

[Shri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee]

The State Government has also taken vigorous steps for the removal of untouchability and has increased the reservation quota for employment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in gazetted posts of the State Government. It has also been decided to set up a Harijan Development Corporation for the socio-economic upliftment of the Scheduled Castes.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (GUJARAT), 1974-75

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE): I beg to present a statement showing Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the State of Gujarat for the year 1974-75.

15.02 hrs.

#### RAILWAY BUDGET, 1975-76— GENERAL DISCUSSION

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we take up the General Discussion on the Railway Budget, Shri Samar Mukherjee.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: (Howrah): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this time, the Railway Minister has presented an optimistic budget and it has been called a surplus budget. There has been no rise in fares or freight rise as it was done last year.

That was because the election is coming. So, the railway budget is presented in such a way that it helps the ruling party to win the election. That is why this budget has been presented in such an optimistic way. This budget has raised high hopes. But, from the reports, it is clear that the railway is sick and that sickness cannot be cured by this budget. It is illusory and absolutely unrelated to reality. The Minister, for example, has said in his

budget speech that the Railways are seeing the end of the tunnel. You should know that the tunnel is not one that you can pass it over. But, you are going too deep in another tunnel. In the railway tracks, there are so many tunnels and when the train tumbles in darkness inside such a tunnel, nobody will come to rescue you at that time!

What is the basis on which this optimism has been expressed? You have further said that the prospects of the next year will depend on the growth of the industry and our agricultural economy as also the cost of living index. So, your expectation is that the cost of living index will go down. But, the actual reality is just the reverse. The economy is not recovering. It is further worsening and deteriorating.

I again quote from your budget speech:

"There is a general apprehension amongst economic analysts that recession-cum-inflation will deepen and economy in the highly developed countries will get worse before it gets better in 1975-76."

You admit this. But you know also that day in and day out our Prime Minister and all the Ministers are saying that there are forces which are beyond our control for which this rise in prices is taking place and this has become a global phenomenon. Here your idea is to completely isolate the Indian economy from the international economy and you expect that our economy will be less bloomy, if not positively better. This is not a realistic assessment. I do not know some astrologer might have advised that the coming year will be a bright year but the observation of that astrologer is beyond this debate. So, I am not going into it. There was a news-item in the Press that even the timing of the presentation of the budget was changed on the basis of the advice of an astrologer.