

**14.23 hrs**

**Title"** Discussion on the Inland Waterways Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2001 (Bill Passed)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up item No. 22. Shri Arun Jaitley.

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SHIPPING ( SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration."

This country has a very large flow of inland transport systems in terms of waterways. There are three waterways that have been declared as national waterways. There are a large number of State waterways. But unfortunately, a very small percentage – about 20 per cent – of our waterways is being actually utilised for transportation purposes.

The inland waterways have some great advantages in terms of being economically cheaper in terms of fuel, being ecologically superior and have also a capacity to reduce the burden on our roads and rail systems. But unfortunately, out of the total cargo that is transported in India, only about one per cent is transported by way of inland waterways system. It is, therefore, a great challenge for the country that we increase the utilisation of the inland waterways system. There are some States, particularly Goa, Kerala and West Bengal, where waterway systems have become developed and are being utilised.

Earlier this year, the Government has announced a policy for encouragement of these inland waterways as a part of the policy to invest in the waterways system. The same exemption, which is available to the national highways in terms of tax systems, was made available. The subsidy that existed was converted into a 30 per cent subsidy for vessel building, which will operate there. Certain customs duty concessions have also been reduced. But one area where it is found lacking is that investment is independently not flowing in in order to develop these waterways independently.

The object of this amendment is twofold. One is to widen the composition of the Authority itself so that we have various shades of experts who are in this Authority, and the second is a proposal to amend the Act in order to permit the Authority constituted by this Act to raise money through various forms of borrowings, such as, bonds, debentures and other instruments as the Authority may consider fit.

The object of this is that the Authority should be able to go to the market and raise capital through different methodologies and it is through this capital that it can then seek to put the investment as far as the expansion of waterways is concerned. This is a step which we have taken in order to encourage and expand the utilisation of these water-ways and I commend to this hon. House that this Bill be taken up for consideration and approval by the hon. House.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration. "

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN (SIVAGANGA): Respected Speaker Sir, this Bill is a very innovative Bill and we support it fully because the national waterways is one of the dreams of great patriotic people, especially Mahakavi Bharati. In Tamil Nadu, during 1920 itself, he dreamt for the linkage of entire Ganga-Cauvery stretch and that there will be transport facilities through the waterways itself. That was the dream of that period during the freedom struggle.

But it has started from Allahabad by the National Waterways Allahabad-Haldia Stretch of the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly Rivers Act 1982. This Act was subsequently supported with some more powers, that is, by Inland Waterways Authority of India Act 1985. This Act gives power to the Central Government by notification under Section 2H to make any national waterways being declared and it can also be made as a navigable channel. This is a very important Act, which can create a lot of economic prospects for India. It can not only create economic prospects but it will also give national integrity to our country. When the Ganga and Cauvery are linked, there will not be any division of North India and South India. People will be united and water scarcity in the Deccan area and also in the Southern part of Tamil Nadu will be totally eradicated and there will be water everywhere. There will be better agriculture, better industry and also there will be forest, which is now annihilated. It will come up again and

we will have a great nation of Bharat which we have seen centuries before. Therefore, I totally welcome this aspect of the amendment.

But again, I want to draw the attention of the Government that there should be some commitment in the economic reforms. Again, we are making only the bureaucratic control by giving a Chairman, three full-time members and three part-time members to the authority. In the previous Act, there was a provision for only five members, and now it has been increased to six.

At the same time, I would like to say about joint ventures. Who will come when they have got so much of authority in the hands of the Government and the Central Government has got the right to remove the persons; and when disqualification clause also is given there? The Central Government can remove any person, any member or Chairman in the authority.

We feel that when we are going in for the economic reforms, we should make it full so that the people can know what types of men are there. Many NRIs are there to invest money for these types of ventures, so that they can get more money and at the same time they can help the nation by making this nation more powerful in economic terms.

Therefore, I request that the hon. Law Minister should have some more thought about it. The National Waterways Act 1982, that is, Allahabad-Haldi stretch of the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River is having only three sections, rest of the sections have already been removed. It is hanging. It can be very well made as a repeal Bill and brought under Section 2H of the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act 1985, by notification.

In the same way, I would like to just stress that the European style of making all water bodies useable be adopted even in the metropolitan cities, just like in Chennai, the Koovam, Buckingham and Adyar canals were used in the British days as a navigable route.

The things which were taken through ships can be taken inside the land through waterways. In the same way, the Cauvery water, which goes into the Bay of Bengal, can be diverted towards Pudukottai and Sivaganga areas. In that way, the water can be used for navigation and also for agriculture.

During the regime of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the Indira Gandhi canal in Rajasthan had created a wonder in the world. In the same way, there should be many wonders in the world by using this Act.

SHRI M.V.V.S. MURTHI (VISAKHAPATNAM): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill looks like a very simple one. But if this Inland Waterways Authority of India (Amendment) Bill is really implemented, the country will have enormous benefits because we have perennial rivers in India. Our country has a lot of rivers, right from Ganga down to Cauvery. There used to be a ferry transport system in the past. Up to 1950s, a lot of material used to be carried from the Kakinada port *via* Yanam, which is near the hon. Speaker's place, to Chennai; the material used to go *via* Godavari and Krishna to Chennai. Over a period, these Waterways have been neglected. The canals were not deepened and some of the areas had dried up. Some canals had dried up in Chennai. Ultimately, the system had been discontinued and abandoned. But this is a right step in the right direction. This is a very recent origin of 1985 Bill. Now, you are creating the Inland Waterways Authority to function effectively.

MR. SPEAKER: It is the Buckingham canal.

SHRI M.V.V.S. MURTHI : Yes, Sir, I had forgotten the name. The Buckingham canal had dried up. So, they were neglected totally. Now, a step has been taken in the right direction to create the Inland Waterways Authority. A lot of canals could be converted in Andhra Pradesh. Only three national waterways have been identified. One is Allahabad to Haldia – 1,620 kilometres. Another one is Dubri to Sadia – 891 kilometres. The third one is Kottapuram to Kollam – 205 kilometres. There should be some other areas also which have to be identified by the Inland Waterways Authority of India so that other States could be benefited. This Inland Waterways Authority should prepare a project report on various projects. Whoever wants to do it through 'Build, Operate and Transfer', it can be done. Once you constitute the Board, there should be some experts, say, three outside experts and three from the Government side, in the Board. If you can identify the projects and advertise them, then definitely people will come. Otherwise, they will remain only on paper. From 1985 till date, it is only on paper. Nothing has been done.

I would request you to kindly take steps in this regard. You are expending / creating new scope now for the Inland Waterways Authority to identify the projects and these projects will ultimately benefit the country.

With these words, I support this Bill.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (CANARA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I realise that this Bill has a very limited scope, in the sense that the Board itself is sought to be expanded. I would just add to what has been said by Shri M.V.V.S. Murthi just now.

The national waterways seem to be only the Ganga part of Kerala and part of Goa-- you know the rivers round there--whereas there is potential for a river system in every part of the country, and given the present constraints, I think, the cheapest transport of goods could take place through the river system. Unfortunately, our rivers are only looked upon either as causing floods or as being responsible for havoc in our areas, rather than as positive instruments for development and for transportation.

For instance, you have Kerala where part of the national waterways system operates. Then you have Goa. In between, there are some of the most beautiful and useful river systems which have been totally left out, which come in North Canara and part of Udupi. If these could be connected, then neither the railways nor the road system really would be able, probably, to meet the type of load which these river systems could take. For long we have talked about connecting the major rivers of the country. Every time this comes up, plans are made and we are told that there is not enough money. I believe that if the river water systems could be connected, it would be the greatest tributes to integrating the economy of the country, and more than that, it would mean massive employment generation.

We are spending so much money on various schemes like JRY, employment of this and employment of that. If all these schemes could be integrated into one national project like connecting the river system, the same money, which is being spent in bits and pieces in different States, could be pooled for paying for this mighty project.

Indira Gandhi canal seemed impossible but it has actually happened and converted the desert into green lands. Therefore, I would ask the Minister, who is a very progressive and forward looking Minister, to think in terms of a national programme by which the river waters could really be connected and this really would then become, maybe, a kind of a National Waterways Authority.

Today, it is nothing but regional pressures which are dominating. Those who are able to get something, get it. The rest are totally left out. There is neither facility for dredging the existing rivers nor river transport equipment is available in our States. Everything is so centralised that the States are totally neglected.

I want to point out one more thing. I wonder if Members are aware that the headquarters of, for instance, the Light Houses which are supposed to be lighting the coastline for the ships, is in NOIDA. You know it is a joke, if I may say so, to have Light Houses' Headquarters in NOIDA and the National Waterways Authority's Headquarters is again outside Delhi.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: The Shipping Ministry is in Delhi.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : The Shipping Ministry is okay. I am telling you that the Shipping Ministry, therefore, should see to it. When we visited as a Committee, we were told that for testing the soil by the National Waterways Authority, the soil is carried to the testing laboratory in drums by air from the Ganga basin to NOIDA. The laboratories are also situated here. You can imagine how much attention they are paying to the river water development when the officials and the laboratory are in NOIDA and the sample of the earth and the sand has to be carried all the way here to be tested. Can the laboratories, at least, not be in the river basin? Therefore, I am asking that just setting up Authorities does not mean development of the waterways. You have to decentralise it.â€  
(Interruptions)

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA (CONTAI): It is not far from NOIDA.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : It comes from everywhere to one laboratory here. You have waterways in Kerala also. So, the entire soil-testing laboratory is in NOIDA. We visited this as a Parliamentary Committee and we had pointed this out, but nobody seems to take notice. I would, therefore, finally appeal that a look be taken at the rivers of the entire country.

This is the national waterways, not just of one or two States. As it now stands, it is limited to a few States and the rest of us feel orphaned. I would therefore appeal that a new look be taken at the next scheme to be introduced in the coming year.

\*SHRI C. SREENIVASAN (DINDIGUL): Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I would like to thank the Chair for giving me an opportunity to speak on this Bill to amend the Inland Waterways Authority Act.

Sir, when this authority is sought to be expanded, representatives from States which had traditional waterways system must be included. For instance Tamil Nadu had always had inland navigation through waterways system which needs to be revived now.

Chennai was linked to several places in Andhra Pradesh through Buckingham Canal system. Likewise Cooum River waterways inked Chennai with several places in Chingleput and South Arcot Districts. Movement of goods from sea coasts to inland destinations were viably carried out.

But now we find both Buckingham Canal and Cooum Canal are silted due to improper maintenance over the years and due to its conversion as an outlet for urban sewerage waste. These traditional waterways need to be desilted and modernised.

Government of Tamil Nadu led by our leader and the present Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr Puratchi Thalaivi has taken up with the Centre a viable project to desilt and modernise Buckingham waterways system. The initial phase would require about Rs 68 crores and I urge upon the Union Government to provide the required funds to revive this traditional waterways system that would save fuel and doubly benefit our economy.

During the Twelfth Lok Sabha when our party All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam was part of the alliance led by BJP, as the then Chief Minister, the present Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr Puratchi Thalaivi put forth the demand to take up Sethu Samudram project. Like offering cornflakes to a hungry elephant, just a crore of rupees were allocated by the Centre that too to conduct a feasibility study and survey.

But the project has not seen the light of the day. Sethu Samudram project could help reducing the navigation distance while moving from the Western Coast to Eastern Coast by about 500 kms. The need to go round the Island nation Sri Lanka could be avoided. But the Centre is meting out a step motherly treatment. Hence I urge upon the Union Government to set apart adequate funds to take up and complete Sethu Samudram project which would add impetus to our inland trade links and movement of cargo on sea waters at our sea border line.

Inland waterway between Trivandrum and Kanyakumari could be augmented if widening, desilting and modernisation of certain existing canals there stretching about 56 kms. Through the Inland Waterways Authority, Centre must take up that project too coordinating with both the States of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Sea faring and navigating both on the high seas and inland waterways were part of the life of the ancient Tamil civilisation. Hence I urge upon the Union Government to accord priority to include in the expanded Board of this Inland Waterways Authority, the States like Tamil Nadu that had traditional waterways system.

With this I conclude.

(\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.)

**डा. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री जी ने जलमार्ग प्राधिकरण अधिनियम में संशोधन करने वाला विधेयक पेश किया है, मैं उस पर बोलने के लिए खड़ा हुआ हूँ। श्रीमती मार्ग्रेट आल्वा जी कह रही थीं कि कोस्टल एरिया में जहाज चलते हैं, लेकिन उसका आफिस नोएडा में है। मंत्री जी ने भी कहा कि शिपिंग मिनिस्ट्री का आफिस भी दिल्ली में है। काबीना मंत्री खुद ही सारा काम करते हैं, राज्य मंत्री के जिम्मे कुछ नहीं छोड़ते। इससे लगता है कि सरकार के राज्य मंत्रियों की कोई वेल्यू नहीं होती। अब पानी के जहाज चलाने में कानून मंत्री का क्या वास्ता, यह समझ में नहीं आता। लेकिन मैं कानून का ही सवाल उठाना चाहता हूँ। अभी से पहले प्राधिकरण में केन्द्र सरकार को पांच पूर्णकालिक सदस्य नियुक्त करने का अधिकार था। अब इस संशोधन से तीन पूर्णकालिक सदस्य रहेंगे और तीन अंशकालिक रहेंगे। इसमें लिखा है कि तीन से अनधिक, माने तीन से ज्यादा नहीं रहेंगे, तीन से कम हो सकते हैं।

एक भी तीन से कम है, दो भी तीन से कम है और इनके कानून के मुताबिक यदि एक सदस्य रहेगा तो भी काम चलेगा। जो कानून बनाया है, तीन से अनधिक है, यानी एक भी तीन से अधिक नहीं है, शून्य भी तीन से अधिक नहीं है। यानी नहीं भी सदस्य रहेगा तो भी काम चल जाएगा। यह कैसा पेच मंत्री जी कहां से ला रहे हैं? इसलिए कोई नियम बनना चाहिए जिसमें कानून हो कि तीन सदस्य रहेंगे, तीन से ज्यादा नहीं रहेंगे लेकिन कानून के मुताबिक तीन से कम में काम चल सकता है। शून्य, एक, दो, तीन- इस प्रकार से ये चार प्रोविजन रखे हैं जो इनको सूट करें। तीन अनधिक पूर्णकालिक सदस्य होंगे, फुल-टाइमर होंगे। अब वे तीन अंशकालिक होंगे, कौन होंगे? मैं नहीं जानता हूँ लेकिन हमारी इसमें रुचि है कि हल्दिया से इलाहाबाद तक पनिया जहाज चालू किया जाये। जब 1985-86 में हल्दिया से इलाहाबाद 15 वां में इस साल एक जहाज चलकर आया और हल्दिया से पटना में आकर रुका है, वह नाम मात्र को है। उसमें भी माननीय मंत्री जी ने दावा किया है कि वह ईकोफ्रेंडली है, इकोनॉमिक भी है और पुराने जमाने से जल मार्ग से दुनिया के एक हिस्से से दूसरे हिस्से में जाता था। आज तो अपने देश के एक हिस्से से दूसरे हिस्से में जाना है। लोग बताते हैं कि जल मार्ग आर्थिक हिसाब से और पर्यावरण के हिसाब से उपयोगी और अच्छा है। अभी कहा गया कि हमें पैसे का संकट था, इसीलिए काम आहिस्ता चला। पनिया जहाज इतना आहिस्ता चला कि 1986 से हल्दिया से शुरू हुआ तो पटना पहुंचने में 15 वां लग गये और पटना से इलाहाबाद 15 वां में भी पूरा होगा कि नहीं होगा, मैं नहीं जानता हूँ। इस प्राधिकरण को उधार लेने का, बॉर्ड लेने का अधिकार दिया जाये, यह कानून में है। हम लोगों की रुचि इस बात में है कि किसी हालत में यह पनिया जहाज हल्दिया से इलाहाबाद तक चालू हो जाये। प्राइवेट लोगों का जहाज एक जगह से दूसरी जगह में चलता था। वहां महेन्द्रो घाट से चकेसो घाट, मयिनार तक और फिर महेन्द्रो घाट से उस पार पहलेजा घाट एलटीसी वाले प्राइवेट वाले चला रहे थे लेकिन वे सब बंद हो गये हैं। लेकिन पनिया जहाज अब नहीं चल रहा है लेकिन हल्दिया से पटना और पटना से इलाहाबाद तक इसकी बड़ी उपयोगिता है और सामान ढोने के लिए इसकी बड़ी मांग है। इनके तीन जल मार्ग तय हैं। इलाहाबाद से हल्दिया, दुबरी से सदिया, चम्पकारा और उद्योगमंडल नौरो के साथ-साथ कोटापुरम से कुल्लम तीन आइडेंटिफाइड जल मार्ग हैं और अन्य जगहों के लिए मांग की हैं। मैं भी मांग करता हूँ कि हल्दिया से पटना आने में फिर बीच में कोसी नदी गंगा जी में मिलती है और नेपाल जो पड़ोसी मुल्क है, उसका दबाव बराबर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर होता है कि पनिया जहाज से उनको भी लाभ होना चाहिए, कोसी नदी से होकर नेपाल का लाभ हो सकता है, उसकी छानबीन होनी चाहिए। केवल चार महीनों की कठिनाई है। नवम्बर, दिसम्बर, जनवरी और फरवरी तक की कठिनाई है क्योंकि सिल्टेशन हो जाता है। कहीं पानी कम हो जाता है और कहीं ज्यादा हो जाता है। कहीं-कहीं चलने लायक ही रहता है। इसीलिए चार महीनों के लिए आपको उपचार करना है, उसमें डीसिल्टेशन का भी उपाय करना है। हल्दिया से पटना होते हुए इलाहाबाद, हल्दिया से खगरिया और कोसी नदी से होकर नेपाल जो पड़ोसी मुल्क है, उसका भी जल से सम्पर्क हो सकता है।

यदि गंगा और कावेरी नदियां मिल जायें, तो देश के एक हिस्से से दूसरे हिस्से तक जल मार्ग यातायात संभव हो सकता है। हम सपना देखते हैं कि कब गंगा और कावेरी मिलेगी और कब यह सुविधा मिलेगी। बाढ़ की समस्या भी हल होगी। जलमार्ग द्वारा यातायात की समस्या का भी समाधान होगा और सामान ढोने में जलमार्ग का इस्तेमाल किया जा सकेगा। हम माननीय मंत्री जी से कहना चाहते हैं कि इसकी योजना बनाकर और दृढ़ इच्छाशक्ति से जिस जलमार्ग पर पन्द्रह वाँ से काम हो रहा है, उसको पूरा करके और धनराशि उपलब्ध कराकर उद्देश्य को पूरा करेंगे, इसको कृपया स्पष्ट करें।

इन शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ।

MR. SPEAKER : Now the hon. Minister will reply.

**श्री रवि प्रकाश वर्मा (खीरी) :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने भी नोटिस दिया है।

**अध्यक्ष महोदय :** नोटिस आपके व्हीप द्वारा दिया जाना चाहिए। डिबेट शुरू होने के बाद आप कैसे नोटिस दे सकते हैं। अब आप दो मिनट बोल लीजिए, लेकिन फ्यूचर में ऐसा मत करिए।

**श्री रवि प्रकाश वर्मा :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपका आभारी हूँ कि आपने विशेष तरीके से मुझे बोलने के लिए समय देने की कृपा की।

महोदय, यह बहुत अच्छी बात है कि सरकार ने भारतीय अंतर्देशीय जलमार्ग प्राधिकरण (संशोधन) विधेयक सदन में प्रस्तुत किया है। यह यातायात का उपेक्षित तन्त्र था, जिसकी ओर सरकार का ध्यान गया। मेरे पूर्ववक्ताओं ने बताया कि उपेक्षा का मूल कारण यह है कि कन्ट्रोलिंग अथॉरिटी दिल्ली में बैठी हुई हैं और फिल्ड में इस्टैबलिशमेंट नाममात्र का है। जलयानों की कमी है, इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर की कमी है और सबसे बड़ी बात यह है कि थल यातायात के ट्रैफिक में बहुत लाबी है। हम लोगों ने देखा है कि 60-70 हजार करोड़ रुपए की योजना थल यातायात के लिए बनाई गई है, लेकिन इस पर भी गौर किया गया होता कि जलमार्ग बहुत ही सस्ता माध्यम है और हजारों सालों से हिन्दुस्तान में प्रयोग में आता रहा है, तो शायद कुछ इसमें विकास होता। लेकिन विलम्ब से ही सही, अब सरकार ने इस तरफ गौर किया है। इससे स्पष्ट होता है कि सरकार की जल यातायात की फिक्स प्रायोरिटी नहीं थी। जैसा कि बिल में कहा गया है कि तीन जल मार्ग - एक, गंगा-भागिरथी-हुगली नदी प्रणाली जल मार्ग; दो, ब्रह्मपुत्र और तीन, पश्चिमी तट नहर(कोटापुरम से कोल्लम) - अस्तित्व में आए हैं। इसके अलावा भी पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में ऐसे बहुत से जलमार्ग परम्परागत रूप से प्रयोग में आते रहे हैं, उनकी की ओर भी सरकार को ध्यान देना चाहिए। आपके माध्यम से सरकार से मेरा अनुरोध है, योजनायें बनाते समय नेपाल और हिन्दुस्तान के बीच में जो सम्पर्क रहा है, पहले भी काफी जल यातायात रहा है और पड़ोसी देश बंगलादेश के साथ भी रहा है, उसको दोबारा चालू किया जाए। इसकी जिम्मेदारी पहले शिपिंग कार्पोरेशन पर आई थी।

शिपिंग कार्पोरेशन का मूल इंटरस्ट कोस्टल बिजनेस है, उसमें उनका कंसनट्रेशन था। इसलिए इनलैंड वाटरवेज़ ने उसे डेवलप करने में कभी ध्यान नहीं दिया। अब आप एक नयी आथोरिटी क्रियेट कर रहे हैं, आशा है कि उसमें जो बेसिक इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर है, इसके अंदर जो एम्प्लॉयमेंट और इनवेस्टमेंट करने के पोर्टेंशियल हैं, जो मैनेजमेंट के प्रभावी प्रबंधन की क्षमताएं हैं, उन चीजों को आप उसमें शामिल करने का प्रयास करेंगे।

महोदय, मेरी जानकारी में एक और बात आई है कि जो पुरानी आथोरिटीज़ थीं, उन्हें निर्णय लेने की स्वतंत्रता नहीं थी। यह बताया गया था कि जहाज खराब हो गए हैं, रिपेयर के लिए पड़े हुए हैं, उन्हें रिपेयर कराने की इनडिपेंडेंस नहीं थी। नये जहाज खरीदने की उनके पास इनडिपेंडेंस नहीं थी। ये सारे डिस्ीजन दिल्ली में होते थे। मुझे आशा है कि आप जो नयी आथोरिटीज़ बना रहे हैं, उसमें इस बात का ख्याल रखेंगे कि डिस्ीजन डिसेंट्रलाइज़ हो सके और जो परफोरमेंस लेवल है उसे एचीव करने के लिए आवश्यक कदम उठाए जा सकें। जल यातायात का संसाधन वाटरवेज़ है जो यह बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण है। अब तक उन्हें बहुत ज्यादा नेगलेक्ट किया गया है। आने वाले समय में इन पर जो बर्डन आ रहा है उसे देखते हुए हमें अपनी प्रोडक्शन कास्ट हर लाईन में कम करनी है। मुझे आशा है कि वाटरवेज़ के माध्यम से इसमें जो ट्रांसपोर्टेशन होगा, उसमें हम अपनी कास्ट कम कर सकेंगे। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ।

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SHIPPING ( SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): Mr. Speaker, Sir, some very valuable suggestions have been made. I respect each one of the viewpoints which have been expressed.

Shrimati Margaret Alva is right that there is a great need to integrate the river systems in this country. We need to utilise them more than the potential, which we have now explored. This not only has a tremendous effect on the employment potential, but also leads to the development of the regions adjacent to the riverways. There will be jetties, there will be infrastructure created.

As far as the maintenance of waterways is concerned, it is the primary responsibility of the Authority which takes over the waterways which are declared as national waterways.

We are also, through other means, including subsidies because there has not been enough interest shown by the private sector, trying to encourage even the transport vessels and the cargo vessels to operate in these waterways. This is one of the incentives which has been given to them so as to ensure that these waterways can be put to proper utilisation because they are, like land and rail, an alternative method of human as also cargo transportation.

Shrimati Margaret Alva mentioned that the soil testing is done here. It is true that it is done here, but there are also several regional centres in Patna, Guwahati, Allahabad, Kochi, Bangalore, etc., where the soil testing is now being done.

A suggestion which has been made almost throughout is that we should conduct studies and have the feasibility studies of which are the other potential waterways which can be declared as national waterways. I must say that there are States in India which have done very successful experiments. Goa, for instance, has a very successful experiment of the State waterways; Kerala has a very successful experiment of utilising those waterways effectively. These are areas where there are still demands that they want some form of assistance.

Only last week-end, I had requested the Transport Ministers and the Waterways Ministers from various States which have this potential to come to Delhi, and almost 15 States were represented. I had an interaction with them. We understood each other. We have had regional conferences. We had a conference in Delhi, we had a conference in Patna, and we had a conference in Kerala already. We are planning to have another one in North-

East so as to bring this item to the forefront as one of the agendas for development of waterways in those regions.

We have identified 10 waterways and conducted feasibility studies in regard to them. With regard to the three main waterways, we have already declared them as national waterways, namely, the *Ganga, Bhagirathi, Hoogly system*, the *Brahmaputra* and the West Coast Canal in Kerala. There are seven others with regard to which we have completed the techno-economic feasibility studies. But after we have conducted those studies, the area of difficulty which confronts us is one of resources.

**15.00 hrs.**

Therefore, as far as the resources are concerned, should it come only from the Budgetary Support? Or, should we also tap the market and make it a commercial venture where there could be some returns and it can operate commercially? This amendment really is intended to overcome the principal hurdle, which is resources. We want to attract resources into this area. Waterways like, the Sunderbans in West Bengal, the Godavari and the Krishna in Andhra Pradesh, the Mahanadi in Orissa, the Narmada in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, The Mandovi and Zuaric rivers in Goa, the Tapi in Gujarat, the Barak river in Assam and DVC in West Bengal are areas where studies have been conducted and we need resources as far as these areas are concerned.

This Bill is intended to create an enabling provision so that we can reach out to the market and raise revenue and this Authority can operate and function keeping the commercial aspects in mind. It is because this is intended to rejuvenate the economy in this area.

Sir, I am extremely grateful to the hon. Members who have spoken on this Bill and have unanimously supported this Bill. I now commend to the House that this Bill be passed.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA (CONTAI): Sir, I wanted to ask three questions to the hon. Minister. First is, have you obtained technical assistance from other countries, like France, Germany and the Netherlands who have been operating inland waterways on rivers like Seine and Danube?

Second is, is not there a tremendous scope for investment of foreign capital in this sector considering that our inland waterways initially depended a lot on foreign capital?

Third is, are you considering to take into account the collaboration of the Bangladesh Government?

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Sir, as far as the second suggestion is concerned, we are seriously in the process of considering it. We have contacted some of the international funding agencies. The Chairman of the authority has informed me that he is in touch with them and we are likely to make some significant progress in this regard.

Sir, as far as studying the experiments of various other countries is concerned, we are open to consider them. In fact, some of us have gone and seen how they operate. Dr. Sengupta gave the example of various other countries. Some of the big international ports are, in fact, integrated with the inland water system and the transportation of cargo after it goes to the port rather than using the land further, the pressure on the land and the roads is being reduced. It is being done in Rotterdam and some countries in Europe. It is now being done through inland water system. This is cheaper as well as quicker. Therefore, the pressure on the roads is reduced. We are keeping all these suggestions in mind including the one that Dr. Sengupta has suggested. As far as Bangladesh is concerned, these rivers are connected particularly to the North-Eastern region and we have a protocol. We will keep all these suggestions in mind.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

*The motion was adopted.*

MR. SPEAKER: The House would now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

*"That clauses 2 to 7 stand part of the Bill."*

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clauses 2 to 7 were added to the Bill.*

*Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.*

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

*The motion was adopted.*

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