

18.03 hrs.

**\*ALARM CHAINS ON NORTH-EASTERN RAILWAY**

**Shri Rajendra Singh** (Chapra): Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Sir, a few days back, the tragic circumstances under which the well known journalist and one of the front rank patriots Shri Rama Rao died drew the attention of this House, and the hon. Minister gave some replies. When Members of Parliament questioned the wisdom of Railways in blanking off alarm chains for their own failure to check unauthorised pulling, the Railway Minister said that it was a matter of opinion, meaning, perhaps, that there can be more than one opinion about the wisdom or unwisdom of blanking off, and about the failure or success to check unauthorised pulling. He added that instructions had been issued that, where there was large-scale unauthorised pulling of chains, the apparatus should be blanked off, and that that constituted a very good reason. One or two persons might be inconvenienced by this, but unauthorised chain pulling on a large-scale caused inconvenience to hundreds or thousands.

18.05 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

The argument boils down to this. If even two or three persons are put to very great difficulties, still inconvenience should be avoided to hundreds of thousands of people. To my mind, it is a very strong argument.

But, for some people, there can be another set of arguments. Some people misuse pavements on the sides of roads, and vendors occupy them much to the inconvenience of pedestrians. So, let us dig up all pavements and efface them from existence. Similarly, there can be another argument for some other people. Some people prefer false complaints in police stations

and waste the time of police officers. So, let them refuse to accept any complaints from anybody. Similarly, some people send false alarms to fire brigade through telephone; so, let us blank off all telephone calls to fire fighting units.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is all this? You must suggest some other better methods. What is the point in accusing Government?

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** I was giving a set of arguments.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member will kindly hear me. We are conscious of this problem and question after question has been put about dacoities, women being robbed or killed and persons being detained. Also, some people fell down, somebody's nose was cut off; all these things are there. Therefore, the hon. Minister and others are trying to do their best. This is one idea which has struck them and they have found some results on account of this. If you want to make any other suggestion, why do you not do that? Then we can see the balance of inconvenience, and consider how far the inconvenience caused by want of alarm chain is more dangerous than the other inconvenience. We can suggest alternative methods. There is no meaning in accusing the Government. There is also no need for quoting any analogy. After all, we are racing for time and this is only a half-an-hour discussion. The hon. Member may suggest. "Throw it open, as before, and take a chance". Then, let him not come again and complain. He can give concrete suggestions. They will implement them. After all, they are also human beings. They are trying their very best with all their experience to deal with this problem.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** I agree with you that suggestions should be given to the Government to meet certain difficult situations. But, as you know, Sir, this Government is very very indifferent.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not going to allow this sort of discussion. Half-an-hour discussion is not meant for quarreling with the Government. If the hon. Member has got any suggestions, let him give them.

**The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram):** Government is not indifferent to sensible suggestions.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Many a time, even when there is a consensus of opinion in this House, Government has not paid any heed to that. I can cite my own instance.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let him come to the suggestions straightway.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** The question is this. The argument of the Railway Ministry is that there is heavy incidence of chain pulling in certain parts of the country and that, in order to reduce its incidence and thereby the inconvenience of the travelling public, it has blanked off the alarm chains. As you all know very well, there has been the tragic death of a very great person in this country. Something had happened in my case as well. Last time.

**Mr. Speaker:** I allowed a discussion on this matter only because it is very important.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Last time my life would have been in danger.

**Mr. Speaker:** We are happy that he is alive. It is only because of the gravity of the matter. I have allowed this discussion. If only the alarm chain could have been pulled in that case, possibly he could have been saved. But there is also the other side. Suppose a man pulls the chain unnecessarily and runs away before he is caught. So, we have to see the balance between the two. What is his concrete suggestion? What does he want the Minister to do?

**Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur):** There are only three minutes left now.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** But what could I do? If he thinks he could do better, let him come here and give his suggestions. Further, Sir, this discussion was not taken up in time according to this watch.

**Mr. Speaker:** If he does not come to the point, how can I help it?

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** The point is that on the one hand you have the difficulties and on the other you have the danger to the lives of the travelling people. Some way has to be found out. The genius of this country must find out some ways so that people travel without any inconvenience and at the same time the lives of the people can be saved.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** Let the genius suggest them.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** The genius is on that side of the Chair. I am trying to evoke the genius that is there. It is a psychological as well as a social question. It is psychological in the sense that some people have taken into their head to interfere with law and order. For that matter the law and order situation should be improved, for example, the police and certain things that you have within your control and at your disposal either in the Centre or in the States. Those should be improved adequately to an extent where you can be able to tackle the lawless elements.

The second thing is the lack of social consciousness. We have to impress on the minds of our people that chain pulling is not only bad from the railways point of view but it is bad also from the point of view of national character. So there can be two ways. The first is to strengthen our police and to instruct the police that such cases are to be dealt with very severely. For that the strength of the police might be increased. The other point is creating consciousness in the minds of the people whoever they are. There I also can contribute and many

hon. Members of Parliament, whether they are on this side or on that side, can also make a certain contribution.

Incidentally, the constituency where I come from is blacklisted by the hon. Minister.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** It is notorious for that.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** My suggestion is this. Suppose there are 500 constituencies in the country. In Bihar and everywhere we have constituencies. There are hon. Members of Parliament. There are members of the Assemblies. There are Gram Panchayats and so many committees. There are responsible persons. If a certain element of trust and confidence is put in the publicmen and responsibility is cast upon them by the hon. Minister I would say that there would immediately be a distinct improvement in the situation. Instead of blanking it off and putting the lives of the people in jeopardy that should be done.

Sir can I have five minutes more, because six minutes were taken away.....

**Mr. Speaker:** No, absolutely not. The hon. Member is saying only what he had been saying.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** I am making suggestions, as you directed me to do. I am simply giving suggestions. I have given up criticising the Government.

**Mr. Speaker:** This suggestion that the entire community must be taught better lessons to behave better is not a suggestion which can immediately carry weight. The hon. Member can also do it and I can also do it.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** I have also said that the police should be strengthened.

**Mr. Speaker:** His first point is over. Secondly, he said that the police must

be strengthened. Thirdly, he says that public opinion must be created.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** That is point number one.

**Mr. Speaker:** Then what is his third point?

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** The third point is that in every compartment, at least in first class and second class compartments, in certain mail or express trains they have conductor guards. Those conductor guards must have certain means at their disposal so that they can be able to hold up the train when there is some such situation or some difficulty like that. Suppose, I am travelling in a first-class compartment and there is a conductor guard there. Suppose, I am in difficulty, or my compartment catches fire as it happened a year ago. I put it on record.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does he mean to say that in every compartment there should be a conductor guard?

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Whatever is possible should be done. There are certain trains in which you have conductor guards even in third class sleeping coaches. These conductor guards must be supplied with certain means by which, if they find some difficulty, the train may be stopped. It is within the means of Government. For that matter there are TTEs, and there are some other type of railway workers. These railway servants must be entrusted with the further responsibility that if there is any difficulty or danger they should stop the train. These are certain suggestions which the hon. Minister may take into consideration.

**Mr. Speaker:** Shri S. M. Banerjee.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** I will take only three minutes.

**Mr. Speaker:** He may ask three questions or put in three suggestions.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Sir, when on the last occasion this question was actually discussed here, the hon. Deputy Minister said that in some of the trains, much against their wish, they have blanked off these alarm chains, even in ladies' compartments, because of the fear that men may get into these compartments. We have now to consider which is the lesser of the two evils.

Sir, in this very House we passed a piece of legislation increasing the penalty for misuse of these chains from Rs. 50 to Rs. 250. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the enhancement of the penalty from a fine of Rs. 50 to Rs. 250 had the desired effect and what steps have been taken by the Railway Ministry for the implementation of this measure?

My second suggestion is this. It is a question of balancing the inconvenience of a few against the inconvenience of many. It is said that the use of alarm chains inconvenience many, while if they are blanked, the inconvenience will be confined to a few. To this my submission is this. Supposing you want to stop goondaism or criminal behaviour of a particular man who wants to pull a chain and remain there. After the blanking off of these chains a criminal gets into a compartment. The next stoppage is after thirty miles. Within these thirty miles he can do whatever he likes. The train cannot be stopped. If the alarm chain were there, somebody could stop it. If I were asleep, Mr. Vittal Rao or Mr. Rajendra Singh can pull the chain and stop the train. This was what actually happened in the case of the late Mr. Rama Rao. Nobody could stop the train for thirty miles until it reached Buxar.

**Mr. Speaker:** Was it a night train?

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** It was a day train.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** The hon. Minister considers this to be a nuisance.

It is a nuisance no doubt. But how are we to avoid it? Suppose a man gets into a train with a view to molest a woman or do harm to a passenger. If there is no alarm chain he can remain in the compartment till the next stop. If the chain were there, some gentlemen would pull it and stop the train and get the man arrested. My submission is that the inconvenience will have to be weighed against the convenience and a balance struck. If the misuse of alarm chain is an anti-social activity, I am constrained to say that this action on the part of the Railway Ministry is actually felt by many people as another anti-social activity, which is affecting the society as a whole.

Mr. Rama Rao's death may be a solitary instance. There may be ever so many deaths not only on the NER, but on other railways as well.

In fact the enhancement of the penalty to Rs. 250 is not notified in most of the trains, and the boards still carry the old penalty of Rs. 50. I know there is a change. But suppose I am travelling with my family, and one fine morning I find unfortunately there is no change.

So my first suggestion will be this. Now the penalty has been increased to Rs. 250. You must see that it is implemented properly. Secondly, there should be the alarm chain. This must be continued. And those who misuse the alarm chain must be punished effectively. Otherwise this will add to the worries of the people.

**Shri Brajeshwar Prasad (Gaya):** May I put a question? Is it possible to instal telephones in the first and second class compartments connecting the passengers with the guard?

**Shri Achar (Mangalore):** The only point I want to suggest is this. The alarm chains have been removed because the persons in the compartment do not disclose as to who pulled the alarm chain. Can we not have some

legislation by which if the persons in the compartment do not disclose this information, a punitive tax may be imposed against all of them? I mean, if they do not disclose that information, the fine must be collected from all the persons in the compartment. Can we not have some legislation of that kind?

**Shri S. L. Saksena (Maharajganj):** I suggest that the penalty for pulling the alarm chain should be increased. It should be made imprisonment for at least three months; because, I do not think people should be allowed to indulge in this kind of folly which endangers the lives of men as has happened in the case of Shri Rama Rao. And we should see that the people who do this mischief are not allowed to go scot-free. If this is done people will be afraid of pulling the alarm chains. This nuisance should not be allowed to continue. It will be a worthy memorial to Shri Rama Rao if as a result of his sacrifice we restore this convenience of alarm chains to the travelling public.

**Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur):** I want to ask the hon. Minister whether there is any substitute for the blanking off of these alarm chains to protect the passengers? I think there is no substitute, and therefore the blanking off of these alarm chains has to be discontinued even though it might affect the running of the trains. There is no other way of ensuring the safety of the passengers.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Is it a suggestion, Sir?

**Mr. Speaker:** He is not able to think of an alternative suggestion. So his only suggestion is: let the arrangement continue.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Is he not challenging your decision to have this half-an-hour discussion if it is so fruitless?

**Mr. Speaker:** Very good. In that case, the hon. Member suggested this, and he must withdraw it!

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** Sir, I am thankful to you for placing the suggestion in a proper perspective. You have posed the question, as a question of balance of convenience, and as to what is the alternative. That is the crux of the matter.

My hon. friends have suggested that enhanced punishment must be there, the fine must be increased, imprisonment should be there, etc. But the whole thing is begging the question. Where is the culprit to be punished? We are not able to catch him. It is only when we catch the culprit that we can go to the court and punish him. We know in which carriage the alarm chain was pulled. Immediately the guard rushes there and the under-guard comes. But if you go and ask the people as to who did it, nobody opens his mouth, nobody would disclose who did it. Unless you are able to catch the culprit, how can you punish him? What is the use of raising the fine from Rs. 50 to Rs. 250? Even if it is raised to Rs. 2,500, unless we catch hold of the man...

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Then why was this Bill brought and passed into an Act? If the situation is so bad that you cannot catch hold of the culprit, what was the object in bringing the Bill—raising the fine from Rs. 50 to Rs. 250 or imprisonment for three months—and getting it passed?

**Mr. Speaker:** Has there been a single case, one out of hundred, where the person has been caught for improper pulling of the chain and punished to the extent of Rs. 250?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** We have instructed the Magistrates to take very severe action.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the actual practice? Have they done so?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** We have instructed them. But the difficulty is in catching the culprits.

**Mr. Speaker:** If there is a deterrent punishment, we will assume that one

[Mr. Speaker]

man is punished out of a hundred; ninety-nine may escape. Is there a case where the magistrates have imposed this enhanced penalty or are they letting off the persons merely with a fine of two or three rupees?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** No. We have advised them to impose deterrent punishment. With regard to the particulars I shall have to find out, but we have advised them to impose deterrent sentences.

**Mr. Speaker:** They must also see whether it is enforced or not; if it is not enforced then a more deterrent sentence, as has been suggested by Shri S. L. Saksena may be necessary, and that question may have to be considered. I do not suggest that, but that is what the hon. Member is suggesting.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** The other point is this. It is not as if it is a matter of pleasure for us to blank off the chains. It is not at all so. That is the last resort. We tried every method. In fact, I may relate to you what all steps we have taken. It was in the ultimate resort that we had to blank off these chains.

My hon. friend has been suggesting that the alternative would be to have one man in each coach. It is not possible. We cannot have a man in each coach.

**Shri Achar:** Non-disclosure of the person in the compartment who has pulled the chain may be made an offence, and a strict punishment may be given for that.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** I am coming to that suggestion. My hon. friend wants that a punitive tax should be imposed on all the persons who are there in that compartment.

**Mr. Speaker:** Then, nobody, will travel in a train. Supposing some

goonda comes, pulls the chain and then runs away, the people in the compartment would be just blinking.

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** I cannot believe that they cannot catch even half a dozen such persons.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** That is an impracticable suggestion. As I said, it gives us no pleasure to do it. We have done it because the incidence of chain-pulling has been the highest on the North-Eastern Railway. I shall disclose certain facts in this connection.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** Is that any argument?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** Yes, it is an argument.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** I can also advance certain arguments to criticise Government. But we want to give only some suggestions as to how to improve the situation.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister is only trying to establish that all the other suggestions are useless.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** I shall try to justify why we did it. From that, I shall come to meet his arguments.

In the North-Eastern Railway alone, in 1957, the number of cases of chain-pulling was as much as 5227, of which, 95.5 per cent. was unjustified; in 1958, the number was 7866, and of these 96.1 per cent. was unjustified. In 1959, it rose up to 11,382, of which 97.1 per cent. was unjustified.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** How many people were punished?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** In 1960, the cases of chain-pulling rose to 13,667, of which 84.9 per cent. was unjustified. Thus, within a period four years, the number of cases of chain-pulling has increased by over a hundred per cent.

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** But how many people were punished?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** From about 5200 odd it has gone up to about 13,000 odd.

**Mr. Speaker:** How many of them have been punished, and what steps have been taken to reduce it?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** I shall read out all the steps that we are taking. The general steps that we have taken are as follows: Firstly, we have carried on a campaign against this evil by press and by posters and also by announcement in microphones provided at important stations. The second is by taking of the students round the trains by the control officers, so as to enable them to understand the extent of dislocation and detention of trains that would result through misuse. We have taken them also round....

**Mr. Speaker:** It is not as if anybody is not aware of it, but this is deliberate misuse by miscreants who want to pull the chains and stop the trains, for their own purposes. What is the deterrent punishment that has been given to them?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** This is the instruction that we have given to them regarding the punishment. We have also impressed on the trying magistrates the dislocation of the train services and the disruption of punctuality and the inconvenience caused to passengers as a result of the unauthorised pulling and submitted to them to consider imposing adequate penalty as is provided in the Act.

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** How many were punished?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** If the suggestion is that increased punishment will meet the situation, then, I would say this....

**Mr. Speaker:** Everybody knows that it causes inconvenience. But, supposing a man loses his child or his child falls down from the train, and then the

chain is pulled, nobody is going to quarrel with that. As the hon. Minister has said, 97 per cent. or thereabouts of these 13,000 odd cases are improper and illegal. Those persons have done it deliberately. But, normally, after all, nobody gets up and pulls the chain, because it is not within easy reach, and one has to raise his hands and then deliberately pull it. But there are fellows who have done so for various reasons, merely to obstruct the train, or for other reasons; for instance, he may take away some property, pull the chain, halt the train and then run away with that property. What is the deterrent punishment that is given in such cases? It is not by mere persuasion that these fellows can be asked to desist from such thing. What is the deterrent punishment that he has been imposed? Has the hon. Minister got any figures?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** I have not got the figures with regard to that.

**Mr. Speaker:** The alternative would be this, namely that if something occurs, the passenger would be helpless; suppose a person falls down from the train, then the other passengers are helpless, because the chain has been blanked off, in order to save some time. After all, the chain has been blanked off, in order to save some time; that is all the purpose of that. But what about the loss of life? If there is some real accident, is the hon. Minister going to say that passengers must guard against such accidents themselves, but he is more worried about the spending of some more time? In fact, there has been an instance recently where a life has been lost.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** My submission is that the danger to the travelling public has been exaggerated.

**Mr. Speaker:** I mentioned one instance. I do not want to take the time. But I will cite an instance where I myself was in this trouble. When I was travelling in the GT Express, a

[Mr. Speaker]

young fellow appeared at the outside of my first-class compartment. He said it was raining and he wanted to get in. The train was nearing Mathura; it was somewhere near a forest. The time was 10.30 P.M. I asked the boy how he came there. I was afraid that he might fall down. He was a young man of 20 or 25. He told me that he belonged to the catering section. Then I asked him, 'Where is your badge?' He was not able to show it. Then I was considering what I should do. If he was really a *bona fide* person, he might fall down and die. If he was not so, he might kill me inside the compartment. Therefore, I tried to pull the chain and stop the train.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** And he ran away?

**Mr. Speaker:** Are soon as I pulled the chain, he ran away.

So this was difficulty. If it was a genuine case, he might fall down because it was raining and he was shivering. If, on the other hand, I had let him inside, I would have got into trouble. Therefore, if the chain had not been there, what would have happened to me?

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** You have put the real question, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the chain had not been there, possibly after a time I would have yielded to his importunities.

Therefore, I am suggesting that during night time it may not be blanked off, because there is greater danger during night than during the day. Leave alone the case of Shri Rama Rao which happened during day time. I would also suggest that between short runs, between small stations, the chain may be removed, but if it is a long distance train or through train, the chain may be kept.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** May I submit that the danger will be enhanced? If there are goondas in the

train, at night they may stop it, commit murder or dacoity and run away.

**Mr. Speaker:** But if someone falls down, what happens?

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Suppose goondas or dacoits enter the compartment. If there is no chain to pull, it will continue for, say, 30 miles until the train stops at the next station.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hereafter in ladies' compartments, there must be female police with revolvers and other things.

This is a matter in which all of us are interested. There is no question of criticising the hon. Ministers. They are doing their best.

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** My experience is that when there is chain pulling, the Railway Staff do not try to find out the culprits. The culprits leave as soon as the train stops. If there was a real attempt made to apprehend them, they could have caught them and punished them.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** We have even announced a reward of Rs. 50 to any person who assists us in capturing the culprit. If you are pleased to say that we should raise this amount of reward, we shall gladly do it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I can only suggest that during the night, the chain may not be blanked off. For short distances—short trains—there may not be chain in the train.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** We will examine that. But the fact may also be appreciated that the blanking off is not for the entire run of the train. It is only for a section where this evil is very acute. Suppose there is a train from Calcutta to Delhi. The chain is not blanked off for the whole distance from Calcutta to Delhi. It is blanked off in between two sections where this evil is very rampant. But I will get your suggestions examined.



**Shri S. L. Saksena:** The only way to meet this evil is not to blank off the alarm chains but to punish the people who misuse it.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** Certainly. I agree with my hon. friend. But for that public co-operation is indispensable. Unless we receive the full co-operation of the travelling public, it is very difficult to detect the culprits.

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** My complaint is that they do not try to find out the culprits.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the chain is pulled, does it automatically stop the train?

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** It automatically stops the train. A signal comes from the coach in which the chain has been pulled. So when the chain is pulled, we locate the coach, but we are not in a position to locate the individual. We only know that the chain has been pulled from a particular coach. So immediately the guard goes to that coach. Then the question is to find out who has pulled the chain. There the co-operation of the passengers is necessary. If we get the co-operation of the passengers in finding out the particular person who has pulled chain, the enhanced penalty will become effective. But the co-operation of the travelling public is indispensable in the matter.

**Mr. Speaker:** Give the money to the Guard or the man there and let him say, 'We will give you the money; come along, show the culprit'.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** I will do that also, Sir. I am prepared to accept your suggestion or any suggestion that will help us.

**Shri Achar:** That is where my suggestion comes. If they do not co-operate a punitive tax may be put; take deterrent action against them. Enhance the penalty. If necessary have even imprisonment. They should really come forward and give evidence. It is an offence; if they

do not come forward and give evidence, make it an offence. Have deterrent punishment once or twice and the whole thing will disappear.

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** They very fact that they cannot give the number of people who have been punished shows that the attempt has not been made to find out the culprits.

श्री विभूति सिन्ध (बंगला) : एक बात है कि गाड़ों को कुछ मदद की जरूरत है। अगर कोई बदमाश चैन खींचता है और गाड़ों कम्पार्टमेंट में जाता है तो कोई मुसाफिर डर के मारे नाम नहीं लेता और गाड़ों थकेला पड़ जाता है। इसलिये गाड़ों को मदद देने का कोई इन्तिजाम जरूर होना चाहिये। गाड़ों थकेला कुछ नहीं कर सकता।

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** In important trains during night—in most of the trains—we have armed guard already—not in compartments. It is not possible to post guards in every compartment, because according to the Police no single individual should be allowed to travel with arms. No armed guard should be allowed to travel alone. There should be at least a party of two from the safety point of view. The police travel as a party. If an individual is allowed to travel singly he may be attacked by the goondas and the arms taken away from him. Now, in the important night trains we are providing armed escorts.

I was happy to have this discussion because we may get some concrete suggestions from the hon. Members. I will get the one or two points that you have suggested examined.

**Mr. Speaker:** One other thing I would submit to the hon. Minister for his consideration is, it is not only the case of a person falling down. We will assume that a goonda gets into the compartment as a bona fide passenger with a ticket; and, on the way, he waylays somebody and as

[Mr. Speaker]

soon as the train stops at a particular station he jumps off and runs away. What happens then? They cannot even pull the chain. The balance of inconvenience seems to be the danger.

In one way it stops the train and the train is prevented from proceeding. The other thing is that, inasmuch as dacoities and other things are occurring in trains and the miscreants jump off, the passengers seem to be helpless. The balance seems to be in favour of continuing the arrangement.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** The pulling of the chain does not only affect the punctuality or performance of the train but there is danger to the life and property of the passengers as well. It is not that the chain is pulled only to detain a train or to affect its punctuality. But it is done with criminal motives as well. What you have said applies in one sense. In the other sense, and also experience has been that some goonda elements have entered the trains, terrorised the passengers, and there have been instances where one or two passengers have been killed also. The chain was not blanked off there and the advantage of the chain was taken by the culprits, and not by the passengers: when they found they were nearing stations they pulled the chain, stop the train and ran away.

Both aspects are there. And, as the Deputy Minister has explained, it is a very painful duty on our part also to blank off the chains. It is only after watching for a long period and finding that there is very acute chain pulling that we took recourse to this action. We have brought to the notice of both the U.P. Government and the Bihar Government the prevalence of this evil. We have requested them to intensify action for maintaining public order in these sectors where this chain pulling is very rampant and to impress upon the trying magistrates to award the

maximum penalty to the culprits who are apprehended.

These are the steps we are taking. Any other suggestion or advice that could be helpful in this matter is welcome. If any suggestion is made by the Members of the House—not just now; they may write to me also—I will welcome that. I will myself ask my technical people, the mechanical engineering people, whether we can further think of certain other devices.

**Mr. Speaker:** Out of these 13,000 cases, how many relate to cases where there has been molestation, dacoities and thefts? I only want to know whether these were done only for the purpose of obstruction—just goondaism indulged in by boys. How many of these were cases, where, as the hon. Minister has said, the goondas wanted to take advantage of it and run away? Have you got any figures?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** We have no figures about unjustified cases but... (Interruptions).

**Mr. Speaker:** There may be only a few. After all, these chain pullings are all done by urchins or some others who want to come in. If the Government are able to give figures and fact, as to how many cases were there in respect of murder or something else, for which the trains were stopped and so on, in how many cases there were dacoities, thefts, and so on, that could be done.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** We have got the figures. We enquired from the railways whether criminal activities have increased in those sectors due to the blanking off of the chain. That point, was ascertained by us and our information is that they have not. We ascertained from the railways, whether, in the sections where the alarm chain apparatus has been blanked off, there has been any increase in the criminal activity on the running trains. And the reply that we have

received from the railways is that due to blanking off, there has been no increase.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** As I told you, Sir, I was travelling in a mail train a year before, and the compartment caught fire. After about 15 miles the train was stopped. In the meantime, some portions of the compartment had been burnt. The fire could have been of such a proportion that I could have lost my life. Suppose that happened, I would like to know from the Minister whether the Railway Ministry will give compensation to my family or not.

**Mr. Speaker:** For instance, in the Southern Railway, if a passenger was travelling in the first class compartment and the bogie caught fire, and then the man disappeared,...

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** There is no question of blanking off there.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** My question was a pertinent one. If they do not give compensation or arrange for any such things, how do we travel with a sense of security? (*Interruptions*).

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. We have had sufficient discussion.

**Shri Rajendra Singh:** I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government will give compensation to the dependants if such a situation arises.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Sir, you have made a very valuable suggestion. Our suggestions may not be accepted, but I feel there is a genuine case. We must discuss this entire matter threadbare very objectively. I request the hon. Minister to continue the alarm chain system, because it is more of convenience to the people than inconvenience to some. That is my request.

**Shri S. L. Sakseena:** Will the Minister find out the number of people who have been punished and the nature of punishment?

**Mr. Speaker:** Since how long has the blanking off been there?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** From 1956.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** It is not continuous for two or three years. It is blanked off for certain periods. In certain sectors where we find that this nuisance has increased very much, it is blanked off for a period.

**Mr. Speaker:** After all, those boys or others come in and try to stop the train. Sometimes it becomes a habit for them and in such cases blanking off has no purpose. On the other hand, the blanking off may be resorted to for three or four months, for a period, when there is need. I am only suggesting the lesser of the two evils. The passengers also should know.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Yes; they should know whether the chain is there or not. Otherwise, it is dangerous.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** For sometime, in the required areas, the Railway Ministry should keep plain-clothed detectives in every compartment, so that if anybody comes to create trouble he may be apprehended. Now, they are depriving the public of the only means of safety the train.

**Mr. Speaker:** In some areas, cannot we have the travelling ticket collectors and so on in plain clothes? Give them plain dress. They have got so many ticket collectors. Let them concentrate in those areas and let them disperse after the work is over. They may disperse thereafter, within that area. This may be tried.

There is no intention on the part of any hon. Member to embarrass the Minister. All of us jointly are interested in seeing that less of harm is there. This chain is a safety measure. If it goes, there may be some difficulty. There may be one occurrence; God forbid there should be more. All these devices in that area may be tried. The hon. Minister will try to do it and let us see.

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** To be very frank, we have already tried these devices and we are trying. We are already trying the method suggested by my hon. friend, Shri D. C. Sharma in certain areas.

**An Hon. Member:** That is for ticketless travelling.

**Mr. Speaker:** They will be instructed to do both.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** When you have a trouble like that travelling in first class, you can understand the conditions of passengers in third class, second class, etc. This is very alarming. (Interruption). I must submit very respectfully that the Railway Ministry have to take upon their shoulders the responsibility for the safety of the passengers. If they cannot find any other device, they must keep the chains and they should put plain clothed-detectives with a revolver under their clothes.

**An Hon. Member:** All this will cost money.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** It does not matter how much it will cost the railways. After all, the railways are making money and they should be responsible for the safety of passengers.

**श्री विभूति मिश्र :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मन्त्री महोदय को मेरा सुझाव यह है कि ट्रबल एरियाज में रेलवे प्रोटेक्शन पुलिस के लोग प्लेन ड्रेस में तैनात न करें बल्कि वह पुलिस की वर्दी में रहें और व फुल्ली आर्म्ड हों।

**Shri S. L. Saksena:** May I know how many people have been punished and the nature of the punishment awarded for chain-pulling?

**Mr. Speaker:** Has he got the figures to show how many people have been punished for chain-pulling?

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** No, Sir

**Shri Jagjivan Ram:** I will give the details.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Since the instance of Shri Rama Rao, we are very anxious.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswamy:** We will furnish the information.

18:48 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, April 17, 1961/Chaitra 27, 1883 (Saka).