LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 24, 1988/
Chitra 4, 1910 (SAKA)

The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*].

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. How are you, Mr. Acharia ?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Sir, yesterday you were absent during Emergency.

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, we missed you during Emergency.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Did I impose Emergency on you ?

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Long-term Plan for Development of Railway Technology

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*427. SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA :
SHRI S. M. GURADDI :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railways propose to involve industries and research institutes in a big way in its Technology Development Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether any time limit has been fixed for the implementation of the Plan and the areas in which improvements would be effected ?

[Translation]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD) : (a) to (c) A beginning has been made to involve industries and premier institutes of learning in development of railway technology. Eight Technology Development Groups being set up, one for each technology area selected, include representatives of RDSO industry and institutes of learning. The Technology Development Plan envisages improvements in locomotives, coaches, wagons, track and bridge structures, traction power systems and signalling and tele-communication system within a broad time frame

[English]

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : Sir, it is really a very ambitious programme. The Minister of State has stated that eight Railway Technology Development Groups are being set up. I would like to know the nature and constitution of these groups and also the scope for the working of these groups; whether they are only to function as Advisory Groups or whether they can undertake research work also. If so, what are the facilities provided for these Groups to undertake such research work ? What is the amount earmarked for the purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : Sir, I did not catch whether the hon. Member has said the Plan is ambiguous or ambitious.

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : I said 'ambitious'. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Both ambiguous and ambitious. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : It is ambitious. I don't think there is any harm in being ambitious because when you do manage to achieve something, invariably you do because you are ambitious. *(Interruptions)*

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : It might be ambivalent also.
(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : It is our attempt that over the next decade in certain selected areas which have special relevance to the Indian Railway System, we should become technology leaders, instead of the present strategy which is to import, after a certain number of years alongwith technology transfer, and then to adapt in our own production unit, absorb the technology and produce the equipment of the unit at our own production units. So, there is a new thrust and a new direction being given to ensure that we do become technology leaders in certain selected areas. For this, we feel that to facilitate this, it is important that the process of synergy is adopted, which really means bringing together technical institution like IITs, universities, like Roorkee University, industry which means, both our production units and railway-oriented production units outside our system and Railway Research Organisation, that is RDSO. So, bringing all the three together and setting up working groups in selected mission areas, which, hopefully, will then be able to advise us and implement that in a cooperative of exercises, in an exercise of collaboration and cooperation, to ensure that we become technology leaders over a certain period of time. And that is why, these groups are being set up. One has been set up, two are almost going to be set up in civil engineering and signal telecom. There is one more particular group. And these groups are initially, of course, going to cogitate on what sort of process should be set into motion, how we should go about it. But ultimately, the implementation would also be done through these groups.

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : There are some countries who have made a headway in this development of railway technology like Japan. I would like to know whether Government of India is having any foreign collaboration either for import of technology or the technical know-how ? If so, what are the details ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : As I said, at present, to upgrade technology, a certain amount of upgradation is already done in our own production units through our own experience. But to make quantum jump the system is to—after a certain period of time when the requirement is there—import certain technology and, as I said, to absorb it and produce it in our country. The process as it is now, there is certain import envisaged after a period of time. We want to free ourselves in at least certain selected areas of being dependent on such import after a certain number of years. And that is why, we have set this particular process into motion.

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV : May I ask from the Minister through you whether the Minister intends to set up its own technological institute, as regards the Government, and the research in the railways so that new dimension may be available to the new entrepreneurs and new talents in the country ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : We have already got Research Designs Standards Organisation, RDSO, in Lucknow which is our research organisation. But at present, there has been very little interaction between RDSO, technical institutions and the production units. We want a little more interaction between the three. And that is why, under synergy, we hope to achieve this.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : The signalling system is one of the important factors for efficient rail operation. These are different types of signalling systems now in the Indian Railways. May I know

from the Hon. Minister whether there is any proposal to have one type of signalling system because the number of accidents take place due to defective signalling systems which are still in existence in our country ? We are now importing 6,000 horse power electric locomotives. Our production unit at Chittaranjan has the capacity to produce this type of 6000 horse power electric engines. I would like to know whether any proposal is with the Government to start production in productiod our unit of Chittaranjan Locomotives of this type of electric locomotives of 6000 HP. If so, what is the target date ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The Hon. Member knows that we are importing ₹186000 HP Thyrister type electric locomotives. They have already started arriving in this country. These 6000 HP locomotives are coming with the transfer of technology clause and they will be produced eventually in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works. That is certainly our intention.

As far as signalling is concerned, it is one of the key development areas identified under the 5 Mission Areas that we have adopted and it will be our attempt and the group that is being set up for signalling and telecommunication will be going into train control and signalling systems, solid type devices controlled by micro process and computer aided system provided for continuous train control and protection. So, the upgradation of signallling and telecommunication is already taking place; but we hope to give it a further impetus after this group has gone into it in detail. I hope that we will then be able to have our own indigenous technology and become world leaders in this area also. Upgradation of signalling and telecommunication is a continuous on-going process and the improved system is implemented in phases.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI PREMALABAI CHAVAN : Mr. Speaker Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether steps are being taken by him to promote indigeneous technology ?

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Minister has already replied to this.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already replied to this.

[English]

Environmental Havoc due to Coal Mining Projects

*428. SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether according to the views expressed by the mining engineers of repute, coal mining projects are playing havoc with the environment;

(b) if so, the nature and extent of problem identified; and

(c) the remedial steps taken or proposed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) According to experts, coal mining projects have serious environmental implications.

(b) The main environmental problems caused by coal and other mining projects are :

—land degradation;

—water pollution including acid drainage;

—atmospheric pollution;

—adverse impact on health of the workers; and

—disruption of the social life of the affected population.

The total area under mining leases in India is 7854 sq. km. Area degraded by