores. Earlier they were promised that after pruning, cutting down, etc. they will be given at least Rs. 1400 crores. But even that amount was less. So, under these circumstances, he has to serve under very heavy strain. But let us not forget the fact that Railways are very essential for the development of the nation. Comparisons of Railways with road transport should be properly grasped. As it has been pointed out in one of the write-ups, the Railway Minister stated that development expenditure will be cut to the bone in this year. That indeed is a very painful statement. And therefore the people are taking to agitation. Where they are not taking to agitation it is because they have not grasped how much is the allocation to their areas. So, the moment people come to know that new lines in their areas have been given low priority and very little amount is given, voices from all parts of the country will start coming to Delhi and there will be a cacophony of voices, vociferous demands for

[Prof. Narain Chand Parashar]

increased expenditure and outlays on the new railway lines. They must understand that Railways is a viable system. If we compare it to road transport system, it is less costly. It is not so dear, because, road transport, with the increasing cost of fuel, is becoming a liability. And for long distances, Railways are the only hope of the nation. So, if these things are viewed in the proper perspective, I think all of us will support the hon. Minister in his fight with the Planning Commission, because, when it comes to resources, he cannot have any other alternative. He must fight it out. Energy is in the minimum-needs sector, in the core sector. Some of the things are in the core sector.

18|00 hrs.

We fail to understand why the transport infrastructure which is so important not only for the economic development but also for the industrial development of the country should be left out of this. So, we must all plead that this should be given a fair deal, and the deal should be liberal that he can satisfy the aspirations of the entire nation.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Parashar, you can continue your speech tomorrow.

18|01 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of Clock on Wednesday, March 2, 1983 / Phalguna 11, 1904 (Saka)*

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