

कर रहा है। संगठन का उद्देश्य काश्मीर की
बैध सरकार को पलटना है।

(ग) सरकार को ऐसी सूचना नहीं है।

(घ) और (ङ). काश्मीर राष्ट्रीय मुक्ति
मोर्चा जम्मू व काश्मीर में कोई प्रभाव नहीं डाल
सका है। फिर भी, केन्द्रीय तथा राज्य सरकारें
दोनों ही राज्य में किसी तोड़-फोड़ की गतिविधि
को रोकने के लिये अत्यधिक सतर्कता बरत
रही हैं।

12 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED NON-AVAILABILITY OF SOVIET AID AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE PROPOSED CALCUTTA TUBE RAILWAY

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI (Calcutta South): Sir, I call the attention of
the Minister of Railways to the following mat-
ter of urgent public importance and I request
that he may make statement thereon:

Reported non-availability of Soviet aid
and assistance for the proposed Calcutta Tube
Railway.

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
HANUMANTHAIYA)**: Sir, it is not correct
that the Soviet aid and assistance for the pro-
posed Calcutta Tube Railway has become non-
available.

The Metropolitan Transport Project Orga-
nisation set up in Calcutta by the Indian Rail-
ways in middle of 1959 conducted studies for a
"Suburban Dispersal Line" and a "Mass Rapid
Transit System" for the metropolitan city of
Calcutta. A team of Soviet Consultants were
made available to the M. T. P. (Metropolitan
Transport Project) Calcutta for a period of two
months from about the middle of November,
1970. The Soviet Consultants did not consider
that the "Suburban Dispersal Line" would
provide an effective solution to the transport
problem of the city of Calcutta. The Soviet
Consultants recommended construction of an
Underground Railway from Dum Dum to
Tollygunge. That has been accepted.

After examination of the Report of the Soviet
Consultants, it was decided to drop the propos-
al for the "Suburban Dispersal Line", and
accept the underground proposal. The Metro-
politan Transport Project organisation was asked
to prepare a Project Report or the proposed
Underground Railway by October 1971 to
enable a final decision to be taken on the sub-
ject.

The Soviet Government has been approached
for securing consultancy and assistance for this
Project. It is still in the stage of discussion and
I hope it will lead to a satisfactory understand-
ing.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI: Sir,
I am happy with the announcement of the
Railway Minister that the reported news of the
non-availability of Soviet assistance is not cor-
rect. I rise on this occasion for calling attention
of the Minister not because cooperation of the
Soviet Union is reportedly not available for the
Calcutta Tube Railway project but for the spe-
cific reason that on several occasions announce-
ments and assurances by the Railway Ministry
as regards the Calcutta railway have almost be-
come a drama because of the fact that the Cal-
cutta Tube Railway Project was almost discus-
sed mainly by the Ministers on several occa-
sions. Right from 1946 the assurance was given
to the people of Calcutta that there must be
some arrangement of a circular railway, under-
ground railway or any other thing.

Then, after sometime, the then Minister of
State, Shri Parimal Ghosh, assured the House
while replying to the Demands of Railway
Ministry or 1969-70 that the Ministry as well as
the Government had taken a final decision, an
absolute final decision, to start the project of
Circular Railway in Calcutta. The people of
Calcutta who were actually suffering for
long expected a bright future.

After that, the then Railway Minister, Shri
Nandaji, told the people in a news conference
that the scheme of a Circular Railway in Cal-
cutta will not be accepted, that it will not be
possible and that we are prepared to have a
project for an underground railway. Then peo-
ple went underground to think over the situa-
tion how it will come about. Again, Shri Nandaji
told the people that it is not possible because
there are certain difficulties in the sanctioning
of allocation of funds and so it must be referred
to the Planning Commission.

[Shri Priya Ranjan Das Munsii]

I am happy that after the retirement of Shri Nandaji, a final project came from Shri Hanumanthaiya. They know the situation has matured and there must be a Tube Railway, that is, an underground railway and that it will be expedited by the Soviet experts. The people of Calcutta were happy and, once again, they got a hope that their transport difficulties would be over.

Further, the Soviet experts visited Calcutta and they made a blue print and submitted it to the Railway Ministry, referring a particular point that the Soviet assistance might be taken or might not be taken. There is certain expertise available in our own country and that there is a firm based in Calcutta who also prepared an underground railway scheme before the Soviet experts had prepared it. That assistance can be available and the work can be conducted very smoothly.

I would like to put two or three specific questions to the hon. Minister. If the report is to come in October, 1971, we shall be glad because, after Dussehra, it will be a Diwali gift to the people of Calcutta, a final announcement of starting the work. Then, I would like to know if it is a fact that the Soviet experts have mentioned in the report that there are certain experts, a firm based in Calcutta, who can assist the project and the work can go on smoothly. I do not know what exactly is mentioned in the report. I want to know whether the Ministry can say, if the Soviet assistance is not available, if the situation so becomes, the work will go on. I do not think the Soviet assistance will not be available. The Soviet Union is our good friend. I would like to know about that aspect.

Then, the Soviet experts propose in their scheme that Rs. 120 crores will be spent for the scheme and that it will take six years only. I would like to know whether, if the report is given in October, 1971, the work will be started from November, 1971 and that the work will be completed in six years, and that there will be no wrong controversy about it, wrong news about it, that there is again non-availability of assistance.

In the last paragraph of the statement, the hon. Minister says:

"Soviet Government has been approached for securing consultancy and assistance for this project."

The Soviet experts have already submitted a report. How soon the work will commence? There is no need of consultancy and assistance now because the report has already been given by them.

Another thing that I would like to know is as to whether the Ministry is aware of the socio-economic problem of the people of Calcutta which is actually related to the socio-economic problem of Bihar, Assam and the whole of the eastern region. After the report comes in October, 1971, the work must be started from November onwards.

I know there are other hon. Members who will speak on the Call Attention Notice. I am happy that the Soviet assistance will be available. The people were frustrated about this wrong news. Lastly, I would like to know from the hon. Minister why should this news come in the press at the present juncture. Before we move a Call Attention Notice, it is the responsibility of the Minister to issue a statement in the press that such news is false, so that the people do not get frustrated.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: So far as the underground system of railway is concerned, as the hon. Member feels happy, the Government is committed to the proposition and both the State administration and the Railway Ministry are very earnest in going ahead with this project... (Interruptions)

So far as foreign assistance is concerned, it is a matter of negotiation. I also have the idea suggested by my hon. friend whether our own experts will not be able to do this work themselves feel that some technical expertise is required from the Soviet Union. As you know, this is the first time that an underground railway is going to be constructed in India. I have myself personally seen the underground railways in Moscow and Leningrad and I feel they are very good and personally, I will be very happy if the Soviet Government collaborates with us in the matter of implementing this project... (Interruptions)

So far as commitment is concerned, we need not only expertise but also foreign exchange content in this project. These are matters for negotiation and even the External Affairs Ministry is taking interest. We hope to carry on these discussions and come to an understanding

as soon as possible. If it was only in our hands, we could give a time within which the work will begin. But the proposal is with the Soviet Government. So we have to see how far and in what way and in what time they will be able to agree to collaborate.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore): Is it still in the air or something concrete has come up?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: My hon. friend speaks of air. It is an underground thing. It is very much akin to the thinking of my hon. friend on the opposite side.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY (Cooch-Bihar): Are you making scope for them to go underground?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: The question is whether the underground tubes will be made use of by some political parties in their operations.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi): Sir, as early as the days of Dr. B. C. Roy, the question of construction of an underground railway in Calcutta and the magnitude of the transport problems of Calcutta have received the attention of this House and many a debate had taken place.

In the statement the Minister has made, there are two contradictory paragraphs, the first paragraph and the last paragraph. Both are contradictory. In the first paragraph he says that it is not correct that Soviet aid is not available and in the last paragraph he says that it is still under discussion. Taking into consideration the Economic Survey Report which has been published this year, we find that after meeting all the debt service charges the Soviet assistance is only negative. Now, from the Press, we get the reports that the Soviet Government has developed cold feet regarding assisting the scheme for the underground railway.

Now I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to a fact that certain Calcutta firms, viz. Khuljians and Atkins had discussed this proposal with the Railway Board and they were prepared to take up this scheme. We further learn from the report that the suburban disposal system has been given up and this underground railway construction is going to be

taken up only on the condition, namely, if the Soviet assistance is given. Taking into consideration all these factors, may I request the Government to be self-reliant? Why can't they ask our own people who are capable of undertaking this work to do this job and provide the necessary funds in the Railway Budget to expedite this scheme?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: So far as the contradiction between the first para and the last para is concerned, only my hon. friend is seeing the contradiction, I don't see any contradiction at all. Non-availability does not mean that it has been rejected. So far as the negative attitude and cold feet is concerned, that argument may be applicable to my hon. friend than to Soviet Government.

SHRI P. K. DEO: The Economic Survey of the Government of India tells us.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: He suggested certain firms which are prepared to take up this scheme. I have had no idea about this nor have they approached me.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): Has any approach been made to any of the Indian firms?

SHRI P. K. DEO: He may find out from the Railway Board.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I request your guidance in the matter. Our rules are very clear that nobody should plead for a particular firm. This firm which he mentioned is a foreign firm. It is an American firm....

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra): Nor can you plead for a particular country.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: I have no knowledge at all on that. So far as self-reliance is concerned, I hope my hon. friend will agree that in all these great ventures, there is a limit to which self-reliance can be extended. There is a certain area in which we require not only foreign collaboration, but also foreign exchange.

SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE (Basirhat): Calcutta has been described as a city of processions, a city of nightmare. It is a city of

[Shri A. K. M. Ishaque]

problems and communication is one of the serious problems. If one visits Calcutta during the peak hours, that is, from 9 A.M. to 11.30 A.M. and from 4 P.M. to 7.30 P.M. he will be in utter confusion; all manner of transport, buses, trams, everything are abnormally overcrowded. One cannot as certain whether the buses are moving or some human beings are floating in the air because there is so much of overcrowding. This is the position of communication in Calcutta. We are happy to learn that underground railway system is in the process of coming and will come one day. But then, about the alternative system, namely, mass rapid transit system, the hon. Minister has not spoken anything and we do not really know whether it has been abandoned or is in the process of being implemented. Is the hon. Minister in a position to give us any assurance of expeditious implementation of the underground system?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: Regarding the problem of traffic in the City of Calcutta, I agree with my hon. friend and that is why we are taking up this underground railway. What he mentioned is a common scheme. Whether it will be underground or over-ground is the question to be considered. The Soviet experts' advice is that it is better to have underground rather than overground. That is why we have accepted the suggestion.

SHRI PILOO MODY: The proverbial mass rapid transit system of Calcutta is like the proverbial car. The little baby car is waiting for Baba to grow up, and the mass rapid transit system of Calcutta is waiting for big brother's approval. My own information is that the Soviets are anxious to help in giving their expertise as well as their technical assistance for this particular project, but are not willing to finance it and give the aid that the hon. Minister is looking for. Apart from what he has said namely that it has not become non-available, which is a very devious way of saying that it is not yet available and that they will continue their efforts to make it available even if it takes them the next twenty years to do it, what I want to know from the hon. Minister is this:—Is this project entirely dependent upon the Soviets' giving us financial aid in foreign exchange or is this merely one method of financing it, and if the Soviets will not give it, will he find some other way of

getting the foreign exchange to finance the railway? In other words, is his decision in principle to go ahead with the scheme or is it entirely hinging on Soviet aid?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: So far as his information is concerned, I am happy to know that my hon. friend is in touch with the Soviet administration.

SHRI RANEN SEN (Barasat): Through somebody else.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Through Shri S.M. Banerjee.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Through the Americans.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: I agree that this scheme is taken on its own merit. The foreign exchange help and the foreign expertise availability is in order to help the scheme which we have accepted. Therefore, it is no use making a distinction between the help required and the basis of the scheme itself. My hon. friend need not have any anxiety. The idea is to implement a scheme in all sincerity and with all speed.

SHRI PILOO MODY: It will go as an undertaking given in Parliament. It will go to the Assurances Committee of Parliament.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: The hon. Minister's replies could not satisfy me. While I appreciate his idea that in Calcutta there will be an underground railway, I am afraid I would have to make my own observations. It is inadequately appreciated that the traffic problem in Calcutta today is one of the prime reasons for the social tensions in society. The hon. Minister has not appreciated that. Had he appreciated, he would not have said that some of the railway officers or railway experts, probably the officers of the Railway Board are not very much willing to have consultancy from our own men, but they want the consultancy also to be imported from Soviet Union; there is nothing harmful in it; but if it is a fact that consultancy from Indian experts is available, and it has already been opined even by the Soviet experts that in India there are enough consultancy firms available with whose assistance this project can be implemented—

and they have submitted a blueprint also—I do not understand how the Railway Minister can say that we are to secure this consultancy and also seek financial assistance from the Soviet Union and so on. I would ask the hon. Minister to study the problem in Calcutta, particularly, the chaotic traffic problem. I would like to know whether he has considered the fact that in a recent study it has been revealed that in the course of another five years, that is, by 1976, the Calcutta traffic problem will be doubled or almost go up by 130 per cent and it has been stated in specific terms that whereas nowadays there are 530 million trips a day in the course of this whole year it will go up about 280 million trips? See the vastness and the gigantic nature of the problem. You can imagine how much it will go up by 1976. The hon. Minister says that by October they will clear the project and they will certainly take it up. But I would submit that these are only piece-meal measures. The original plan was that there should be a suburban dispersal line and along with that there should also be a mass rapid transit system.

Now suddenly in 1970 while the budget sanctioned was for some Rs. 38,000, the whole scheme was scuttled. Shri Nanda said on 24th April, 1970 that the suburban dispersal line would not solve the problem and something else should be done. But originally it was said that the suburban dispersal line along with a mass rapid transport system, either an elevated railway or an underground railway, should be there to meet the problem of intracity traffic.

Now the hon. Minister comes only to the question of intra-city traffic, not about the suburban dispersal line, that is, to serve those commuters who come from the outskirts of Calcutta to the heart of the city. He is dealing only with the intra-city traffic problem.

It is good that the hon. Minister is very firm and committed to the idea of a tube railway, that it should be constructed by help from whatever source possible. But at the same time, I would appeal to him not to scuttle the whole idea of the circular railway or suburban dispersal line, because both are necessary, one complementing the other. I would also like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that some of the railway officers and railway experts are not in favour of obtaining consultancy from within the country when it is available? Is it a fact that there is a strong lobby among railway officers, among the members of the Railway Board that no traffic

problem of Calcutta, particularly the underground railway line and the suburban dispersal line, should be solved? Is it also true that in view of this hostile attitude of the Railway Board, two officers who are experts in the Calcutta traffic problem, particularly the tube railway problem, have, as reported in the press, been transferred? If so, why? I want clear answers to all these questions.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: So far as the traffic problem is concerned, it is common ground between the hon. member and myself that there is a great need to relieve it by some such system. I do not accept his charge that the Railway Board is in the way or is hostile. For all I know, I discuss with them daily and they are as earnest as my hon. friend to implement the scheme.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: What is the opinion of the railway experts?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: In fact, the two officers who were transferred from Calcutta to some other place are not experts. They are merely civil engineers who were associated with the Study Team.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: What is the definition of 'experts'? Are engineers not experts?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: My hon. friend will see that this is a new project we are undertaking, that is, the underground railway. As I have already said, we have not constructed any such underground railway earlier. Therefore, the assistance of people who have got experience of constructing such projects is required.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: We have got experience; we remained underground for many years.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA: So far as the availability of consultancy in India is concerned, I do not share the optimism of my hon. friend. If at all there is any expertise, it is only in the Railway Board. I have not had the benefit of knowing any private company which has done this work in this country. I have not come across any firm in India which has done this work and which has gained expertise and experience in this.

SHRI PILOO MODY: The Marxist Party?