

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

DECISION RE CLOSURE OF KALIGHAT— FALTA RAILWAY

Mr. Speaker: I have received notice of an adjournment motion from Shri Sadhan Gupta. I had no time to look into it. It was handed over after I came in and so I am calling it now. It relates to the following subject:

"The sudden decision to close down the Kalighat Falta Railway between Kalighat in Calcutta and Falta in the 24 Parganas which will lead to considerable hardship to the public and unemployment of a section of the staff."

When was that decision taken?

Shri Sadhan Gupta (Calcutta South-East): It is, for the first time, in today's papers.

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Jagjivan Ram): The decision is not a sudden one. As a matter of fact, there was notice of a question on this matter by Shri K. K. Basu on the 25th of this month. I may, therefore, say that this decision is not a sudden one and it is not that the matter has come to the notice of the public only today.

But, I will state the case. It is a small line—26·2 miles of narrow gauge. A private company was running it at a deficit and according to the agreement entered into with that company by the Central Government, we have been paying a subsidy, on an average, of Rs. 3·71 lakhs, from year to year. Therefore, we decided that it will be better to take over this and dismantle it, if adequate facilities are provided for the public. The West Bengal Government also took up the matter with us and they gave an assurance that they would make all possible efforts; they said that the road services would be sufficiently developed in that area to cope with the normal traffic. That is the position so far as the public are concerned.

As regards the staff of the Kalighat—Falta railway, it has been decided by the Government of India to offer fresh employment to such of the staff as are below the age of superannuation and are otherwise found suitable. Detailed instructions in this connection have already issued to the General Managers of the Eastern and the South-Eastern Railways.

So, on both these points, namely, hardship to the public and unemployment to the staff, we have taken measures so that the public will not be put to inconvenience when this line is eventually dismantled and the staff who have not superannuated will be offered alternative employment.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: This closing down of the railway which runs for over 26 miles to the outskirts of Calcutta....

Mr. Speaker: Order, first of all I ask, whoever has tabled an adjournment motion, whether he wants to make any submission. The hon. Member must have risen in his seat and made his submission as to what are the hardships. Then only the hon. Minister would have given his reply. Hon. Members want to have the last word in every matter.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: But the point is that the Minister has made a statement.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister is certainly entitled to do so; he is bound to reply. Why did not the Member come forward first with all that he had to say?

Shri Sadhan Gupta: I cannot anticipate the Minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Then he must keep quiet. We cannot allow the Minister to make a statement, then the Member to make a submission, then again the Minister to reply and so on. Therefore, whoever starts with a resolution or a motion must be armed with all the matters that he has to place before the House. Then only I will call upon the Minister to reply and give my decision. Anyway, today

[Mr. Speaker]

being the last day I am allowing the hon. Member to make his submission.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: The Minister said that the railway has been stopped on the assurance of the West Bengal Government that it will take up the development of road services to compensate the stoppage. Obviously, when this railway runs for over 28 miles into the outskirts of Calcutta and conveys a number of people to and from Calcutta it would be very undesirable to close down this railway before the road services are developed, because it will be impossible for the public to come and go out of Calcutta every day as daily passengers before the road services are adequately developed. Considering this hardship, a matter of about Rs. 3 lakhs a year does not seem to be a great sum.

Secondly, I want to know about the staff. What portion of the staff are over the age of superannuation? The notice to them has been very short. They did not expect to be superannuated so soon. Since the notice to them is so short, it will lead to great hardship if this section of the staff, who have attained the age of superannuation suddenly, is thrown out of employment. I request, Sir, that these points may be clarified.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I have already said, Sir, we have been losing nearly Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs. 4 lakhs of the taxpayer's money over this railway every year. If we run this line departmentally, the loss will mount up and it will be to the extent of Rs. 5 lakhs.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: Not permanently; till the roads are developed.

Shri V. P. Nayar (Chirayinkil): Roads are not developed overnight.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It is not a question of roads developing overnight. My friends should not forget that this line is not in jungles; roads are already there in this area.

Shri V. P. Nayar: And transport?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: If the hon. Member does not know it, then I would say that he has not been briefed properly. The roads are there and lorry services are running. It is only a question of putting a few bus services; of course, lorry services also must be there because roads are not meant only for passengers but goods also. So it is a question of widening the roads in certain sections and putting a few more buses. As I have already said—if the hon. Member had understood it he would not have raised this point—if eventually the line is dismantled properly developed bus services will be found there.

As regards staff I have nothing to say. I am not going to absorb in service those who are already superannuated just because the hon. Member has raised the point.

Mr. Speaker: Now, so far as this matter is concerned, it is only a decision that has been taken; it is not as if the line will be dismantled immediately; it will take some time before the dismantlement takes place. The hon. Minister has just now said that already roads are existing in that area, and only bus services have to be introduced. He said that it is only a question of putting a few more buses and lorries and widening the roads here and there. I am sure that no inconvenience will be caused to the general public in the matter of services and sufficient care will be taken, so far as dismantling the line is concerned, to see that these hardships do not occur.

This is not a matter which has occurred quite recently. The question was put on the 25th. Between 25th and today there were only three days. But, all the same, this must have been in the course of negotiation. The Government is losing and, as a matter of fact, the country is losing to the extent of Rs. 5 lakhs. Under the circumstances, I do not think this is a matter which calls for any particular discussion on the floor of this House. Enough has been said about it. I am sure that the hon. Minister

will see, in conjunction or collaboration with the State Government, that no hardship is done to the public. I am not, therefore, called upon to give my consent to this adjournment motion.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: I have to inform the House that the following two Members have resigned their seats in Lok Sabha with effect from the 26th March, 1957:—

- (1) Shri K. Janardhan Reddy.
- (2) Shri Sohan Lal Dhusiya.

RULES COMMITTEE

NINTH REPORT

Sardar Hukam Singh (Kapurthala—Bhatinda): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with the Ninth Report of the Rules Committee laid on the Table on the 26th March, 1957."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That this House agrees with the Ninth Report of the Rules Committee laid on the Table on the 26th March, 1957."

The motion was adopted.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

FIFTH EDITION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE AND CONDUCT OF BUSINESS IN LOK SABHA

Sardar Hukam Singh (Kapurthala—Bhatinda): Sir, in pursuance of the decisions of the House on the 22nd December, 1956 and 28th March, 1957, on the recommendations of the Rules Committee contained in their Seventh and Ninth Reports, I beg to lay on the Table the Fifth Edition of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. [Placed in Library. See No. S-125/57.]

SECOND EDITION OF DIRECTIONS ISSUED BY THE SPEAKER

Sardar Hukam Singh: Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Second Edition of the Directions issued by the Speaker under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. [Placed in Library. See No. S-126/57.]

APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS) VOTE ON ACCOUNT BILL, 1957.

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Jagjivan Ram): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the service of a part of the financial year 1957-58, for the purposes of Railways, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the service of a part of the financial year 1957-58, for the purposes of Railways, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1 to 3, the Schedule, the Eacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I beg to move

"That the Bill be passed."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.