

Members know the practice in different States has varied very widely and the opinion of experts also varies widely.

### Coastal Railway in Kerala

\*149. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the work on the coastal railway in Kerala has stopped due to financial constraints ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) what is the total outlay of this project ;

(d) whether any time schedule was fixed for the completion of the work ;

(e) if so, the details thereof and the reasons why this schedule could not be kept ; and

(f) what steps are being taken to complete the work expeditiously ?

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRI BANSI LAL) : (a) to (c). The construction of New BG Line, between Ernakulam-Allapetty is in progress and a sum of Rs. 2 crores has been allotted for this work during 1985-86. Work of extension of this line upto Kayankulam is also an approved work, but its physical progress has been affected due to constraint of resources. The total expenditure on this composite project upto September 1985 is about Rs. 16 crores.

(d) to (f). In view of the severe constraint of resources, especially for construction of New Lines, no time schedule for the completion of the entire project has been fixed. The completion of this Project will depend on the availability of resources in the coming years.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, the answer given by the hon. Minister is very dis-appointing. In spite of the fact

that Government has spent Rs. 16 crores on this new railway line they have not fixed any time schedule for its completion. If this is the way the projects are implemented, I do not know what will happen ! When you spend so much money you should have some idea as to when the project will be completed. The Minister is admitting in this House that he has no idea when the project will get completed. I think this is not good particularly when so much money has already been spent. I do not want to say more on that. Sir, you may be aware that already so much money has been spent for this railway line. Land has already been acquired. Yet, last year you had included only Rs. 1000 for this project. It is not a new project. It is not a new line. It is an on-going project. I would like to remind the Government about their pronouncement that the on-going projects would be given preference. Why has this project not been given preference and why funds have not been allocated for this railway line ? May I know whether the Government will give importance to this project and allot more funds in the next budget ?

SHRI BANSI LAL : I can't say what will be the funds allocation in the next budget.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I want to know whether the hon. Minister agrees with me. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek our protection. I would like to know whether he will consider my request.

SHRI BANSI LAL : I will consider his request.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I am very much thankful to the hon. Minister for according to my request.

MR. SPEAKER : You can add one more word, that is, 'sympathetic' consideration.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : The hon'ble Minister, Shri Bansi Lal, is very famous

for keeping up his words. I am sure he will keep up his words. There are already complaints from the State of Kerala that the railway covered in Kerala is far behind compared to other States. Recently there was an agitation of 'Rail Rokho' in Kerala. For one lakh of people the average railway line is only 4 kilometres whereas the country's average is 10 kilo metres. In view of this, I would only request the hon. Minister whether the Government will consider construction of railway line between Cochin and Madurai in the coming years. The Kerala Government has already recommended this proposal.

**SHRI BANSI LAL :** I will consider this.

**SHRI SURESH KURUP :** Sir, I fully agree with Prof. Kurien that Kerala is far behind in regard to coverage of railway network. There is already a proposal pending before the Government, that is, regarding doubling the railway track between Cochin and Trivandrum. This has been pending for the last 10 years. There are many constraints. At present there is only one broad gauge line in Kerala. May I know whether the hon. Minister kindly consider doubling of the railway track between Cochin and Trivandrum ?

**SHRI BANSI LAL :** Sir, it does not arise out of this question.

**Income ceiling for National Merit Scholarships to 'Teachers' Children**

\*150. **SHRI A. CHARLES :** Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the ceiling fixed on the annual income of teachers for the award of National Merit scholarships to their children and the year in which the above ceiling was fixed ;

(b) whether there is any proposal before Government to raise or abolish the above ceiling in view of the substantial increase in the pay scale of

teachers in the recent years and also because the scholarships are given to the children of teachers taking into consideration the merits of the students rather than the income of their parents ; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) & (b). The erstwhile Ministry of Education had been operating a scheme of National Scholarships for children of School Teachers from the year 1961-62 to 1978-79. The purpose of this scheme was to enable meritorious children of primary and secondary school teachers to pursue higher studies from post-matriculation stage. This was a merit-cum means scheme under which scholarships were awarded to meritorious children whose parental income was not more than Rs. 6000 per annum. The scheme was transferred to State Governments from 1979-80. Since then the scheme is being operated and administered directly by the State Governments/Union Territories and no funds have been provided by the Central Government in its budget for the scheme from that year. Since it is being implemented by States/Union Territories, no proposals are received by the Central Government in regard to this scheme.

(c) Does not arise.

**SHRI A. CHARLES :** Sir, the ceiling of Rs. 6000 was fixed years back and a substantive increase in the pay-scale has been given to the teachers in all the States. The ceiling of Rs. 6000 is not at all sufficient and no child is getting any scholarship under the scheme. A few months back I had pointed out some anomalous position in this to the Education Ministry. I got a written reply from the previous Education Minister that this anomaly and certain other aspects were being examined in the Education Ministry of the Central Government. May I know whether that re-examination is still there and whether the Ministry would be pleas-