

Grievances of Loco Running Staff Association

*146. SHRI BHAGAT RAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that the Loco Running Staff Association has protested against maligning of Railwaymen in general and loco running staff in particular through the Television medium show that the railwaymen are responsible for train detentions and late running; and

(b) whether an equal opportunity will be given to the loco running staff association to use the T.V. to give a correct picture of detention of trains and late running?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) and (b). Doordarshan has not received any protest in this regard from any quarter. No maligning of Railwaymen of any category has taken place through the television medium.

श्री भगत राम : अध्यक्ष महोदय, नेपा सवाल बिल्कुल स्पष्ट है, लेकिन इस को रेखाई बिल्कुल गलत दिया गया है—यह अस्पष्ट नहीं है, बिल्कुल गलत है। मैंने पूछा है कि क्या लोको रनिंग स्टाफ एसोसिएशन ने प्रोटेस्ट किया है कि टी० वी० मीडियम पर उन की गलत रिक्वैरमेंट की गई है और यह जाहिर किया गया है कि ट्रेनों के लेट रनिंग और डिटेन्शन के लिए वे जिम्मेदार हैं। उन्होंने अपनी बकिंग कमेटी की मीटिंग कर के इस के खिलाफ प्रोटेस्ट किया है। लेकिन यंत्री महोदय ने इसका बिल्कुल गलत जवाब दिया है। मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या टी० वी० मीडियम से गाड़ियों रोकने और लेट चलाने के लिये रेलवे कर्मचारियों को जिम्मेदार नहीं ठहराया गया है।

श्री जाल कृष्ण आठवानी : मैंने उत्तर भी स्पष्ट दिया है। माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा है कि क्या कोई प्रोटेस्ट हुआ है। मैंने जवाब दिया है कि दूरदर्शन के पास इस प्रकार का कोई प्रोटेस्ट नहीं पहुँचा है। मैंने इस बारे में रेल अधिकारियों से भी पूछा, तो उन्होंने भी मुझे यह जानकारी दी कि कोई प्रोटेस्ट नहीं हुआ है। फिर मैंने अपने कार्यक्रमों की जांच करने की कोशिश की कि प्रोटेस्ट किस बारे में हो सकता है। मुझे जानकारी मिली कि 25-9-78 को "नगर नागरिक" का एक कार्यक्रम हुआ था, जिसमें गाड़ियों की समस्याओं के बारे में गाड़ियों से बातचीत की गई थी।

Commuters' problems were discussed with the commuters and in the course of those discussions one of the commuters made certain observations. Thereafter the officials of Railways were also interviewed. Their reply was also taken so that there is no question of Doordarshan maligning any section this way or that way. But so far as the citizens' problems are concerned, the commuters' problems are concerned, I think, it is the duty and it is expected from the media to discuss all problems with them. This is all that has been done.

श्री भगत राम : यह बिल्कुल स्पष्ट है कि उन लोगों को गाड़ियों की लेट रनिंग और डिटेन्शन के लिये जिम्मेदार ठहराया गया है। इस लिए उन्होंने प्रोटेस्ट भी किया है और यह बखबारों में भी छपा है। यंत्री महोदय को इस की जानकारी होगी चाहिए थी। मैं एक और स्पष्टीकरण चाहता हूँ कि क्या उन लोगों को अपनी दोषीयता साफ करने के लिये मौका दिया जावेगा।

श्री जाल कृष्ण आठवानी : मैंने बताया है कि बखबारों में भी तो कोशिश यह होती है कि बैलेंस प्रेजेन्टेशन हो, और अगर कोई नागरिक कोई समस्या बताते हैं, तो अधिकारियों से भी पूछा जात है, और मौका मिले, तो रेलवे कर्मचारियों से भी पूछा जाता है।

Wrong Choice for Thumb_a Site

*148. SHRI VASANT SATHE: Will the Minister of SPACE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the new report appearing in the "Sunday" English weekly magazine dated the 24th September, 1978 under the caption "Will Thumba Disappear into the sea—wrong choice of site endangers premier scientific project;"

(b) if so, the reaction of Government to the various observations made therein; and

(c) the details of steps/action taken in this regard?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The report is misleading and does not bring out the situation in its correct perspective. It is well-known that the Kerala coast is susceptible to sea erosion, and that neither the location nor the intensity or even the direction of erosion and

secretion is constant or predictable. The sea erosion in the Thumba area has not so far caused any major problems. However, a decision has been taken not to locate new installations near the Thumba Coast. The National Institute of Oceanography was commissioned to study the erosion of the coast near the region and to suggest suitable protective measures. In the report of the National Institute of Oceanography, based on studies over a year, certain experimental protective measures have been recommended, and accordingly, a scheme has been prepared. This scheme will be implemented after conducting model design studies.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: As the Hon. Prime Minister has accepted, the Kerala coast is susceptible to erosion. Now, the Thumb project, as we all know, is a very important project: it deals with launching of space-craft. Now, it is surprising that, as even the photographs taken there show, the sea water is actually washing the walls of the project.
(Interruption).

Now, the report says that the problem was first noticed in 1973 when severe erosion occurred all along the beach. By 1976 the situation was almost desperate. It was belatedly realised that important and costly facilities like launching pads (Interruption) and control centre were built dangerously close to the water front. This is the position. So, I would like to know from the Hon. Prime Minister what is the distance of the launching pad from the sea-shore. He may please tell us. They have said that even if it were 50 metres inside, it would have been better. That means it is dangerously close. Why was it necessary? Was no land available a kilometre or so inside, away from the coast? What was the special need for having the launching pad so dangerously close to the sea water? That is what I want to know. Why was it originally done like this? What was

the idea? Was it technically required that it should be so near the coast?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: My Hon. friend does not know that in a launching station like this...

SHRI VASANT SATHE: You need water nearby!

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: No, you don't need water nearby, but you must have a safety zone for launching. Otherwise, the risk is very great for many people. A lot of land would be required to be kept vacant in front of it. Therefore, it should be as near the coast as possible, and that is why it has been kept near.

But the particular reason why this particular place has been chosen, in spite of some dangers, is that the United Nations Committee on Space decided that the launching station should be established in the geo-magnetic equator line and that line passes through very few points in the world. One of these points is Thumba, and it is more suitable. Therefore it was decided to keep it here. It was examined by scientists and other people. Scientists and experts were concerned with this, and it was decided that it should be here, at the coast. As I have said, it has to be near the coast: otherwise the safety zone is not there: when it is launched, many people will be killed, unless a lot of space is kept vacant in front. And that becomes very difficult; it is not possible at every place. But here there is no such danger. This coast is being protected for the purpose of the station. As for another precaution we do not want to have any further expansion there: that has been the precaution taken.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, there is some confusion. I do not say that Thumba is not the right site. Thumba is admittedly the right site. The question is about the exact location. After all it must be in a few miles area. Why was it necessary for having the location of the launching pad site just adjoining the coast? That is my

point. Because there is a danger of erosion. What is the scientific requirement? Can you not take it two miles away and have the purpose fulfilled?

AN HON. MEMBER: Near Nagpur.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Do not take it to Madras or anywhere, but keep it in Thumba. You have admitted that Kerala coast is susceptible to erosion. Supposing there is a heavy erosion and some damage takes place, it will cost heavily to Thumba. What are the protective measures being taken?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: In view of the clear reason given by the scientists and the persons concerned with this, this is the best location and that is why it should be located there.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I am asking about the erosion part.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I have already said that it is to be near the coast, not two miles away from it.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It has to be... is that your contention?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: Yes, Yes. That is what the Scientists say not my contention. I am not qualified to question there contention.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Is there any report or Scientists' record to show...? (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You have mentioned that.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I cannot go on laying every report like this.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Many of us have had the occasion to visit Thumba and in fact to see the launching from there. When the site was selected, it was not only the United Nations agencies but our own scientists, Shri Vikram Sarabhai and others must have selected. The Prime Minister has said that there will be no further extension of space launching facility in Thumba....

MR. SPEAKER: Near about that place.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Because I have been there and I have got some idea of the whole of that area and as he says the geo-magnetic line passes through Thumba, I would like to say that why you should rule it out totally. Certainly you can go to Sriharikota for other developments, but if certain developments are necessary in Thumba also, with due deference to my friend Satheji, I feel that this site has been very carefully selected by our top Scientists. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, as you know, was on the last Jay of his life in Kovalam where he passed away—will you rule out totally the development in Thumba or would the Prime Minister assure us that if it is necessary to develop something there they will also develop?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: There is no question of ruling out any further installation whatsoever. There is nothing for the time being.... I am only saying that large-scale extension will not be taken up here. But if anything is required for making it more efficient and for working it better, that will not be avoided and Dr. Bhabha was in it, not only Dr. Vikram Sarabhai. It is they who decided it in 1962-63. As I have said, I have visited that area and this is what also struck me and then I enquired about it and when they told me, well I was satisfied. But obviously my friend is not satisfied because he is a doubting Thomas.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY: Sir, I remember last year when there was the Workers' agitation in Thumba, the Thumba rocket launching station was closed down. Then there was a report in the press that further expansion work in Thumba has been stopped and rocket launching site has been shifted to Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh and the first Indian satellite was also launched from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister about the truth of this statement.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: Thumba will be utilized for some things and Sriharkota will be utilized for other things.

Prime Minister's meeting with leaders of opposition on crimes against Harijans

*150. **SHRI CHITTA BASU:** Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a general agreement emerged in the meeting held by the Prime Minister with the leaders of the opposition on crimes against the Harijans and law and order problems on the 20th, July 1978;

(b) if so, the nature of the general agreement; and

(c) the follow-up action thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI DHANIK LAL MANDAL): (a) to (c). There was general agreement on the following points in the meeting held by the Prime Minister with the Leaders of the opposition on the 20th July, 1978.

(i) There is need for the political parties to take up a crusade against untouchability and awaken social consciousness among the people in favour of removal of all social discriminations;

(ii) Every incident of atrocity on Harijans should be dealt with firmly and effectively. There is need for the State Governments to further tighten up their administrative and Police Machinery in this regard and to implement the suggestions offered to them by the Centre from time to time; and

(iii) In those cases of major incidents of atrocities against Harijans where it is felt that the State Government has not taken effective follow-up action, an all-party Parliamentary delegation might visit

the place of occurrence for making an on-the-spot enquiry.

These were communicated by the Prime Minister to Chief Ministers of States and Union Territories. They have welcomed these suggestions and have assured us to deal with every incident of atrocity on Harijans firmly and effectively. However, some State Governments have some reservations about the desirability of sending a Parliamentary delegation for making an on-the-spot enquiry.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, may I draw the attention of the Prime Minister himself to certain suggestions, observations made by the Leaders of Opposition and other groups regarding the steps to be taken to tackle the problem, namely, whether Special Courts could be established for speedy trial of offences committed against the Harijans; whenever available, Harijan officers should be posted to deal with cases of atrocities on Harijans; and whether fire arms licences could be suspended/cancelled in areas which are specially prone to atrocities on Harijans even though there may be no substantive case made out against the licences concerned individually? I have read out from the note circulated by the Prime Minister's Office to the Members of the Opposition. When all these things are there, whether the Prime Minister took those suggestions, observations made by the Leaders of the Opposition to the Chief Ministers of the States when they met in the conference. If so, what has been the specific reply or specific steps taken by the State Governments with regard to those suggestions made by the Leaders of the Opposition?

SHRI DHANIK LAL MANDAL: Sir these points which the hon. Member had just now read out were agreed upon and discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conference. As far as the reaction of the Chief Ministers regarding Special Courts for speedy trial is concerned, generally the Chief Ministers were in disagreement except the Chief Minister of Bihar. The Chief