

for the establishment of a permanent Bench of the High Court of Bombay at Pune.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of a permanent Bench of the High Court at Bombay at Pune."

The motion was adopted

SHRI V.N. GADGIL: I introduce the Bill.

17.24 1/2 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL*

(Insertion of new article 16A)

[English]

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN (Cooch Behar): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: I introduce the Bill.

17.25 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: CONVERSION OF NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINES INTO BROAD GAUGE—*CONTD.*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we go to Private Members' Resolutions. Item No. 25, further

discussion of the Resolution moved by Shri Sudam Deshmukh.

On the last Private Members' Resolution day, I had said that every Member had been given an opportunity to intervene. I said that I will give time only for the hon. Minister to reply and for the mover of motion to respond to the Minister's reply, I hope Mr. Deshmukh will realise I am trying to work for him.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): Mr. Chairman Sir, the Resolution moved in the House on the 22nd concerned a 225 kms. long narrow gauge line in Vidarbha. All points raised by the mover are valid. This railway line is owned by a private company but it is being run by the Government and not by any private management. When the Government took over the responsibility of running this railway, the understanding was that the Government could take-over this railway line subject to certain conditions.

17.26 hrs.

[SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE *in the Chair*]

There was also an agreement that once in every 10 years, the Government could initiate a move to take-over this railway line and also decide the cost at which this project would be undertaken. The agreement was entered into in 1916 and since then after every 10 years the Government considered the proposal for the take-over of this railway line. The last time such a proposal came up before the Government was in 1986. During discussions between the private company, the Railway Board and the Maharashtra Government, it was decided that the Government would not take-over the railway line but would reconsider this proposal in 1996 on the basis of this agreement. So the first problem before us is that if we abide by the terms and conditions of this agreement be-

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tween the Government and the Company we will have to wait for a further period of seven years. Madam, we can, of course, think in terms of taking over this railway line as a special case but there are 2-3 problems which I would like to point out. Firstly, in spite of the fact that this railway line is in the ownership of a private company, the Government is running it despite heavy losses. The hon. Member who moved the Resolution said day before yesterday that the railway line passes through agricultural land where oranges and cotton are grown. But the daily haulage on this line during the past 1 1/2 years has been seven tonnes on an average. So far as movement of passengers on this line is concerned, the daily average during the past 1 1/2 years has been 200 passengers. During the discussions held in 1986, the argument put forward was that as the railway line was incurring heavy losses, the railway administration was not interested in the take-over in its present state. When the Maharashtra Government was approached they declined to take any responsibility in this matter. Their plea was that the State Road Transport Corporation was running its services along the 225 kms. long route of the railway line i.e., 113 kms. from Murtajapur to Yeotmal, 77 kms. from Murtajapur to Achalpur and 35 kms. from Phulgaon to Arvi. Therefore, there is no need to consider taking over this railway line.

Madam, the issue of earnings from this railway line is also a complicated one. On an average the daily income from freight haulage is Rs. 150. Not much of freight is transported along this route.

SHRI SUDAM DATTATRYA DESHMUKH (Amravati): Freight carriage has been stopped.

SHRIGEORGE FERNANDES: Madam, I have the figures for the last 11-12 years with me. The figures I have quoted pertain to 1978-79. So far as the earnings are concerned, this railway line has shown a declin-

ing trend. During the 18 months of 1988 and 1989, 16.29 lakh passengers travelled on this route. In the last 18 months, 11,37,815 passengers travelled on this route whereas there has been a 5 to 7 per cent increase in the number of passenger carried by the Indian Railways as a whole. There has been a gradual decline in income on this line over the last 12 years. When the income from freight traffic is Rs. 150 a day and that of from sale of tickets is Rs. 3000/- a day as against such a huge operating cost, you can well imagine how difficult for us to operate this service. The Central Railway has incurred a loss of about Rs. 2.25 crore in operating this Railway line last year. As against an annual expenditure of Rs. 2.50 crores, it fetches revenue not more than Rs. 17 to 18 lakh a year.

Madam Chairman, I am not saying that as the line in question is incurring losses, this area should not be developed by the Railway. It is a fact that the Railways is the best mode of freight as well as passenger traffic. I do not believe in this theory that the expansion of railways should not be undertaken at the place where it is incurring losses. Though such argument is often given that the concern running in losses should be closed. There are people in the country who believe in this theory to be applied universally on factories as well as transport organisations. As a matter of fact, I believe in this principle neither in theory nor in practice. We have with us detailed information in regard to income and losses on various lines. No definite criterion can be evolved in respect of laying of new railway lines, expansion of railways and continuance of old tracks. As I have already stated that we have legal difficulty. The main hinderance in taking over this line is that of legal stipulation of ten years which was first signed in 1916 and so on after every ten years. We are not in a position to find any solution to this problem as the position was last reviewed in 1986. During the course of discussion, I explained the position with regard to one such 225 km long railway line in Vidarbha region. As many as 33 Members participated in the discussion which took place on last Friday.

SHRI SUDAM DUTTATREYA DESHMUKH: I have an amendment on it.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Yes, I am aware of it and I will come to it also. You will be surprised to know that this railway line is situated in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra about which people are least concerned and which is backward to the extent that we have launched a movement to develop the vidarbha region. As many as 33 Members belonging to 9 different states took part in the debate on this railway line and highlighted the problems of their respective areas. I welcome the discussion because it is a major problem and Railways play a significant role in the development of people and the economy of the country. I said it on that day itself that we discussed it as if it were a mini budget. The problems highlighted by the Members with regard to their respective areas have been noted down. We are aware of the high expectations of the people from the Government. During the course of discussion held on last Friday, a demand for laying 3623 kms new railway line was made in the House. Similarly, a demand for converting about 3085 kms metre gauge into broad gauge has been made. As regards the doubling the railway line, the demand is of about 737 kms. As regards the demand of constructing a bridge across the river Ganga, it involves an expenditure of about Rs. 225 crores. Yet another demand is of electrification of track. Thus during the discussion held on last Friday, the hon. Members made several demands which involved an estimated expenditure of about Rs. 8892 crores. The Government have assessed the development projects of the railways undertaken during the last 4 to 5 years. We are going to spend Rs. 250 crores only on laying of new railway lines this year whereas the demand made in the House would involve Rs. 5000/- crore. Similarly, we are going to spend Rs. 80.90 crore on gauge conversion, whereas an amount not less than Rs. 2.5 to 3 thousand crore would be required to meet the demands of the hon. Members. So it is very difficult for us to accept or reject a particular line for gauge conversion. On a 2 hours discussion on conversion of a narrow gauge

railway line into broad gauge in Vidarbha region, 33 Members took part in the debate and made demands involving Rs. 10,000 crores. Sensing the trend, it is difficult for me to imagine the demands to be made by the hon. Members during the course of discussion on the Railway Budget. Therefore, I understand the importance of this question and that is why I said that I should be happy to have this discussion as it enabled me to have an advance idea of the demands to be made by the Members. A number of demands have been made by the hon. members. These pertain to several constituencies. So it would not be possible to discuss all of them today, nor do I consider it to be necessary. I beg to be forgiven for this.

SHRI MAHADEV RAI SHIVSHANKAR (Chimboor): I have an amendment on it.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Your amendment is with regard to railway line from Gondia to Chandrapur.

[*English*]

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT (East Delhi): For a few seconds permit me to speak. I shall be grateful if the hon. Minister enlightens us on this because there was a proposal at one stage—of course I know it from the initial stage for a Metro railway in Delhi with Soviet assistance. But I read in newspaper that hon. Minister has stated that Delhi will not get it. I would like to know the position, as to where does it stand? We should get it in Delhi; it belongs to the nation and nine million people are living there. I would like to know from the Minister as to whether the newspaper report is correct, if he said it, he should reconsider that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the point raised by the hon. Member is absolutely correct. When I attended my office in the Rail Bhawan for the first time, I was asked question in a Press conference to express my views in regard to the proposed metro railway in Delhi about

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which the hon. Member has just now stated that a negotiation was going on with the Soviet Union. I only said that on 16.4 kms. stretch of metro railway in Calcutta, an amount of Rs. 700 crores has so far been spent. If such a huge amount of Rs. 1300 crore is spent on a stretch of 16.4 kms. metro line in Delhi, it attaches no significance except beautification of the city. For a developing country like us, it has no utility.

SHRI JAIPRAKASH AGGARWAL: It is not beautification but a facility.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI H K L BHAGAT: You know the grounds for that

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: It is correct. I do not want to enter into controversy of words. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

I will not go into any debate

[Translation]

All right, I appreciate your point. As regards our priority is concerned, we will give priority to the development of those areas where no facilities are available. This is my thinking but this does not mean that no attention would be paid to the problems of urban areas and no facilities will be provided there. I do not mean that the problems of the cities should be sidetracked. But it would be difficult to do both things at the same time.

[English]

SHRI H K.L. BHAGAT: May I request the hon. Minister to give us a chance to meet him all the M.Ps from Delhi—before he takes the final decision?

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The matter would be discussed during the debate on the Railway Budget. If you want to discuss the matter with me, you are welcome at any time. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI R.N. RAKESH (Chail): The hon. Minister is very well aware that there is a city named Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh. He has visited the place several times. Demand for constructing an over-bridge near Fatehpur Railway Station has been made many times but of no avail. You are requested to take steps for construction of the over-bridge.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: It is not a question hour. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: In regard to the amendment given by Shri Shivsankar, I would like to tell him that there is a narrow gauge line from Gondia to Chandrapur. A survey was conducted earlier in the year 1980 but the matter was left undecided. As the matter has now come up for reconsideration, a new survey is being conducted again in respect of the railway track between Jabalpur and Gondia and between Barahat and Hatangi. This survey was started in 1983. We expect that a report thereon will be submitted very shortly. Moreover, a proposal has been received from the committee for the Expansion of Railway Network that the entire railway line from Chandrapur to Gondia and Jabalpur should be converted into broad-gauge line and one more direct railway line from South to North should be provided as there is only one railway line for rail journey from South to North. The afore-said proposal of the committee is at present under consideration of the Planning Commission. So, we are sure that as soon as we receive a report on the proposal from the Planning Commission and the report of survey being conducted since 1903 in respect of Gondia-Chandrapur and Jabalpur-Chandrapur rail sections, we will certainly discuss the same. I would also like to make it clear to Shri Shiwankar....*(Interruptions)*....

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as I have already said, I am not going to discuss all the points raised by each and every hon. Member. However, I would like to submit that we will certainly discuss each and every proposal submitted during the debate on last Friday. We will discuss them not only for the sake of discussion, but will also take into account the sentiments and problems of all the hon. Members and wherever possible, take all the steps to provide immediate relief and undertake the construction work. We will try to do all that we can do in this regard.

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore): I had made a very modest demand—not running into thousands of kilometres or hundreds of crores of rupees. I wanted to know why in an already existing suburban network of electrified trains around Calcutta metropolis, one missing link, which runs only for 40 to 45 kilometres, has been left unattended to. Will that link be supplied?.....
(Interruptions)...

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Chairman, Sir, first, I would like to reply to Shri Inderjit... (Interruptions)... It is not a new but a long standing demand and it is not only Shri Indrajit Gupta who has raised it here, but it was also the residents of Calcutta who had personally raised it. We will discuss it and take all the possible steps in this regard.

PROF. YADUNATH PANDEY (Hazaribagh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, even after 40 years of independence, Hazaribagh has not been connected with a rail link. Though it is a scheduled caste and scheduled tribe area, to this day it has remained completely neglected. During the freedom struggle, it was the place where Shri Jai Prakash Narain was put behind the bars, from where he had escaped in the year 1942. So, Hazaribagh should be connected with railway line. Though a survey had been conducted and accordingly an estimate had been prepared in 1977, but till today no step has been taken in

respect of this 294 kilometres of railway track.

SHRI NATHU SINGH (Dausa): Mr. Chairman, Sir, a proposal for the conversion of the railway track from Delhi to Ahmedabad via Jaipur into broad gauge line has been pending for long. Hence this railway track should be converted into broad-gauge track.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have already said... (Interruptions)....

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, if you exhaust all your demands now, what will you do during the discussions on the railway budget?

.....(Interruptions)....

[Translation]

SHRI PHOOL CHAND VERMA (Shajapur): Madam Chairman, the railway line from Indore to Dohad has been given the administrative sanction alongwith the clearance of the project by the Planning Commission but nothing has been done in this regard. The hon. Minister may please state as to by what time the work on that line is going to be started?....(Interruptions).....

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I can only say that all the demands are justified. A demand was made in respect of the Chhitouni bridge. But you know it very well that his bridge had collapsed in 1924. Work on it is yet to be undertaken.....(Interruptions)....

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): I would like to request you to take up the conversion of Delhi-Ahmedabad narrow gauge railway line into broad gauge line because to this day, the cities like Ajmer and Jaipur in Rajasthan have not been connected with the broad-gauge line. Hence, Delhi-Ahmedabad narrow gauge line should be converted into broad gauge line.

SHRIGEORGE FERNANDES: Madam Chairman, I would like to tell all the hon. Members that we will discuss with them the points and problems raised by them here during the discussions and besides that during the last three weeks I have received a number of letters from about 250 Members regarding the working and operation of railways in their constituencies. All these things will be taken into account at the time of discussion with the members and all those works and programmes as will be feasible within the constraints of the Budget will be taken up. However, I would like to make it clear that if each and every Member insists on an instant and concrete work in respect of the railway line in his constituency, you all will agree that it is not possible for me.

SHRI MURLI DEORA (Bombay South): What is going to be done in respect of Bombay?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I accept that you have submitted about Bombay. Others have also submitted about their constituencies. We will do as much as it is possible.

Madam Chairman, we will do, whatever is possible, regarding the railway line about which Shri Sudam Dattatreya Deshmukh has asked to take a final decision. But there are certain legal difficulties in it. In view of these legal difficulties and the proposed structure of zonal development, I would try to realise their aspirations and do all that what is possible in this regard. On that ground, I would like to request him to withdraw his resolution. I would like to thank all those hon. Members who have given their suggestions about the preparation of railway budget. They have expressed their views on the occasion of this discussion on this precise resolution.

With these words, I conclude and hope that the hon. Member will be pleased to withdraw his resolution.

SHRI SUDAM DATTARYA DESHMUKH (Amravati): Mr. Chairman, Sir,

I am grateful to all those 35 hon. Members of this House who have expressed their views on my resolution and supported it. Besides their participation in the discussion on my resolution, they have raised the problems of the whole country regarding the railways. They have pointed out the places where there is need of laying new railway lines and to provide railway facilities in those areas where they are not available. However the criterion of economic viability and the pressure of passenger traffic will not be basis of our decision in respect of the laying of new railway lines in these areas which have not been hitherto covered by the rail net work. It will be our sincere intention to cover such areas because it is a good step and it should be done. The information given regarding the railways in my constituency is not correct. Firstly, there is no ticket collector. Only money is collected from the passengers. The second thing that you have stated is also based on a wrong information. As this railway line is going to be closed, no parcels or other articles and goods from the traders are accepted for booking and there is also no transportation of timber from this area. Hence they have reduced the railway income. That is why you are saying all these things.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: We are going to take steps to improve the situation.

SHRI SUDAM DATTARYA DESHMUKH: Another fact about which you have not given information is that the Government of Maharashtra is saying all along that the Central Government is not prepared to cancel this contract. But you are saying altogether a different thing. The plea given by them is that alternative arrangement is available there. Alternative arrangement are available everywhere. They are available even in Bombay and Delhi. The bombayites are rich people so they can start a new train also. Hence, before all those steps you are going to take in 1997, you should give the assurance that this railway line will be nationalised and I am sure that you are going to give that assurance. With that thing in view, I am going to withdraw my resolution. (*Interruptions*).

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Many Members are raising their hands. As you know, naturally, according to rules we cannot reopen the whole discussion again. So, I am sorry. The Minister has already invited you all to place your demands in writing to him so that he can consider them before the Budget. I request all the Members who wish to speak now to resume their seats...*(Interruptions)*...He will do that.

(Interruptions)

18.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE): No interruptions please.

SHRI MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR (Chimur): I seek leave of the House to withdraw my amendments No. 1 and 2 of the Resolution of Shri Sudam Deshmukh.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his amendments?

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Yes.
Amendment Nos. 1 and 2 were, by leave withdrawn

SHRI SUDAM DESHMUKH: I seek leave of the House to withdraw my Resolution.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his Resolution?

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Yes.
The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.

18.02 hrs.

RESOLUTION REGARDING POLL REFORMS

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (New Delhi): I beg to move:

"That this House is of the opinion that

against the background of the Ninth General Elections, poll reforms should be urgently undertaken, more particularly to curb the influence of money-power and muscle power, and to ensure that future elections held in this largest democracy of the world are completely free and fair."

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may please continue next time.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do like this, what am I to understand?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Brahm Dutt.

SHRI BRAHM DUTT (Tehri Garhwal): Madam, yesterday, when the Prime Minister was replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address, the Leader of the Opposition, Shri Rajiv Gandhi demanded that all the papers regarding Bofors should be laid on the Table of the House, and it is on record in the debates of this House, that the Prime Minister promised to lay them on the Table of the House today. And today he only made a statement. What he laid on the Table of the House is a bunch of papers which are totally incomplete...*(Interruptions)*. The Prime Minister should not behave like this...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When I have given permission to one hon. member to make his point, all the others should listen. Even I could not hear what is saying. Please order. Yes Mr. Brahmadutt, what is your point?

SHRI BRAHM DUTT: Madam, the Prime Minister may be requested to come to the House and lay all papers relating to Bofors issue on the Table of the House..*(Interruptions)* All the papers must