

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Friday, February 24, 1989/Phalguna 5,
1910 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: How is the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs standing in the centre?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: He should always be in the centre.

MR. SPEAKER: He should be in the centre of the ruling and the opposition benches and not in the corridor.

[*English*]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. NAMGYAL): Sir, I was on my way to seat.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Bonds to Raise Funds for Development of Rail Communications in Marathwada Region

*41. SHRI SHARAD DIGHE†:
SHRI D.B. PATIL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have allowed Maharashtra Government to float bonds to raise funds for better rail communications in the Marathwada region; and

(b) if so, the details of the Scheme.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): (a) and (b). The matter is under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Active or otherwise?

DR. DATTA SAMANT: This is the demand of the hon. Minister also.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: The reply is that the matter is under consideration. Marathwada is a backward region of the State of Maharashtra. With a view to developing transport facilities in Marathwada the State Government had recommended four projects. Out of them three are gauge conversion and one for a new railway line. And the successive Chief Ministers including the hon. Finance Minister have been pressing for the sanction of these projects and allotments for these projects particularly Manmad-Aurangabad-Parbhani-Parli-Vaijnath metre-gauge line and Parbhani-Purna Mudkhed metre gauge line into broad gauge. Yesterday, the Railway Budget provided Rs. 15 crores for the first project and a token grant of Rs. 1000 for the second project. The Railway Minister has always been praising the Maharashtra Government for agreeing to raise debentures of nearly Rs. 80 crores for the New Bombay railway i.e. Mankhud Belapur railway. And yesterday in his speech he reiterated and appreciated such efforts of the State Governments to come forward and contribute for railway projects. In view of this when the Maharashtra Government has offered to raise public bonds for these projects, what is now the

technical difficulty? Why is the Government not agreeing to such a proposal? Why is it kept under consideration?

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Sir, I do not think that I can request my colleague the railway Minister to react in a question which is put to the Finance Ministry. As regards the first part of the question, it is a fact that successive Chief Ministers of Maharashtra have been trying their best to see that these railway lines are sanctioned and adequate amounts are provided for execution of these lines. Both the lines have been sanctioned by the Railway Ministry. There is no difficulty about it. But, at the same time, it is true that in one case the amount provided happens to be Rs. 15 crores, in the case of the other it is just a token provision of Rs. 1,000. Might be, the explanation which possibly I can give will be that since these debentures were going to be floated, this might have weighed with them. I can not say on behalf of the Railway Ministry as to actually what weighed with them. There was a meeting between the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the Railway Minister, the Minister for Planning and myself. All four of us sat there, discussed the whole matter and agreed in principle that we will have to take definite steps in this direction in order to see that this backward area gets the benefit of the railways.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Sir, my second supplementary is that in view of this meeting which has already taken place and in which it has been agreed in principle, as the hon. Minister has said, how long will it take ultimately to take the final decision.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Ultimately this has to be sent in a proper shape and form to the Planning Commission and thereafter the Planning Commission will send their proposal to the Ministry of Finance. Might be that in order to expedite the whole thing, all of us will again sit there and prepare the proposal and see that it is expedited.

SHRI D.B. PATIL: Sir, it is an accepted fact that Marathwada region is a backward region. That is why it has been provided in

the Constitution, under article 371 (2), that a Development Board for Marathwada should be established. That itself speaks for the backwardness of Marathwada region. The hon. Finance Minister comes from Marathwada region and he has been pressing for the rail communications in Marathwada. Not it is upon him to sanction at the earliest the scheme to issue bonds. The Government of Maharashtra is very anxious about rail communications in Maharashtra. One or two years back, there was a proposal that the earth work for new lines should be worked out and done under the Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Maharashtra Government was prepared for it. Considering all these facts, will the hon. Minister take an early decision in the matter so that the speed of development could be accelerated in Marathwada?

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Sir, I quite see the anxiety of the hon. Member. It is a fact that this is a backward area and something needs to be done. That is why we will try to expedite the things.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, it is good that I am asking a question to the Finance Minister who also happened to be the Chief Minister, who also made the demand which we are making in the House from the other end of Maharashtra... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: To Mr. Madhu Dandavate, the Railway Minister.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: That is right. It is a wonderful combination, Sir. I did my job by allowing the first route to be completed... (*Interruptions*).

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Dighe was saying that you were pressing. Who will press the Finance Minister and whom will he press?

[*English*]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Whom-

ever we press, he has to impress the Prime Minister. Sir, is it not a fact that the question of floating the bonds to raise funds for better rail communications in the Marathwada region arose, as you yourself just now said, out of the fact that this region is considered as a backward region. Now, in terms of region, the backward caste includes Marathwada as well as Konkan region. He knows it very well, Sir. Therefore, I would like to know that having accepted in principle that the bonds should be floated and fortunately... (*Interruptions*). Sir, is it a bell for me?

MR. SPEAKER: No.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Sir, I am so loyal that even if inadvertently the bell is rung, I become very conscious... (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: I appreciate that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: He is so conscious of it that even if a bell rings in his television, he opens the door.

[*English*]

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Fortunately the hon. Railway Minister yesterday gave enough indication that he accepts the principle of raising funds through the bonds. Now, in view of this, will the Finance Minister accept the very principle that he made from Bombay as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and expedite the clearance of issuance of bonds both in the case of Marathwada Railway as well as West Konkan railways? This you referred to me as a former Railway Minister. Now, I am asking this question. I did my job by negotiating the matter with the Planning Commission and getting the first part of the 62 Km. in Apta-Roha Section of the Konkan Railway. Fortunately that is also constructed. So, I did my job. Now, kindly do your job.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: That is exactly what have replied to the question Sir, that the

whole matter is under the consideration of the Government. I can assure the hon. Member that the Prime Minister is also equally sympathetic to this Railway line. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Sir, I will tell you one thing.

As far as "consideration" and "survey" are concerned, these terms are there. I will give you a very interesting quotation. In Railways, it is said:

"Where there is a will there is a 'Railway'; when there is no will, there is only a survey."

That is how you consider that. I am very frightened of the word 'consideration' from my experience. That is exactly what is happening with the term "under consideration". So, let him give a time-bound assurance as to when it will be done and when the bonds will be allowed to be issued.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: I must express my gratitude to the hon. Member for passing on this information as to when he was the Railway Minister, how he looked at it. Anyway, I can assure the hon. Member that when I say that the whole thing will be expedited, we will see that within a stipulated time—I won't be able to mention the exact timing—we will try to see that the whole thing is expedited.

MR. SPEAKER: I can well realise that when you are sitting in the train, you travel at the same speed, all of you.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: Sir, I support the demand for the development of the Marathwada region by having more railways because at one time I also represented a part of Marathwada. But the point is, that the floating of the bonds for the development of the Railways is the main concern of the railway department or the Railway Finance Corporation. I do not understand where the Maharashtra government comes into the picture. But I am very happy if that is consid-

ered as a new policy. I would like to know whether the Government of India is going to support all such proposals which come from various States for floating public sector bonds for the development of not only Railways but also many other projects taken up by State undertakings.

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: I can well understand the indication which the hon. Member has given to me that in different States there is a demand for all types of Corporations for floating loans. I won't be able to say at this stage anything about the whole thing. But whether the Railway Finance Corporation should also take part in this or the Maharashtra Government alone will be asked to go in for floatation of the bonds, that is also one of the point which is under consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Uttam Rathod; Last supplementary.

SHRI ASHOK SHANKARRAO CHAVAN: rose

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, junior Chavan wants to ask a supplementary.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD: I hope he will come after me.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: What about junior Chavan? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I can't take it a family affair.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD: I will ask only half a question.

AN HON. MEMBER: Half a question will be passed on to him.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD: Sir, when this question bonds issue was taken up, there was a demand through the Janata Vikas Parishad recently when a Railway Convention was held that the railway lines which they have proposed should also get the benefit of these bonds. May I know from the

hon. Minister if he is prepared to do that? Will they at least give priority to Adilabad-Mudkhed railway section so that the Marathwada region gets coal from Chandrapur?

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Sir, this question is being replied in the context of the demand made by the Maharashtra Government. I don't think I have all the details as to what transpired in the Janata Vikas Parishad. But these are the two railway lines which have been sanctioned and we will try to see how we can accommodate both of them.

SHRI ASHOK SHANKARRAO CHAVAN: I would like to know from the hon. Finance Minister if a specific proposal has been received by the Finance Ministry regarding floating of bonds and if so, what has been done in this regard.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Let him answer with paternal affection!

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: Sir, the guidelines are very clearly laid down by the Finance Ministry, if the floatation of any bonds is to take place what are the guidelines which every one is supposed to follow. If it fits into that, then certainly it will be taken into account, but about the details as to whether the Maharashtra Government has sent such a proposal or not, I will have to find out, I don't have information readily available with me.

[*Translation*]

Maintenance allowance limit

*42. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the maximum amount of maintenance allowance per month that a wife is entitled to get from her husband;

(b) is the same maximum limit applicable irrespective of the income and property of the husband;

(c) if so, the reasons, if any, for not