

survey for connecting Nilambur with Calicut

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*215. SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR:

SHRI C. H. MOHAMED KOYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased state:

(a) whether the Nilambur-Shoranur railway is running at a loss;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to extend the Shoranur-Nilambur railway line upto Calicut so that the passengers are benefited and the Railways can earn profit; and

(c) whether taking into account that Kallai is the world's second biggest timber centre and Nilambur where the forests are thickly grown (the oldest teak plantation of the world), Government propose to conduct a feasibility survey connecting Nilambur and Calicut?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). It is not proposed to take up the survey for the line from Nilambur to Calicut on account of the very limited availability of funds.

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR: Is it not a fact that Kerala is a long strip of land lying between the Indian Ocean and the Western Ghats, and there are very few railway lines in the States? So, will the Government consider giving top priority to the question of extension, especially as the Government has admitted that it is running at a loss?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: The development of the railway is not taken into consideration on a State-wise basis. Naturally, if a particular line falls in a particular State, priority is accorded according to the potentialities of traffic and other considerations. You will kindly permit me to say that this particular section does not have that potentiality and it will not be possible, within the limited funds, to give any priority to this line

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR:

From his reply I understand that the consideration of the needs of the various States is not a matter of importance to the Government of India. But it is a matter of importance to the people of the State which is neglected and which is discriminated against. Therefore, may I know, in view of the fact that the route mileage for a lakh of population in Kerala is less than one-third of the all-India average whether the Government considers giving some more consideration in the matter of giving new lines?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: I don't accept the insinuation made by the Hon. Member. As you must have noticed, the Hon. Minister for Railways has, in his budget speech and earlier also, stated that backwardness and the opening up of new areas will be the main consideration.

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR: What about his State?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: It will not be possible to open new railway lines in a particular State at this moment where it has no relation to these considerations. The considerations on which a railway line is taken up is not only economic viability, the opening up of backward and other areas where there is no railway line is also given due consideration.

SHRI C. H. MOHAMED KOYA: The Minister has said that there is no potentiality for railway lines there; how did he come to that conclusion? This is only an extension of an existing railway, to make it more profitable. This is the only railway in Kerala which is now running at a loss; in view of that, why has the Government not thought at least of having a survey?

SHRI BHUTA SINGH: It is not just an extension; its distance is 55 kilometers, involving about Rs. 33 crores. That is why I said that, with the

fundₛ available with us, it will not be possible, at this moment to accord priority to it. But in due course, when fundₛ are made available, we will definitely take up this line.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: It is not as though this is for the first time that the Railway Ministry has come forward and stated that, in order to hasten up the development of a particular backward or hilly or remote or forest infested tract, they would be opening up new railway lines. This has been said in 1974; this has been said in 1975 and, as far as I remember, this has been said for many years. I would like to know whether it will remain a sort of shibboleth or a pious hope. After all the promises handed out in the course of the last two to three years, how many of such areas have been opened up by the construction of new railway lines? On the basis of the figures furnished by the Railway Ministry itself, we find that the investment in the Railways has gone up by as much as 600 per cent while the route kilometre in the last 25 years has gone up by hardly 7 per cent.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: This is a wider and a separate question; if notice is given....

SHRI B. V. NAIK: This is a limited question in relation to part (a).

SHRI BUTA SINGH: So far as part (a) is concerned, as just now stated by me, there is no hesitation and there is no want of effort on the part of the Railways, but what can we do? As against Rs. 355 crores that we require for new lines in the 5th Plan, we were given only Rs. 100 crores and it is not possible to carry on even the projects in hand.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: There is a long-left demand of the people of Karnataka and Kerala to connect the two States via Mysore and the Shoranur—Nilampur is a part of it. I want to know whether Government will take up survey during this period and find

out whether it will be feasible to undertake this project.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: We shall take into consideration the suggestion made by the hon. Member.

Progress on Bongaigaon Refinery

*217. **SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state

(a) the progress on the Bongaigaon refinery so far;

(b) when is it going to be commissioned;

(c) what will be the installed capacity of this refinery, and

(d) whether there will be provision for further expansion in future?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM (SHRI ZIAUR RAHMAN ANSARI): (a) Process design and detailed engineering work for the crude distillation unit is at an advanced stage. The various civil works at site are progressing and most of the critical and long delivery items of equipment have been ordered. The process design for Kerosene Treating and Coker Units is progressing.

(b) The crude distillation unit is expected to be commissioned in 1977-78 and Kerosene Treating and Coker Units in 1978-79.

(c) The Refinery is slated to process one million tonnes per annum of crude.

(d) Apart from normal provision for increasing through put by debottlenecking, the possibilities of expansion of capacity are being reviewed from time to time by Government.

SHRI BISWANARAYAN SHASTRI: I am glad to hear that considerable progress has been made to commission the refinery in 1977-78. Apart from Assam, drilling work is being