

ANNOUNCEMENT RE: ADJOURNMENT OF HOUSE FOR THE BUDGET

MR. SPEAKER: Before we take up next item, I would like to inform the House that as is customary, the House would adjourn for half an hour at 4.30 p.m. today to re-assemble at 5 p.m. for the presentation of the Budget

12.05 hrs.

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1976-77—GENERAL DISCUSSION—contd.

MR. SPEAKER: We now take up further discussion on the Railway Budget. Shri Hanumanthaiya.

SHRI K. HANUMANTHAIYA (Bangalore): The House naturally welcomes this annual opportunity to look into the working of the Railways. I might straightaway say that the Railway Ministry, beginning with the Minister down to the Divisional Manager and so on have been putting forth their best efforts. That is why we see a great deal of improvement when compared to the conditions existing two years earlier. It makes me very happy; and I suppose it makes everybody happy to see that there is a surplus budget. In fact, wherever there is surplus, we may say there is progress. Deficit is a sign of deficiency. Therefore, when the Railway Minister shows a surplus budget, it makes us naturally happy. The Railway Minister, at the same time, has been frank and forthright in his speech when he said on the very first page that the Railway indebtedness to the General Revenues under Development Fund and Revenue Reserve Fund at the end of 1974-75 stood at Rs. 379.75 crores. He also said that more contribution has to be made to the Reserve Fund and there is a sharp fall in meeting the dividend obligations to the General Revenues, which is of the order of Rs. 62.81 crores.

If you weigh these surplus figures, you will naturally see that it is the

manner of accounting that has shown the surplus and it is not really a surplus. I therefore, characterise this surplus as 'accounting surplus' and not 'counting surplus'; we cannot count the money in terms of rupees and paise...

AN HON. MEMBER: Then it is jugglery?

SHRI K. HANUMANTHAIYA: I don't say it is jugglery because nothing has been fiddled with; he has stated it frankly. Therefore, let us not use extravagant words, either in praise or in denunciation. This statement is there and, after all, I am quoting figures only from the budget speech. Therefore, there is no deceit and there is nothing hanky-panky about it.

So, I hope that, by the time we reach the stage of budget preparation next year, the hon. Minister and the hon. Members of the Railways Board will see that this accounting surplus is really turned into counting surplus.

Sir, this House has discussed several times the pattern of the Railway system in India. When the British built the railways, they had only two purposes in view, namely, their trade based upon the three Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and defence. Now, we have reached a stage, after gaining independence, of developing economy. Therefore, the railway system has to be so re-arranged or rationalised as to meet the development purposes. The trade pattern has also changed in India today. So, the Railway system based upon the three Presidency States has to be so rationalised and changed as to make every State Capital in India and Delhi get connected directly by broad-gauge system. That proposal was placed before the House a few years ago and it has been unanimously acclaimed and accepted. But I do not find mention of any further implementation of that idea in