

The farmers raise mustard seeds crop after putting in hard labour by using quality seeds costly fertilizers, but they are not getting due reward for their input and labour. The mustard crop is already in the market. If no attention is paid by the Government in this regard, it would be a blow to the economic condition of the farmer.

I, therefore, request the Union Minister of Agriculture to fix the price of mustard seed at Rs. 600 per quintal so that the farmers may get remunerative price for their produce.

15 26 hrs.

DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT OF NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I now request Prof. Dandavate to raise a discussion on the Report of the National Transport Policy Committee, laid on the Table of the House on 12th August, 1980.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to initiate the discussion on the Report of the National Transport Policy Committee which was laid on the Table of this House on 12th August 1980.

This Report was actually the result of the Committee that was appointed as early as 26th April 1978. Here, I may recall an interesting experience : In 1978, when I was replying to the debate on Railways, some Members had already made a suggestion during the discussion that some sort of a National Committee should be appointed to coordinate various modes of transport in the country, and streamline and rationalize the entire transport in our nation. In response to that suggestion, I had already assured during the debate that the Government would appoint such a Committee. And I was very happy that on our suggestion the National Transport Policy Committee was appointed on 26th April 1978. Its Report was laid on the Table of this House on 12th August 1980.

I may remind you that right from 1980 i.e. for the last five years, in every session without any exception I have been demanding a discussion on the Report of National Transport Policy Committee. It took me a long period of five years to get this discussion admitted ; and I must thank the Speaker for allowing me to raise this important discussion on the floor of Lok Sabha.

The terms of reference that were given to this National Transport Policy Committee were very significant, because they sum up all the issues that were to be taken up by the country in order to rationalize and streamline our transport. These terms of reference were :

- (1) To propose a comprehensive national transport policy for the country for the next decade or so, keeping in view the objectives and priorities set out in the Five Year Plan. . . .
 - (2) To identify the areas in which the data base of the transport system should be strengthened in order to be able to formulate integrated transport plans, and to suggest procedures and methodologies for formulating and appraising such plans at the Central, State, District and Block levels.
 - (3) To recommend areas in which research and development in the transport field should be undertaken and the institutional framework for carrying it out,
 - (4) To suggest measures for improving training facilities in transport planning and management.
- and (5) To recommend any other measures which the Committee may consider relevant in relation to items (1) to (4) above.

I was very happy to find that this Committee which was headed by Shri B.D. Pande did very fine work and tried to analyze in depth all these problems to

which I have made a reference just now. This Report was laid on the Table of this House in August 1980. Unfortunately, this Government has taken no steps so far to implement some of the important recommendations of the National Transport Policy Committee. Had they been implemented, a number of bottlenecks in our transport system would have been completely resolved.

But, unfortunately, that has not been done. Now, this Committee addressed itself to certain important aspects of the problems on which the terms of reference were given to them.

15.31 hrs.

(SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI
In The Chair)

They set up actually six expert groups. These expert groups were able to formulate a policy on a number of issues confronting our transport machinery. These six groups were: (1) policy on construction of new railway lines; (2) rural roads; (3) employment intensity of mode of transport; (4) transport pricing, taxation and subsidy; (5) freight equalisation; and (6) problems of urban transport. As far as these aspects are concerned, I think these expert groups went into all these problems and actually submitted their report; and on the basis of that, the national transport policy has formulated its recommendations. Really speaking, if you have to tackle the problem of transport, the main problem is the problem of priorities, and very briefly, before various Ministries, I would like to place forward certain concepts of priorities that have to be tackled adequately.

Taking for instance, the question of airline. I think in a developing country like India, we must make up our mind what is going to be our priority. There was a stage at which the Planning Commission had taken a very firm decision that there would be no scope for third airline in this country; we would like to concentrate more on shipping, more on motor transport more on railway lines particularly in the economically backward area to provide infrastructure for development; and only

we are able to provide infrastructural facilities through railways, motor transport and also shipping, then only we should be able to go on to the third airline and that proposition was ruled out altogether. But, somehow or other, surreptitiously, because every mode of transport has its own lobbying in the government, they were able to exert the necessary pressure and again they are able to find that a third airline has come into the picture. Again, in motor transport, what is going to be their priority? I may recall that this very House had adopted a policy document in which the priorities of motor transport and automobile industry were already fixed up. It was agreed and it was the unanimous decision of this House that in terms of the requirement of the poor people in this country and the common man in the country, to meet their necessary requirement, it is necessary that the entire priority should be given to the expansion of an automobile industry for manufacturing only those vehicles which are meant for public transport. So, public transport was supposed to be the priority and that was the decision of this August Body, but, unfortunately, when the small Maruti car factory was given the licence—it was owned by late Shri Sanjay Gandhi—the entire priority was to bypass; and only for the sake of certain directions to be given to one particular field we find that the entire national policy regarding priorities to be given to an automobile industry only for the manufacture of those cars which are meant for public transport, actually, small Maruti car was granted permission; they were given letter of intent and ultimately the licence was granted and the entire policy was reversed. I feel this is the distortion, this is the deviation, this is the aberration and we must try to correct this distortion, remove this aberration; and when we are able to stress, for the time being, on public transport, automobile industry, when only we will be able to solve the problem of the country.

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA : Unnecessarily, he is trying to drag that point.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is not yielding. You please continue.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Some people are so allergic to certain issues that the moment you refer to Maruti, they spring to their feet. I have been watching it for a long time.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESHWAR NEEKHRA : The licence for Maruti was granted before the appointment of Pandey Committee.

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Let us debate it. I am prepared to face the criticism from you. But, why do you unnecessarily obstruct me? I never try to obstruct you when you put forward your point of view, which is, to my mind, the constructive point of view. In this very House, there was a debate and I was decided that we should give stress and priority to expansion of automobile industry for public transport. That is all I am saying. I am not making any allegation. If you feel that I must pick out only your language, I have not come to this House only to echo your view.

I have not come in this House only to echo your voice. Let it be very clear.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara) : But you should speak for others also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Yes, I will speak for you. I know it from the Estimate Committee days.

Madam, as far as Shipping and Transport is concerned, it is absolutely necessary that there are a number of coastal line for shipping. If shipping is to be made more effective, small ports which are not adequately covered should be expanded, in respect of shipping services and also cargo services. They are to be properly covered and it is absolutely necessary that we must try to restructure the entire policy regarding shipping and transport and the priority should be again on small shipping vessels and ships which are earmarked to cater to small ports which are totally neglected today.

Is it not also necessary to pay more emphasis on inland water traffic? Rivers can be utilised for this. In European countries number of rivers are properly harnessed for inland water traffic. That has been done very profitably there. It is also possible that in certain places like Kerala and others small rivers can be utilised for inland water transport. I think it is very essential and also profitable. In view of the fuel constraints also one more policy decision has to be taken. We have got three types of transport. Just now, in the Railway Budget we have seen about the Railway transport. We have steam traction, diesel traction and electric traction. It is accepted that the most costly traction, traction is the steam traction, though there may be various types of traction, then comes diesel traction and then electric traction.

In particular, I can point out, that while talking about haulage, for one thousand gross tonnes of load to be hauled for one kilometre of distance, the cost of haulage will be for steam traction of the order of Rs. 10, for diesel traction it will be of the order of Rs. 6 and for electric traction it will be of the order of Rs. 3 per kilometre for one thousand tonnes. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary in view of the various considerations that priority should be given to electric traction and greater and greater amount of electricity should be generated. Hydel power should also be explored, and we have rivers like Brahmaputra which should be adequately harnessed for hydel power.

Let me refer to the relationship between rail and motor transport and also to the freight structure. For the time being we will leave the passenger movement. As far as the rail and motor transport is concerned we have the comparative figures for 1950-51 and 1965-66. A very interesting phenomenon about transport has emerged. In 1950-51 traffic carried by rail was of the order of 44.1 per cent and that by road was 5.5 per cent. In 1955-56 by rail it was 59.6 per cent and by road it was 9 per cent. In 1960-61 by rail it was 87.7 per cent and by road it was 30.0 per cent. In 1965-66 the transport by rail was 116.9 per cent and by road it is 55 per cent. So, from 1950-51 to 1965-66 you will find

[Prof. Madhu Dandavate]

that the traffic by rail has increased from 4.41 per cent to 116.9 per cent and as far as road is concerned it has increased from 5.5 per cent to 55 per cent. This increase has taken place.

Now, I would like to warn all the Ministries concerned, that there is a strong motor lobby in the Government.

In Railway itself, there is a strong motor transport lobby. I am very often came across the experience that whenever national licences were to be given and whenever the question of leaving certain high rated traffic and low rated traffic to certain modes of traffic, was taken up. Railways had always picked up low rated traffic and high rated traffic had always been left to any motors. As far as high rated traffic is concerned, it is today appropriated mostly by the motor transport and only the low rated traffic is left for the railways. Here I would like to make a plea for the Railways on behalf of the Railways and that will have to be taken note of. The Planning Commission discussed that proposition. Today we find that what is happening in India is not happening in other parts of the world. For instance, the Indian Railways are bearing certain social burdens. In moving foodgrains from one place to other, they do it at a concessional rate. Defence materials are to be moved. They do it almost free. On certain types of relief materials they offer a lot of concessions. In addition to that, on certain suburban routes, certain concessions are given. In parcel and other cases also, they try to have certain concessions. As a result of that more than Rs. 400 crores of social burdens are borne by the railways. What happens in other countries? In other countries also, the Railways have to bear the social burden. But there the entire nation bears the burden from the General Revenues. Here the Railways bear the burden. As a result of this, there is a great constraint on their revenues and expenditure and their expansion activity and growth activity suffer to a great extent. This problem also has to be gone in depth.

There was a Committee appointed in 1978 to explore the problem of social burden on the Railways. I believe, by this time, its report must have been out. I

would like to know from the hon. Railway Minister as to what concrete steps are being taken to implement various recommendations made by the Committee on Social Burdens of the Railways.

As far as shipping is concerned, we find that in a number of important places like Bombay, Calcutta, Haldia and a number of other places like Cochin berthing facilities extremely inadequate. Because of this, we find that some of the ships carrying imported material, have to stand miles away from the ports. As a result of that, artificial scarcity, sometimes is created and there is artificial inflationary pressure and artificial rise in prices takes place. I think that can be eliminated completely if more attention and priority is given to provide better berthing facilities in places like Calcutta, Bombay, Haldia and other places Cochin. If that is done, probably congestion in dockyards can be eliminated completely. That will also have an impact on the artificial rise in prices as a result of artificial scarcity.

Dredging operations are absolutely necessary. No doubt, a part of this work is to be undertaken by the States. But our experience shows that dredging operations cannot be undertaken by the States at their own expense. It requires a certain type of technology, it requires a lot of expenditure. Unless central assistance is made available, dredging operations in various parts cannot be effectively done. Since there is not enough depth near the ports, ships have to halt at a considerable distance from the shore and the passengers have to be carried by launches. As a result of that, there are not adequate facilities for the passengers. And because of this, some of the ports are completely avoided by the shipping services. Therefore, this aspect is also to be taken note of.

The constituency which I represent and for that matter the entire West coast on which there is a passenger shipping service starting from Bombay and right upto Goa, Panaji, you will find a number of docks which were formerly covered by the passenger shipping service, are not covered today because there is not adequate depth.

That is because a lot of silt has gathered and dredging operations have not been adequately undertaken. That can be undertaken by the State Governments only with assistance from the Centre. Therefore, that must get priority.

The Committee on Rationalisation of the size of the ships has already made certain recommendations. For instance, I remember in the State of Maharashtra, the Government had appointed one Committee to go in depth about this problem regarding rational shape and size of the vessels which will be able to cover a number of small ports.

I am told that the Report is already out. If that Report is implemented on the entire West coast line, I think a number of small ports can be covered properly and, therefore, that problem also has to be attended to. There is also a reference to that in the national Policy document.

There has been no considerable progress regarding all-weather ports on the entire coastal area. This is the complaint of Kerala, this is the complaint of Konkan region, this is also the complaint of all other complaint of all other areas. Therefore, adequate allocations should be made available to convert the ports into all-weather ports so that in times of calamities and in times of different circumstances, the traffic can be adequately managed.

As far as the modes of transport are concerned, there is one very significant point that has been very beautifully raised in this Report. This Report raises a basic question as to what is the inter-relationship between the various modes of transport will the various modes of transport always remain complementary or whether there will be alternatives. For instance, this Report focusses a very salient aspect in the context of defence and in the context of all natural calamities. In the Report it has been pointed out, in times of war for instance, if the bombing takes place, there is an explosion and if there is only one mode of transport in a particular big region and if that particular mode is totally destroyed, in that case the communication is totally destroyed. On the contrary, if there is also simultaneous motor

transport and the shipping transport, in the case if one mode of communication is destroyed times of war or due to calamities like earthquakes or floods, some other alternative is survived. Therefore, the recommendation of this National Policy committee has been that all these modes of transport should not be treated as alternatives to each other but they should be treated as complements to each other so that in times of war, in times of constraints on our defence and in times of natural calamities like floods and earthquake, if one mode is destroyed, the other will survive and, therefore, that has also to be taken note of.

I may point out to you that only year before last, there were heavy floods in the Konkan region and the entire highway from Bombay to Goa which passes through this particular belt of Konkan region, was badly affected by floods. That road transport was totally disrupted and since on that particular line there was no railway communication, the total communication, the total communication remained disrupted. That affected the freight traffic; that affected the passenger traffic. This is one particular instance that I would like to quote. And in this context, also I would like to point out that there is an appeal for a West Coast-Konkan railway. I am glad and I congratulate the hon. Minister for Railways that while delivering his Budget Speech this morning, he has already made a reference of the West Coast-Konkan railway which start from Apta and goes right up to Mangalore. It is supposed to go up to Mangalore and a track of 62 kilometres Apta to Roha is already constructed but people are doubtful whether the entire route will be undertaken. Therefore, I welcome his announcement, this morning that in order to remove the suspicion from the minds of the people that the entire West Coast-Konkan railway would not be completed, he proposes to undertake the work from the direction of Mangalore also so that from both the directions if the construction starts, people will be convinced that ultimately this West Coast-Konkan railway will be completed and I welcome that particular posture that is adopted by the hon. Minister.

[Prof. Madhu Dandavate]

As far as the fuel and energy consumption is concerned, there is one very significant aspect and to me that is dangerous one. In the morning I had raised certain issues. I would like to concretise my criticism. If you take up the consumption of fuel—I am talking about all modes of transport—from 1953 to 1976, you will find that as far as coal is concerned in 1953-54 the consumption of coal for transport purposes was 56 per cent. In 1960-61 that became 47 per cent and in 1975-76 that became 17 per cent. As far as diesel oil is concerned, in 1953-54 it was 41 per cent, in 1960-61 it was 51 per cent and in 1975-76 it was 81 per cent.

As far as utilisation of electricity as a source of energy is concerned, the figures were :

1953-54 . .	3 Per cent
1960-61 . .	2 per cent
1975-76 . .	2 per cent

So, the figures are very interesting for coal, the corresponding figures are 56, 47 and 17 per cent and for diesel oil, 41, 51 and 81 per cent. so far as the consumption of diesel oil for transport purposes is concerned, it has increased. In 1953-54 it was 41 per cent, in 1960-61 it went up to 51 per cent and in 1975-76 to 81 per cent. I am quoting all these figures, because they have been quoted in this particular report, where it is said that the percentage of electricity remained 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent.

At a time when we have great constraints on the availability of diesel oil and coal, it is better that we shift to greater utilisation of electricity. In the morning the hon. Minister raised a particularly controversial point that, due to the high tariff on electricity, if the consumption of electricity goes up, the total quantum of money spent on that may go up. Here I may point out that this aspect was already taken note of by the railway administration. There was a time when it was rightly believed that the best traction was the electric traction. The only difficulty is, if you want to elec-

trify a route, in that case, the initial investment that is required for electrification of one km is of the order of Rs. 10 lakhs. That is the trouble. But some way has been found for this. The Raj Committee was appointed. It came out with the recommendation that today the cost of electrification is Rs. 10 lakhs per km; it can be brought down to Rs. 6 lakhs or 7 lakhs if we are able to change the present catenary to aluminium catenary. Certain other changes can be brought about, which the Raj Committee has pointed out. I would request the railway Minister to examine this particular aspect in depth and if he is able to convince himself that this is beneficial, to go in for electrification. If hydel power is available, it will be still cheaper. Though the initial investment will be of the order of Rs 7 lakhs per km. in the long run, I am sure, it will prove to be a cheaper proposition. Therefore they should go in for that.

✓ Then there is the question of freight equalisation, an extremely ticklish question in which all the Ministries are concerned. Here my colleague, Shri Indrajit Gupta, coming from Bengal, will narrate his experience in his State. Here is the former Finance Minister, Shri H.M. Patel, who will be able to reveal his own experience. Now there are two aspects of freight equalisation. When the concept of freight equalisation came into the picture an inter-ministerial committee, headed by Shri Marathe, was appointed. That committee went over this problem in depth and adopted a balance view on the question of freight equalisation.

Why is this freight equalisation demanded. It is demand on two grounds. One aspect is that some times the raw materials are available only at one end and they have to be carried over longer distances to the other end, where the goods are manufactured or where the factories are located. In such a situation, if you utilize the transport for carrying raw materials over longer distances and charges it on the finished product, then the commodity becomes extremely costly, because of the transport element of the expenditure. The second concept is that those who live in hilly areas, mou-

tainous terrain, where the transport charges are heavy, because they are places very difficult to reach, if full cost of transport is charge then it will be costly for the people living in those areas. In order to remove these imbalances, the freight equalisation was suggested. For instance, if there is a manufacturing firm, which is located at a place where raw materials are available close by, then the finished products might be available at that place at a cheaper price where as, if the some finished product is carried over a long distance, and is charged according to the distance covered, the price of the commodity may go up very high.

The Marathe Committee have gone into this problem, they said that sometimes we give concession or advantage of freight equalisation to commodities like iron, steel, cement or petroleum products, but if we calculate the transport component in their cost of production, that component is very small; so, only a pretext is made that because of the traffic problem, the prices are going up. In fact, this freight equalisation is nothing else but an indirect subsidy that is given. I think that, if subsidy is to be given, it is better that you give an open subsidy by the front door, rather than doing the same thing by the backdoor. This is as far as iron and steel, cement and petroleum products are concerned.

So far as fertilizer is concerned, which is utilized by the small man; the agriculturist, a slightly more liberal attitude can be taken. But that liberal view in regard to freight equalisation should not be taken in relation to commodities like iron and steel, cement and petroleum products. But, it could be done in relation to fertilizer for the agriculturists and also for foodgrains and those commodities which are used by the common consumer for mass consumption.

So those commodities which are used for mass consumption in their case if we find after proper analysis that the differential of prices in different regions arises because of the transport charges, we should see if in that case freight equalisation can be resorted to or not. In that case, of course, the public dis-

tribution system also has to be streamlined and adequately made powerful. That also will solve the problem. Therefore, in this respect I fully agree with the recommendation that has been made in the National Transport Policy document which says that we must phase out the existing freight equalisation. And if it is granted, the commodities of mass consumption, which deserve this particular concession of freight equalisation, their problem should be taken not of.

Then in regard to the problem of coordination, I would like to say that modes of transport should not harm each other, they must complement each other. To give you a simple instance, Sometimes there is conflict between the railway and the motor transport. Motor transport, particularly in the private sector, is demanding more and more national licences to carry commodities over large distances. They actually carry the commodities at high rate, as a result they lose. Therefore, we must also guard the interests of the Indian Railways and must not allow the railways suffer for the interest of the motor transport. At the same time I do not mean that we should harm the interest of the motor transport. Some sort of the althy balance has to be restored between the railway and the motor transport. We should also see as I said earlier, that the role between the two has to mutually complementary and not mutually destructive.

There is one more aspect to which I would like to make a reference. I have taken a lot of time of the House, but if we go through all aspects of the Report it will not be possible for us to do justice to all aspects. Therefore, I am making a reference to these in a cursory manner.

The last aspect to which I am making a reference is the general approach of the Government to various expert committee reports. Unfortunately the fact is that Governments may come and governments may go, but very often some of the most important documents that are prepared and also some of the best recommendations that are prepared by various expert committees, just lie in the

[Prof. Madhu Dandavate] shelf. I remember one occasion. When Shri Ashok Mehta, who happened to be a Member of Parliament, became a Minister, at that time some report was also prepared. And later when he became an ordinary Member, he asked what had happened to that report which was prepared when he was a Minister. Somebody said that report is lying in the godown and you also go to the godown and remain there.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : What about the Planning Commission.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Planning Commission is the best instance.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : They are supposed to study them,

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Therefore, I would like to point out that a number of reports have been prepared. For instance for the freight equalisation Marathe Committee was appointed. This Report has taken cognisance of the various aspects of the problems and made recommendations, but even then the freight equalisation policy remains unchanged today. I give another instance. An expert committee for electrification was appointed. They have already made their recommendations, but still they remain unimplemented. Therefore, I would suggest all these expert committee reports, including the National Transport Policy Report, which has touched upon a number of aspects and has framed the basis for a proper and rational coordination between various modes of transport, should be taken note of properly.

During the last five years in every session I had been fighting for this report to be discussed. Ultimately, I think, my patience has won. I remained patient for the last five years in the House. Every time during zero hour I used to get up and ask the Speaker as to what happened to that report.

‘Ultimately the Speaker got fed up of me and seeing that for five years I have been demanding to know the fate of the Report

day before yesterday he said : Let us discuss it. They were in need of agenda today and I was also in need of discussion on this subject. I think both the interests came together and I am glad that discussion on this has ultimately taken place.

But I will request the Ministries concerned that after all this is a report, not prepared by any party, but prepared by certain experts. So they should take a non-partisan attitude and implement it in the best possible way in the interest of developing the infrastructure in the country.

SHRI G. L. DOGRA (Udhampur) : Madam, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I agree with Prof. Dandavate that this report has been prepared after hard work by the study of the experts from different groups and their various recommendations have been made, but I differ with Prof. Dandavate with regard to the Government's automobile policy. Whereas Janata Government decided that the automobiles industry should cater only to the public transport. But the Congress Government changed the policy and in produced the small car as well he attributed it to Maruti.

He said that ‘we feel sensitive’. I think he has some prejudice about it. There were small cars earlier also. Another licence was given and there were further licences given after that also. Now it has come in the public sector. I do not think he should have any prejudice about it now.

16.00 hrs.

Madam, I would like to say that this Report lacks in one respect. All Members of this Committee were probably from cities and developed areas. Bulk of the people in India live in the undeveloped areas. They should have suggested an integrated transport system for the whole country. People living in the mountainous areas, in the far-flung areas, in the cut-off areas, are bearing the burden of the development of the rest of the country, they are bearing the burden of the expenses of development. The price level goes up; the things are priced high

and they are bearing the burden. For whatever they are producing, they are not getting anything. Unless those areas are opened, you cannot have an integrated development. Here there is one difficulty, because constitutionally most of the things which have been recommended by them, fall in the jurisdiction of the state Governments. The Centre by itself cannot interfere in those things, but they must discuss the proposals with them. It has been pointed out that so far as the road transport system is concerned, the National Highway system constitutes six per cent of the total road system of the country and 25 per cent of the goods are transported on the National Highway. But we know that since the report was presented more roads in the state and rural sectors have been constructed, that six per cent must have come down further as there has been expansion of the roads in the States. There is too rapid expansion—and the development of rural roads, as you have pointed out, is a very important part of the development of the country and development of the economy of the country. This percentage must have gone down from six to something lower than that because National Highways are not expending like that. The maintenances of the National Highways and other roads is very poor. But in the far-flung areas they are not opened. I went to Himachal Pradesh this time. I went some other places also. I went to even Orissa, I saw that the areas were not opened and unless you open an area, unless a road goes there, unless electricity goes there, development is not possible. We are thinking of computers, we are talking in terms of computers, but we are forgetting those people who are living in those far-flung areas. Unless we do something for them, it will be very difficult. I tell you, we are living on their ignorance because they do not understand the implications and intricacies of things. Whose burden are they bearing? It is our development, the burden of which they are bearing. What they produce gives them nothing; what we produce carries very high price. What has this Committee done? It has not touched this aspect. Professor Sahib has suggested certain things which are in contradiction with the recommendations. For example,

in respect of coastal shipping, they say that this is not very important. But as far as ports are concerned, they say that some of the ports which are congested should be further developed and in respect of some of them which are idle, some more traffic should be diverted towards them and some facilities should be created there. The wording used here is that 'it requires foresight and forward planning so far as port development is concerned'. Therefore, these are the things which should be considered.

I do not want to repeat all the things which Professor Sahib mentioned and with which I agree. About the Motor Vehicles Act they say that it is restrictive in nature. It should be abolished or it needs to be modified. Rather it should be replaced by a new Act.

The Motor Vehicle Act of 1939 is of restrictive character and has lost its relevance. The procedure for natural permit is to be simplified and the issue of permit should also be expedited.

About the transport system, we must be able to conserve petroleum and petroleum products. They say that for two decades, it may not be possible for us to do much in this regard. But that should be our main aim, that is to conserve petroleum and its products. Because whatever we get from below the earth, we are exhausting the resources which could be available to the future generation. So, if we can substitute the petroleum resources with electricity, then it will be possible for us to save a lot of our precious foreign exchange and internal resources. So, electrification of railways is also important from that point of view. It will cost more as compared to diesel which has to be conserved but its consumption should be minimised so as to save foreign exchange resources. So far as electricity is concerned, we need not import and we can generate electricity from our natural resources, water resources. If we generate hydro electric power from waste resources, we would be generating from water which would be flowing to the sea. But in terms of diesel, the main consideration is to save it,

[G.L. Dogra]

There is one more important thing which the Committee has mentioned. They said that the railway services should be expanded and improved. Railway network needs to be carried everywhere. Railways should carry things, carry passengers and goods and services from far-flung areas. They say, passengers' traffic is developing much more rapidly than population growth the growth of our national income or per capita income. The number of passengers is increasing rapidly and we have to provide transport for them. The hon. Railway Minister has said that they are providing faster train services so that they will be carrying more passengers at quicker pace. They will be carrying more passengers with the same existing resources available.

But so far as the Railways are concerned, I think, they need more money and therefore the Committee recommends that they should be given money ungrudgingly. Unless we strengthen our railway system, unless we enlarge our railway system, unless railway system goes to the interior of the States; the benefit will not reach our people. We have started rail from Jammu to Udhampur. And the hon. Railway Minister is probably giving only one crore of rupees this year because he has no money. If we carry our railway to those areas, we will get the return immediately at a very high rate and in addition we will strengthen our defence system. That will give a confidence to the people in those areas. The main object as has been declared in this House is to carry the railways to the Kashmir valley. But with this system. I think, probably it will take more than 20 generations to reach the valley. Therefore, these are the things which we have to consider seriously.

I do not want to take a very long time. I agree with Professor. Saheb's suggestion that there should be a body appointed by the Government to go through the reports, consider them to take follow-up action. Wherever necessary. The Government may not agree with all the recommendations. For instance, as far as freight equalisation is concerned, Professor Saheb has expressed the view with which I do not agree. I say, there

are poor people living in far flung areas. If you do not give them cheap transport how will you get foodgrains? How will they transport foodgrains from these area if you do not give them cheap transport? How will they get it? They live on meagre and poor agriculture; they live on horticulture. Whatever they produce, they are not able to sell because of transport bottleneck. And you say that you do not want to give a little subsidy in the transport, in the railways. You want to raise the fare and freight.

This is very unfair. A trader can say so. But a Person who serves the people, who serves the common man, who serves the backward areas, cannot say so. As far as the freight equalisation is concerned, I congratulate the Government for ignoring the recommendation, whatever may have been recommended by the Committee. I want to ask the Government whether they keep the people belonging to backward areas on the Committee. If they do so, then I can appreciate it. But when the people coming from big cities make certain recommendations ignoring the bulk of the people, it is very unfair.

As regards other things which have been said, I agree. This aspect of the problem concerning transport system has been ignored. I have very humbly tried to put it as clearly and as forcefully as I could. There are various other modes of transport. It may be a pipeline; it may be a ropeway. But these modes of transport are not very common in our country. Some experiments are being made in this regard. In hilly areas, they will be of some of some use. I think, the Central Government should try to devote their attention to this aspect so that the backward areas which are their responsibility can be helped by these modes of transport.

I would again like to say that the people who are living in far-flung areas, in cut-off areas, who are our *santries*, who are guarding our frontiers, who are the people who face the enemy whenever the time comes, they are the most neglected people even from transport system point of view. Let the Central Government try to help those backward areas, let the

benefits of civilisation to go them and let them feel that they are also a part of a big system, they are a part of a big country and an enlightened world.

SHRI SOBHANEDREESWARA RAO (Vijaywada): Madam Chairman, I fully agree with the views expressed by Prof. Dandavate. In fact, it is very saddening to find that the Government of India has not taken serious consideration of the Report given by an expert body; they have kept it Pending for such a long time and they have shown no interest in taking any action on the recommendations or valuable suggestions made by the Pande Committee.

In fact, the transport system has to serve the needs of the economy of the country. The economic development of an area is linked with the development of a transport system connecting that area. Particularly it is so in the case of backward areas and the interior areas of the country. It is common knowledge that without a proper transport system, the rural people are exploited by the traders.

The farmers will get a lesser price for their agricultural produce and the prosperity of the rural areas is linked with the better transport system development.

In fact, instead of increasing or allocating more funds for the transport development, the allocations are being reduced. In the First, Second and Third Five Year Plans, the allocations were 23% but since the Fourth Five Year Plan, the allocations have been on the decline and ultimately in the Sixth Five Year Plan period, it was hardly 12% as a result of which unfortunately, out of 5,76,000 villages in this country, 4 lakh villages are even now left out to be connected with all-weather roads. 3,14,000 villages are left out without roads and those villages have to be connected with some type of road. Road development should be given top priority at least in the coming Budget Session.

Regarding passenger traffic, there is nearly three-fold increasing in regard to railway Passenger traffic over the last

26 years and freight traffic has increased nearly 14 times. While both Central as well as the State Government are collecting thousands of crores of rupees by way of Motor Vehicle tax and customs duties in one form or the other. . . . they are spending much for road development and only one-third is spent for road development. This is a very sad state of affairs.

I request the Government to collect large amounts through taxes and to spend that amount at least for the development of the roads and in particular, the rural roads because, when we examine from the point of view of providing employment, the road transport system gives better opportunities as for every lakh of rupees 27 persons get employment opportunities for road transport system whereas in railway system only 4 people get the employment. For long distance travel, railway system will be of much use and for short distance travel, road transport system will serve better. Prof. Madhu Dandavate has rightly said that they are not contradictory and, in fact, they are supplementary and the Government should take that point of view. In the road transport system, the example which has been set by Tamilnadu-Government is more suitable. That is, some routes of travel are taken up by Government-owned transport organisations, and some routes are left out to private operators so that the RTC buses run by the State Governments, funds for which are provided by people, do not incur losses, they earn some profit or even if they do not earn profit, they at least do not incur any loss, they run on no-profit-no loss basis. So, such ways and means should be examined and implemented on a national scale.

Regarding national permit buses, many people are misusing the provisions of the present Act and they are doing regular business by carrying the passengers who have to travel by RTC buses; in their national tourist buses, instead of taking tourists from one place to another, they are taking the passengers who are supposed to travel by RTC buses, thereby causing losses to the RTC buses. Some provision should be made in the present Act in this regard: if a vehicle with a national permit

[Shri Sobhanedreeswara Rao] is used for carrying, not tourists, but ordinary passengers, it should be punished severely so that those people do not misuse the provisions of the Act.

Regarding air travel, I feel that something can be done to reduce the terrible traffic congestion, especially in the Bombay Airport. For example, from our State, Andhra Pradesh, people go to Gulf countries and other part of the world and they are all made to go via Bombay, and this causes a lot of congestion there. So, we suggest and request that the Government of India consider making Hyderabad Airport an international airport so that the congestion problem can be solved to some extent. Even goods like egg and meat are routed through Bombay Airport. In the process, only the business people who are in Bombay are getting more and more profits and not the actual producers or peasants or the small local people of our State. So, I request the Government to consider this suggestion sympathetically.

Regarding inland waterways, it is the cheapest mode of transport. Infact, in the olden days when Sir Arthur Carton developed the irrigation systems, he originally designed the canals so as to be suitable also for canal navigation. But now with addition of more acreage under the irrigation system, this purpose is not served. Unless the canal bunds are raised and strengthened, I fear, nothing much can be done. If the canal bunds are raised and strengthened, it will certainly help and it will ease the traffic congestion on our roads as well as railways.

Regarding seaports also, at present there is lot of congestion in major ports as a result of which we are paying several crores of rupees as demurrage and penalty for keeping the vessels waiting in the ports. For exporting our food-grains and other commodities to other countries and for receiving fertilisers and other commodities from other countries, I think, there is very necessity to improve the minor ports and reduce the overheads.

I have made all these suggestions for consideration. I request the Government to earnestly take up, at least now, consi-

deration of the report submitted by the Pande Committee and try to implement the very valuable suggestions made therein.

I think you, Madam, for giving me this opportunity to speak.

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour): Prof. Dandavate, while he was Minister, had got this committee appointed and, as he said, the committee gave its report within 2 years' time and it has taken the Parliament 5 years after that to discuss the report. Prof. Dandavate is obviously very pleased that this report is being discussed before the House. But, has he considered that it will take another 15 years to get it implemented? When the discussion itself takes 5 years to be held, implementation certainly will not take place within 15 years.

This committee was appointed for the purpose of suggesting what should be the . . .

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Even if it is implemented, it will be a homage to us afterwards.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: This committee was appointed to suggest what should be the role of the different modes of transportation in India during the next 10 years or so. That is what it says in the terms of reference and of that 10 years 5 years have already gone and the data on which the committee gave its report is already outdated because it had to depend upon data mainly from 1977-78 or earlier to that naturally because the committee was appointed in 1978.

Now this is the type of things that this Government is habituated to doing. Anybody having a nodding acquaintance with the economic history development knows that transport development is one of the prime necessities of any kind of economic development. Not only that, transport development precedes economic development. It is always at a higher percentage rate than other types of economic activities. Even in India we have seen that during the first two

decades of the Plan period, that is the 1950s and 1960s, the development of transport has preceded the growth of economic activity in other spheres. It has been in fact double the rate of economic activity in other spheres. In the third decade it was the same and now it is lagging behind.

Now in this particular report which is under discussion a number of considerations and a number of points have been discussed about the various methods of transport including what my friends said about the role of rural roads and my friend from Telugu Desam quoted statistics that out of 575,000 villages in India, 400,000 villages do not have all weather roads and 300,000 villages have no roads at all. These are also out of that report. They considered this also. But all these factors cannot be gone into in a short discussion which has been very kindly allowed to-day. The main thing that Prof. Dandavate discussed and I would also emphasize is the role of the railways and the role of road traffic. Air traffic is very marginal and is meant for passenger traffic on the trunk routes. But the role of road and rail transport for the whole country has to be properly brought out— which part of the cargo will be moved by rail and which type of cargo will be moved by road, for what distances and what will be the freight charge, fare charge for passengers, etc.—these are the things which this report has gone into and they have very clearly brought out the considerations on the basis of which the policy has to be formulated. They have not given the concrete suggestions which can be immediately implemented. They have given the policy considerations which must be applied to the facts and to the data and then only concrete plans can be drawn up.

Now, the difficulty is—the Committee itself has pointed out—that there is today no data available for what goods are being moved from one region of India to another. Even no estimate is available as to what kind of goods movement will take place in future—say five, ten or twenty years hence—from one region of India to another. There is no methodology of prediction also. The reports says that the

Planning Commission has started a transport policy planning project. Very well. I do not know what is the outcome of that project. But it appears from the Sixth Plan document also that they are not able to predict what would be the nature of the movement of cargo and passengers between one region of India to another and, therefore, whatever this report as stated remains only in the realm of policy and no concrete schemes can be drawn up. But still certain guidelines have been given and keeping in view those guidelines the Railways can decide whether a particular line should be approved or not. Now, this report gives some guidelines which the railways are not following. They do not even know whether such guidelines exist. I know it for a fact because I had discussions with the previous Railway Minister and I found he had no idea whether such guidelines are there. He thought he was formulating his own guidelines. Railway line after railway line that was promised—not out of considerations of parochialism—but on consideration of opening up a backward area, those have been scuttled in the railway budget today, possibly on the plea that they do not give any economic return. That Committee report says for opening of such areas which have got a growth potential you do not look at the economic return but look at it as a social obligation on the part of the Government. The Ministry is required to take into consideration these guidelines which they have not done.

Similarly this report says that the inland water transport has been utterly neglected. Upto 1977 starting from 1951 in these twenty-six years only Rs. 34 crores had been spent on development of inland water transport. Now, whatever was there has just disappeared. If you go down from Calcutta to Sandheads which is about 80 nautical miles you will see not even 80 boats. I saw in this report that in 1875 there were 1,50,000 boats registered in Calcutta and another 80,000 boats registered at Hooghly and they were plying up and down the river. Today you will not find 80 boats. They have disappeared. And you do not find even mechanised boats there. In the report it has also been said that water transport is more efficient than land transport. The vast stretch of the river which is about 1 kilometer wide

[Shri Amal Datta]

is just lying idle. In 26 years they have spent only Rs. 34 crores. I do not know what has been done in the Sixth Plan. The allocation was there. Usually allocations are made but the money is not spent. If one goes there and sees the activity one assumes the money has been allocated to show that they are doing something but later on they give one excuse or another for not spending the money.

There is a lobby for road transport. As Prof. Madhu Dandavate has pointed out, there is a very good lobby for road transport who have been able to see to it that valuable cargo found its way out of the Railways. Today the Railways are carrying about 80 per cent of the low-freight yielding cargo. From 1960 they have followed a peculiar policy whereby the people who are shipping the high freight-yielding cargo or valuable cargo will not come to the Railways but will go to the Road transport, where they will charge less. These road carriers will take those high yielding cargo and Railways have been left only with the low freight-yielding cargo. So: they cannot get much profit. Another point is this. Whatever profit they get goes to the Freight Equalisation. They have to bear social burden of the order of Rs. 400 crores as Prof. Madhu Dandavate has pointed out. That figure must have increased by this time. I don't know what this figure is, because internal subsidy is there. It helps Defence; it helps the Steel industry. But it should not be there. Whatever you want, you openly subsidise. Last year's Defence Budget could have been added by another Rs. 200 crores. Last year's Defence Budget which was of the order of Rs. 8,000 crores could have been increased by another Rs. 200 crores and it would not have mattered much. But there should not be that sort of hidden subsidy. Our coastal shipping has been totally neglected. The other day made an enquiry as to what is the cost of bringing salt from Tuticorin to Calcutta. I found that the cost is very high. They said, it is costly because the ships have to go back empty. I asked, why cannot you carry coal. They said, they cannot carry coal because the freight of coal by Rail is lower than by ship. Everybody knows that carrying by ship is always

cheaper than carrying by rail. Government has been following a policy of Freight Equalisation whereby they charge less than $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ of what it actually costs to carry the cargo of coal from Bengal to Bihar coalfields. Coal is carried over a distance of 1500 or 1800 kilometres by rail at subsidised price. Because of that, it cannot be carried by coastal vessels although actual coast of carriage by ship is lower. So, my point is that Coastal shipping in that respect has been scuttled. Inland Water Transport System is destroyed. So, what remains? It is only the Rail and the Road and the Rail Transport System gets only the low profit yielding cargo whereas the Road Transport System gets the prize cargo. So we find that the Railways cannot make profit. They have to bear the social burden, the cost of freight equalisation and so on. As a result of this what happens? Railway passengers have to pay more and the freight which has to be sent by rail has to be charged a high rate. This is what is happening and that is why the Railways cannot generate enough internal resources. We find that only 300 kilometres of railway lines have been built during the last 30 years. More lines have been closed during the last several years since Independence than have been built. So, this is the achievement of the Railways in India! No doubt more passengers are carried. The figure given just now shows an increase of four times of the number of passengers carried by Railways in 1977 compared to 1951, whereas road Transport System has carried more than ten times the number of passenger carried by them in 1951. Railway lines have not increase. Railways have not expanded.

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There is one more example which I would like to give. Before the Sixth Five-year plan the Railways declared that they will acquire hundred thousand wagons.

The capacity of the wagon building industry was slightly lower than 100 thousand. They call it FWUS-Four Wheeler Units. They say that they will acquire 100 thousand wagons in the course of five years. These people have to increase their capacity. They had to increase their capa-

city to 120 thousand FWUs in the next five years' time. But in five years Railways could hardly acquire 50 thousand FWUs. So, they made them increase their capacity but they did not utilise the capacity and their capacity utilisation remained low. Instead of acquiring 10 thousand FWUs next-year they will acquire only five thousand capacity of FWUs. The Railways were acquiring Wagons at the rate of 10 thousand per year long ago. But that figure has been going down.

Now, do you have surfeit of wagons. You don't know what is happening to them? We hear reports every day that coal does not reach the power station because the wagons have not reached the collieries. Coal is accumulating at the pit-heads. This is happening everywhere. But the Railways are cutting the purchase orders of wagons and ultimately the result would be that more industries will become sick and according to the Government's new policy, they would declare closure of the sick industries. Now, some of the industries manufacturing wagons are Government-owned by the Industries Department or owned by the Railways themselves. Before the present Government came to power, the previous Government—at least did not try to close down the Government owned undertakings. Now, the present Government has come with a new policy that they will close down the sick industries. That is the policy of the present Government. But I am saying that in transport there is no policy at all. There is no integration of different modes of transportation. They have not worked out any future requirements for the next five years, and ten years. Whereas in all other departments, they work out their requirements for next five or ten years, only in regard to the transport and Railways they go about in this *ad hoc* fashion and all the costs will be borne by the ordinary citizens.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar): Respected Madam, I am happy that the hon. Speaker has allowed this discussion on the National Transportation policy Committee Report. I was going through the report and the report has said that the share of transport in the total Plan Outlay which was 22.3%

in the first Plan and 23.5% in the Second Plan declined steeply to 12.1% in the Sixth Plan. Therefore, the important problem regarding the development of transport system in this country was not given full consideration in the Sixth Plan allocation. It was reduced from 23.5% to 12.1%. Therefore, what I will plead from the beginning. I have pleaded also in the previous Lok Sabhas—it that the transport should be included in the core sector of the Plan. The late Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi also indicated that the Railways and the transport should be included in the core sector of the Seventh Plan. I hope the Government of India should try and see that this is included in core sector so that more fund is allocated for the transport sector. This morning the Railway Budget was presented in the House. It was most unfortunate and I cannot say something more than this. But I think that those words could be used because the entire objective of the National Planning Policy and the Transport Policy is to see that the regional imbalances in the different regions are removed from Plan to Plan. What we find today is that in the budget the Talcher-Sambolpur Railway line which was given the topmost priority and money was allocated to the extent of Rs. 2 crore towards the end of 1984 has not found a place. Today we find that no mention of that railway line was made in the Railway Budget.

Secondly, out of 18 districts which have no railway connection in this country there are two districts in Orissa and they are mostly tribal districts. The late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi was kind enough to sanction a survey for the Khurda Road-Phulbani-Bolangir link. This would connect the coastal Orissa with the western Orissa. Though the money had been sanctioned in 1983, for the last three years, this survey has not progressed at all. I was expecting that at least some mention would be made about its progress in railway Budget.

There is another very important thing. If you have gone to Puri to see Lord Jagannath, Khurda Road to Puri is a distance of 41 kms and it a single track

[Shri Chintamani Panigrah]

About eight trains are moving on this line; so many passengers and pilgrims go to Puri. For the last many years I have been pressing for doubling this 41 kms of single track, but it has had no effect.

Then, there is so much of passenger traffic in the Puri- Palasa passenger train. But the passenger train on this line has been withdrawn. I am not able to appreciate why this train has been withdrawn. It should be restored immediately.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why don't you come to the point. We are discussing the Report of the National Transport Policy Committee. It appears as if we are discussing the Railway Budget.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : Madam, the report says :

"In our view, the Indian railway network has remained static since independence and for a country of our size, with its population. Vast potential, and anticipated growth of traffic its expansion is essential. New growth centres can be established and congestion removed from existing metropolitan cities and other growing cities only through a judicious expansion of of the railway network. There is a need to expand the network, provide alternative corridors to busy saturated trunk routes and to develop areas rich in mineral and forest resources."

But from the Budget today, we find that 45 per cent of the allocation is going for development of major trunk routes. We have been mentioning these points every year; these must be looked into seriously.

Paradip was a major maritime port on the eastern India, and it needs to be developed further, but on the other hand, we find that it is almost dying. One dredger was purchased at a cost of Rs. 10 crores for this port; it got damaged. There was an accident, and it ran allround in 1980 and still remains inoperative. Consequently, the grounded dredger has been blocking the ships with large draft; the cargo ships of heavier draft find the harb-

our unsuitable. The port is having neither export import business. The port is also without a sand pump of its own after its Rs. 2.5 crore sand pump went out of order. These things need to be looked into seriously. We have invested crores of rupees on this major port, but it is dying and languishing. Why should the Government not give more money for this port? Recently, I am told, they have sanctioned Rs. 40 crores, but we do not know, what kind of programme they are going to implement to save the situation. The rail and road transport in Orissa needs very urgent attention.

Then, the river Mahanadi has 700 kms of navigable water, but this has not been made use of for inland water transport. The report has mentioned all about these things. Though the report has said that the inland water system in Orissa needs to be developed, it has not been developed all these years.

Paradeep in spite of being a major port is languishing, it is not being developed. Minor ports like Gopalpur etc. also need to be developed but they are not being developed. The Report has actually recommended the development of all these ports and I only request the Government that they should give more attention for the implementation of the recommendations of the Report. Orissa which is lagging behind in all respects should find its place and it should be allocated more money in the Seventh plan for all round development, of transport.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Bairhat); I would just like to touch briefly on a few aspects of this question of National Transport Policy. This report is a very valuable report. But like many of its predecessors and successors, I think, it is being consigned to the pigeon holes or cold storage, whatever you like to call it, and most of the recommendations that you find in this report have not been implemented by the Government, whether it is the Central Government or the State Government, or the two of them having joint responsibility in some of these matters. The problems which are facing the

country in this respect are getting more and more acute.

Madam, you will forgive me if I speak with particular reference to some of the problems, as they affect my State and my part of the country, not because of any local or partisan outlook, but because I just got very limited time at my disposal.

About freight equalisation, there is a whole chapter in this report. Prof. Dandavate has spoken about it. I only wish to point out that this report itself has stated categorically that the original purpose of railway freight equalisation was to stimulate the dispersal of industries. But they have also admitted that this object has not been achieved and rather than helping the proper optimal dispersal of industries, it has actually added to the real transport costs.

Now for example in west Bengal, iron and steel which are available in our region, are covered by freight equalisation. So, that is an advantage enjoyed by the engineering industries located in other States at great distances, like Maharashtra and so on. But in the reverse process you find that Bengal does not grow any raw cotton. We have got textile industries and all the raw material, i. e. cotton has to be brought from cottongrowing areas. But it is not covered by freight equalisation. So, our textile industry suffers this disadvantage in competition with other older textile centres.

Similarly, consumer goods have also not been covered. We have to get all our sugar from outside. We do not grow any sugarcane. Even mustard oil, which is the normal cooking medium for most of the people in Bengal, strongly enough has to be brought from outside. Mustard oil seeds have to be brought from outside which are grown much more in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of the country.

Coal, I believe, is not actually covered by this freight equalisation, but there exists a system of telescopic rates, as a result of which, the consumers of coal (I am talking especially about industrial consumers) who are situated at a great distance from the coal fields are actually enjoying the

advantage of the telescopic rates. It is another form of freight equalisation, even if formally it may not be so.

I think that it is high time that the Government should make up its mind as to what to do with this freight equalisation which has been in force for some considerable time. The Committee has said, I quote —

“We endorse the view that freight equalisation in industrial commodities does not meet the desirable objective of dispersal of economic activity, but can lead to non-optimal location of industries. We therefore recommend that it should be phased out.”

So, I strongly plead that this recommendation of the Committee should be taken seriously.

They had spoken about phasing out, 4 or 5 years ago. I think it is high time that this equalization policy was given up. It is working to the advantage of some States, but it is working against the interests of other States. Therefore, it becomes an issue, not of harmonious reconciliation of interests, but it becomes an issue of controversy and dispute, and adds to inter-State tension and disputes.

Then, Madam, I would like to say something about the Calcutta Port, with which the hon. Minister of Shipping and Transports is very much concerned. This Report has spoken about the fact that most of our inland waterways are facing very serious hazards; that is to say, hazards of shallow water, erosion of the banks of the rivers and so on. But of all the inland waterways, the one which is never described as an inland waterway—because it happens to be one of the major rivers of this country—is the Ganga when it reaches the Gangetic delta when it becomes known more familiarly as the river Hooghly. Everybody knows that for years we are grappling with this problem, viz. that unless something is done to improve the navigability of that river, the Calcutta Port ion dwindling, is shrinking and it can no longer receive large vessels as it used to, at one time. And this is all due to the

[Seri Inderfit Gupta]

siltation of the river, for which Government has spent a considerable amount of money constructing the Farakka Barrage, in the hope that we would get an extra flow of water from the Ganga diverted through the Farakka Barrage, which would flush out the accumulated silt from the Hooghly river, and thus permit navigability to be increased. But I regret to say that this is not happening at all.

I think the State Government only a couple of weeks ago has drawn the attention of the Centre to the fact that despite the fact that under the agreement between India and Bangladesh we are supposed to receive 40,000 cusecs of additional water through Farakka — that is the minimum which has been judged by water experts to be the required amount for flushing out the silt from the river—in addition to dredging, of course and dredging has also to go on—instead of 40,000 cusecs, we receive for example in January, 18,000 cusecs and in February 12,000 cusecs of water. The condition of the river is deteriorating all the time; and the future of Calcutta Port itself, which serves a huge hinterland and on which depends the employment not only of the people of my State but of lakhs of people belonging to other States who are located in area that for their own business trade employment and so on—all that future is at stake. So I suggest that the stretch of the Hooghly river from the seamount i.e. from what is known as sand-heads right upto the two ports viz. Haldia and Calcutta should be treated as a national water-way. Just as we have the national highway, there is no reason why this should not be considered as a national water-way. This is the only river port, the major port in our country. The other ports are all situated on the sea-coast. This is the only major port which is situated at a considerable distance from the seamount; and it is an important major port on which much of the commercial and industrial activity of this country depends. And the Government knows very well that conditions are deteriorating every day, and unless that river is properly de-silted, and unless it is properly trained also—training works on the various tributaries of Hooghly have been given up long ago—I think in a few years' time we will find that the Calcutta

Port has died a natural death. So, I wish to draw your attention to this: this National Transport Policy Committee's report has emphasized the fact that when you are undertaking modernisation measures in these ports, at present, the single biggest item of modernization that one finds is the introduction of containerization. Well, I suppose that with the progress of modern technology and all that, one cannot go on saying that containers should not be allowed in our country, because they are going to displace human labour.

So, there is a big argument about it because we cannot compare our country with its huge volume of mass unemployment with other highly developed countries of the West. However, this report has pointed out that whenever measures of modernisation are introduced in the port, the labour there must be consulted at every stage. I am not quoting at the moment. The paragraph is here. They said very clearly that without consultation with labour, these new methods of containerisation and other technological innovations should not be introduced because there is likely to be a great deal of displacement of people leading to friction and so on. This is already happening in Calcutta Port. I do not want to go into details because of lack of time. The number of workers has already been reduced substantially and I believe with the extension of containerisation, nobody tell us what would be their own projection; we are supposed to be taken into confidence; but, nobody tells us what are their actual projections in the next five or 10 years, as to how much labour will be displaced and what will happen to that labour in case this containerisation becomes the rule of the day.

As far as shipping goes, I have not much to say, but I just point out that there was some talk at one time, I remember of the government stepping into it to bring legislation, if necessary, to fix some kind of minimum level of cargo which would be available, reserved for Indian shipping. I do not know what has happened to that. The Indian shippers, I know, were very keen on that. By shippers I mean the shipping line. But, at a present, the total share of traffic carried by Indian shipping as compared with non-

Indian shipping or world shipping is declining all the time ; it is not going up at all ; and I do not refer only to Calcutta. This is the general picture in all the Indian ports and we are constantly told that the foreign shipping lines are offering attractive terms to the shipping and so on and, therefore, they prefer to patronise those shipping lines rather than our own. As far as I know, the attractive terms so-called, which are being offered are only some kind of a discount in freight rate which is done under the table ; and apart from that, I think government should definitely step in and take some concrete measures to see that Indian shipping is protected in the sense that there must be minimum amount of cargo reserved for Indian shippers ; that is not being done.

On the question of roads and bridges, Prof. Damdave was pointing a picture very vividly as to what would happen if during a war damage is done to a particular form of transport in an area, if there is no alternative form of transport available, there would be absolutely a chaos. I must mention the fact that after all these years and years, these twin cities of Calcutta and Howrah are still connected by only one bridge and the eastern railway terminal is located on the Howrah side and the rest of the City of Calcutta is on the other side and connecting two is one single bridge. I think many members in this House have occasions to visit Calcutta occasionally for various purposes ; they have travelled across that bridge. Missing of planes and missing of trains is the least part of the trouble that is caused by the tremendous congestion on this single bridge. I also wonder what would happen if anything happens to that bridge any day. Suppose something happens ; some damage is done to that bridge and it has to be closed for some time ; if it becomes unuseable, we have not yet got the second bridge to fall back. The second Hooghly Bridge which is hanging fire for so many years is making no progress at all. On two banks of the river, some infrastructure has been built, some approach road has been built and so on. But, as far as the river itself is concerned, we do not find a single span of the bridge coming up even now.

I am sure, the Minister who has travel-

led extensively, knows that in practically all the cities of the world which are situated on rivers or which have been divided by a river in between, there are at least 12-15 bridges across that river at different parts of the city. But Calcutta City has got one bridge and if anything happens, God forbids, to that bridge, then there will be utter dislocation and chaos.

Between Howrah and Calcutta with the railway track on the one side and the airport on the other side there will be no link left at all. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to take very seriously and urgently the question of completing or going ahead with the second bridge. We do not know the position. We just read now and then that funds have been allotted and all that but the work does not seem to progress at all.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : Funds have not been allotted.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I do not think that funds were a problem at all. The foreign consultants who were given this job in the beginning they wasted time quarrelling about what type of bridge should it be high level bridge, or low level bridge or cantilever bridge, and that was the reason for the delay. On this rests the future of the city and the transport problem.

Now, coming to roads, I have one final word to say about roads. This report has said quite a lot about roads, Right here at page 169 you will find that they have commented :

“The development of rural roads received encouragement during the Fifth Plan period as a part of the Minimum Needs Programme, with the object of linking of all villages having a population of 1,500 and above with an all-weather road”.

If this, was the encouragement given in the Fifth Plan period, to link it up with the Minimum Needs Programme, we are now in the Seventh Plan and the position must be better.

I think the Minister would like to mention about the 20-Point Programme also.

[Shri Inderjit Gupta]

For election campaign when we go to our constituencies, where rural constituencies are there we find that—I do not know about Punjab and I cannot speak about Haryana also they may be better off—the position in respect of rural roads in my State or in the Eastern region is a single issue of discontent and dissatisfaction of our rural people. The condition of our rural roads has to be seen,—they are not all weather roads at all. They are all fair weather roads. That at least is the position in my part of the country. In the monsoons they are not negotiable at all. The total cost in terms of money and the time which will be required to convert these rural roads into all-weather roads or to connect them with the main highway would be prohibitive. But this report has suggested some really good alternatives. They have suggested supplementary sources of finance. They have suggested other possibilities of cost reduction in this matter of improving rural roads on which the vast majority of the people of our country depend.

I know that in my constituency, during rainy season, if patients or sick people have to be taken to a hospital or rural health centre, first of all they have to be carried by three or four people on their shoulders because it is impossible for anybody to negotiate those roads, because, they are all full of water—knee-deep in slush some time—for you to reach the metal roads. Then they will have to be taken to the rural health centre which may be several kilometres away. We have been doing quite a lot for rural development, but as far as roads are concerned, the situation really is absolutely deplorable even now.

And the other thing I would like to say is that there are some border areas. I do not mean orders which are necessarily, or potentially very hostile or explosive. Those borders are looked after by the Border Roads Organisation generally. I am speaking for example about my constituency which lies along the centre border of Bangladesh. In many places there are no roads at all. You have to move by boats in rivers.

It has to criss-cross so many rivers and narrower channels of water. On this border

i.e. 24 Parganas district on our side and Khulna and Jessore districts of Bangladesh on the other side, there is a total lack of any kind of decent roads or bridges. We may not be apprehending, at the moment, any trouble with our neighbour on that side as we may be facing on the western border, for example. But what is happening is that there is a tremendous increase in criminal activities. Armed dacoits and armed criminal miscreants come across from the other side and commit crimes on our border, terrorise the people, commit dacoities and then run away crossing the river. This whole area is patrolled by the BSF. The BSF here is supposed to be having mobile patrol not only on land but on the rivers also. But the people of this area have lost all confidence in the BSF which goes on saying that they cannot apprehend these people coming across because, they say, the condition of the roads is so bad that their patrols cannot move about. I am saying that this is not a question of defence in the military sense, but certainly both for the convenience of the people living in these areas as well as to give them some security from this kind of trans-border criminal activities, at least the roads in this area and should be built at places where bridges should be constructed but there are no bridges, these should be constructed. This should be looked into very thoroughly by the Government and if necessary, the cooperation of the State Government will also be available. But they should together do something in this matter, because the condition is so bad that the people are completely fed up.

Finally, I will say that it is all a question of priority. I understand that. The Planning Commission itself should be concerned with this whole general problem of transport policy because so many Ministries are involved. So, we will hear as, of course we were hearing this morning from the Railway Minister also, that it is all a question of financial constraints, scarcity of resources and all that. Obviously, that means that in that case you have to decide on priorities. I am not saying anything about the railways because we are going to have extensive discussion on the Grants for Railways and all that. But as far as major ports of the country, taming of rivers, ship-

ping and roads especially rural roads, are concerned, all these different aspects and sectors of this transport question have to be taken up in an integrated way with, of course, necessary priorities. But the Government should come forward with some well-thought-out plan and tell us how they propose to move, because in the Seventh Five Year Plan, we expect, in this respect also some targets will be fixed and we will be told how they are going to be attained.

Finally, I would like to remind the Railway Minister that it is high time that freight equalisation policy is now done away with. It has not served the purpose for which it was introduced. The Committee has said so clearly. Five years ago, they have recommended that this policy should be phased out. Now, five years have passed but that policy is still continuing. It is not helping the dispersal of industry. But it is certainly helping the interests of some States and harming perhaps, some other States. That is not a good thing in the prevailing atmosphere of the country. It is better that this freight equalisation policy is abolished forthwith.

[Translation]

SHRI LALIT MAKEN (South Delhi) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, transport is a very important subject today in our country. I think National Transport Policy is of great importance and, especially, road transport and railways are of vital importance.

This report refers to national highways and road development. According to the present information, about 32 thousand kilometres of roads have been constructed in the country as national highways.

There has been a persistent demand that more and more national highways should be constructed, but the demand could not be met due to paucity of funds. I am of the view that there should be more and more national highways to facilitate development of the country. The Planning Commission should allocate more funds for the cons-

truction of national highways to accelerate the pace of development. At the same time, I support the suggestion made in the report, that instead of constructing new national highways, what is needed is that the national highways already constructed should be properly maintained. The construction of roads in started and stones rubble etc. are laid and thereafter for 5 to 10 years no further work is done. Therefore, instead of constructing new roads, priority should be given to proper maintenance of national highways already constructed. Besides, the highways should be linked with state capitals and backward areas. In this way, the backward areas and remote villages in the States will be linked with state highways. Paucity of funds is the hindrance in the construction of these state highways and for this my suggestion is that public sector undertakings and other institutions, with whom crores of rupees are lying unused may be asked to construct roads, national highways, state highways and the amount so spent can be recovered by levying toll tax. When the money is fully recovered the money released as toll tax thereafter may be made use of for the construction etc. of roads. In this way millions of rupees lying with the public sector will be put to proper use, national highways will be constructed leading to development of the country.

I want to say one thing specifically, to which a little attention has been paid. I would like to speak about the transport facilities in metropolitan cities. The problem of metropolitan cities is of different nature. That there are no transport facilities there; transport facilities are there in big cities. The biggest problem, which might aggravate with the passage of time, whether it is Delhi, Bombay, Madras or Calcutta, is the pace at which the traffic is increasing in all the metropolitan cities, and after ten years it will not be possible to drive vehicle, or to walk on the roads. Therefore, what is needed is that we should plan for the next 20 to 30 years.

So far as Delhi is concerned, it is compared with Bombay and it is said that whereas the people of Bombay have traffic sense, Delhites do not have such sense. Delhi's Traffic problem is a different one

[Shri Lalit Maken]

The people of Delhi makes maximum use of road transport and do not travel by trains unlike Bombay. In Delhi, there were 500 lines 30 years ago and now there are 660⁺ buses.]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE ;
Whatever is said about Delhi relates to rural areas of Delhi.

SHRI LALIT MAKEN : It is said about Delhites that they do not have traffic sense. It is a big problem and I am speaking from that point of view.

One thing to which I would like to draw the attention of the House is the speed at which traffic is increasing in Delhi. It will be difficult after ten years to drive buses on the roads. Some hon. members have suggested that for smaller distance, road transport should be made use of whereas for long distance, trains should be used. I think this formula cannot be applied to the metropolitan cities because as I have already stated, in Delhi and other big cities the problem of transport and increased traffic cannot be solved through buses alone. I would like to suggest that in all the metropolitan cities there is need to plan for the next 20 or 30 years and when the construction of new flyovers and widening of roads is undertaken this fact should be born in mind. The roads should not be widened by two or three feet just to cope with the traffic for next one or two years but we should try to visualise the situation after, say 20 or 30 years and plan accordingly. In big cities large scale encroachments on roads have been made by constructing Jhuggis and hops and therefore, I request the Government to enact *stringent* laws regarding trunk roads on which buses ply and enforce them strictly and there should be no compromise in this regard. The encroachments on roads, wherever they exist, should be removed so that there is smooth flow of traffic. About Delhi I would like to say that Ring Railway was introduced to ease the traffic in the city. But it is lying mostly unused. But one happens to travel by Ring railway, one will hardly find fifty or hundred people travelling there in. The reason is that the Ring Rail-

way in Delhi covers a small area and it stops at Stations meant for loading and unloading goods and people at large can not make use of them.

As Mr. Madhu Dandavate has said there is need for electrification and instead of using diesel and petrol we should use more of electricity. But at the same time I would like to suggest that if we do not take to other means of transport, apart from road transport, in the metropolitan cities, then, say after ten, fifteen or twenty years, the situation in these cities will worsen. My suggestion is that we should run electric trolley buses. we should not only be satisfied with the electrification of trains but ply electric trolley buses, trams and tube railway in the cities. It might appear to be a dream but we have to undertake perspective planning. I feel that we are discussing this report after five years and therefore, it has become obsolete. Our aim should be to plan for the coming twenty, thirty or forty years. We should keep that in our mind. I would like to submit that there should be provision for electric trolley buses, tube railway and mono rail, as are being run in foreign countries.

There was also a discussion about pollution in Delhi. Now the Government is stressing the need to check pollution. For this, it becomes all the more necessary that there is more of electrification. The number of diesel and petrol operated vehicles should be minimised and there should be greater stress on vehicles run with electricity. Recently, we saw a few vehicles on Delhi roads which are battery operated. The Government should pay attention to this fact and use battery-operated vehicles in metropolitan cities and in Delhi, so that world-wide diesel and petrol crisis and also the pollution problem are operated. It will also reduce the noise pollution. This will be useful from all points of view. Apart from term, the committee has suggested in its report the constitution of a single authority. Whether this is possible or not, I do not want to go into this controversy. The attention being paid to the road transport is evident from the fact

that in big cities it is being run by small municipalities. I would like to say that there should be some kind of uniformity in the road transport system: The DTC employees in Delhi have different pay scales as compared to others. Some get industrial DA, Other get Central DA. some are covered under the Pay Commission, others are not. Road transport should, at least, be controlled and coordinated by the Central Transport Ministry. If it is not possible to cover the entire country and each and every town or village, at least in the metropolitan cities, where small municipal Committees run the transport and due to lack of funds cannot run it, efficiently road transport should be brought under the control and supervision of the transport Ministry. There should be uniformity. The fares structure should be uniform all over. The pay scales, dearness allowance and other facilities should be allowance and other gestion is accepted, then we can provide useful transport facility everywhere, with these words I conclude.

[English]

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir the House should be grateful to the Hon. Speaker for permitting this discussion on the Report of the National Transport policy Committee and also to Prof. Madhu Dandavate for insisting on this discussion. I wish this credit had gone to my friend Shri Madhavro or Ansari Saheb. But it is unfortunate that for the last five years in spite of the repeated requests—the House did not get an opportunity to discuss this vital document. This was very important because the problems have aggravated even after the report that was submitted. These problems, I dare say, are closely inter-linked with our own development goals and priorities and the problems of our basic infrastructure. It impinges upon the very growth and progress of our national economy. The appointment of this Committee itself was a significant landmark and I must congratulate Prof. Madhu Dandavate for taking this initiative when he was in the treasury benches.

There has been debate among the economists about the importance of social

overheads and about the importance of comparative improvements of transport and so on, but the way the transport system has developed, particularly the railway system, has not been in keeping with the economic needs of the country. I know you have been teaching the students about the development of transport system. The political approach was basically different and it had to be different. It developed in a hazard manner because it was geared towards control of the vast territory of the sub-continent.

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour) : It developed in a very systematic manner to benefit them.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : Yes, but I am talking in terms of the economic development of the sub-continent. So, the ports and railways developed and there is a graphic account of this development in our great leader, Dadabhai Nauroji's book where he developed the 'drain theory'. He described how the British imperialism had been draining off the resources and taking away the bloodstream of the Indian masses. In his book called poverty and British rule in India he examined long back this question of successive drains. During the national liberation struggle, when there was a national planning committee with which Prof. Ranga and other distinguished persons were associated with Subhash Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, all these problems were focussed. Later on, even when we began the Planning process itself, many of these problems were focussed properly. We had a set of problems with the structure of the railways and with the Sterling companies which we had taken over later on. So, after Independence our priorities had to change and it did change, but somehow we did not give enough attention to this crucial area. You will forgive me for saying so. It is vital not only for national security and rapid economic development, but also for our national integration. So, the approach to the transport policy or development of the railway system network or highways and ports and so on should not be viewed in isolation. It should not be viewed only as a mode for improving our transport system, but also in the overall national

[K. P. Unnikrishnan]

interest for promoting national integration.

Therefore, when we talk about some of these things, it is important in terms of our very existence as a nation, it is not only that we are discussing about airports, sea ports and National Highways and coastal shipping or inland waterways system and so on, but the very existence of this nation itself. That is why it is a very welcome measure and this Report received national acclaim. In the First Plan period there was an investment of Rs. 434 crores, but that is, if I remember, about 20 per cent or so, whereas in the Sixth Plan, although the outlay is Rs. 8620 crores, percentwise it has come down to 12 per cent. From 22 per cent or 23 per cent it has been cut almost half in the Sixth Plan period. I do not remember the figures of the Seventh Plan estimates. Therefore, as I said, it should not be looked at from the point of view of the movement of goods and people which is important but from the point of view of our very existence as a nation.

There were about 1000 kilometres of route length of railway system. After Independence we have been able to achieve only an expansion of about 6000 kilometres. And, Sir, when we have our entire planning process, the social aim was to destroy the regional imbalances of the system. I cannot say the same thing that in the development of railways or transport system this has happened. Particularly, take the State from where I come, Kerala, which has the highest passenger density. I am sure Shri Madhavrao will not deny that, but I can also say that we are not casting any aspersions on friends elsewhere, but we also buy tickets. Ticketless travel is the least in Kerala.

SHRI PRIYARANJAN DAS MUNSHI (Howrah):

(Interruption)

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN: Yes, Therefore, it is almost at nil level. But it is only one-third of the national average in route length and in spite of our repeated efforts through the State Governments

and Members of Parliament and various other agencies—and you know, we are also known for our mobility. I am not talking about political mobility I am if talking about mobility—if you go and see there you will find that twenty four hours people are on the move in that State. But what are the priorities, as for example, of railway traction? Power is the most abundant, it is the cheapest in the State and here is mobile State where people are demanding more and more trains moving straight criss-cross and people are arriving in thousands all the time from the Gulf countries and various other countries where they have gone in search of their livelihood. But in spite of that there has not even been a policy for electric traction has not even been considered, which should have provided the cheapest mode of transport in Kerala length-wise. Similarly, vital links like Mysore-Telecherry, Madurai-Bodinaikanur or even the pilgrim line which was promised by Shri Kamalapati Tripathi. like Guruvayo—these have not been taken up. Therefore, by any investment criteria some of these lines would have got priority, but the Railway Board strangely enough has other priorities. Similarly, I am happy that the question has been raised, and there was a mention in today's Budget speech by the Railway Minister on the Bombay-Mangalore line. This is one of the most, I would say, key, arterial lines and it was a deliberate policy of the British not to have constructed these lines along the west coast. It not only benefits the coastal States of Maharashtra, Goa, Karanataka and Kerala . . .

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Even the Britishers were afraid of our constituencies.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN: Sir, it is the biggest missing link in the entire railway system. Therefore, the Committee was right when it said—you may permit me to quote:

“It is in this context that there is an urgent need for developing alternative routes on which traffic can be diverted, reducing leads and consequently total transportation effort, The saving in energy

as a result of reduced transportation effort is of great value to the economy in the context of energy shortages. There is for example a missing link between Bombay and Mangalore. Traversing the potentially rich west coast areas this link will reduce lead on the north south traffic by about 600 to 1000 kms and considerably relieve congestion on the Grand Trunk and Bombay—Madras routes."

Sir, I do not want to quote more. The Committee goes on. This should have got topmost priority. But unfortunately some have had a kind of wrong consideration. I mean, I do not want to mention names—this is Mr Dandavate's project, this is Mr T. A. Pai's project and so on because some of them happened to be coming from those areas. This is a very unfortunate approach to take. And I am happy that the Railway Minister today mentioned it. But mention is not enough. It has to be carried forward on a gigantic way and construction of line has to be done on a time-bound programme and I can also assure you that I know finance for this line would be forthcoming if the Government of India is serious. I do not want to go into the details of that.

Therefore, the question of expansion and priorities is very important. Sir, Railways have another importance of its own. It is a very energy efficient mode of transport and in the present context of economic development and phase of economic development, priority has to be given for railway development.

Sir, now you would permit me to make some references to other transport mode as well. Sir, the national highway system is only about 5 to 6% of the total route length, although it carries 1/3rd of the transport. Now I am told that it is 40%. I read the other day that it was more than 40%. When the report came it was 30%. Earlier, it was 25%. Therefore, the development of this highway network has not been commensurate with the traffic that it is now handling. It is also partly the result of the failure of

the railway administration. It is because certain commodities which were being moved by the railway system are not moving now and they have taken alternative route and have put a burden on the national highway system and the road network system. Therefore, Sir, it is important that this grossly inadequate national highway system should be developed and things like Express Highways and double laning should be taken up immediately on a priority basis. Sir, here, I want to say something again—if you permit me—something about some of us who have come from the coastal States. You cannot have a maintenance criteria of national highways on a uniform basis. Where you have 5 times the rainfall in coastal districts, particularly in Kerala, Karnataka, Konoan area of Maharashtra and also coastal area of A.P., you cannot impose a uniform pattern of maintenance criteria. This resulting in huge losses in the in the State where we cannot maintain them and you know whatever we give, it is devoured so that national highway expansion work cannot be taken up. This was our experience in Kerala whether it is national highway No. 17 or 47 or 47A and some of these areas, as I have said, have been neglected in terms of national highway development. Certain important roads like Bombay-Mysore-Calicut which have been recommended for long have not been taken up for expansion in the national highways.

I may also be permitted to point out that today we have the highest *per capita* ownership of automobiles in Kerala. The roads are cluttered with automobiles, may be as a result of the Gulf boom, and therefore, it is very important that urgent attention is given to our road system.

Similarly, I want to say something about the national permit system. I must here pay a tribute to late Shri Sanjay Gandhi who was primarily responsible for introducing the national permit system because at that time I happened to be one of the authors in a committee on the first 20-point programme and the only one point on which he emphasized and he wanted it to be included in the 20-point programme was the national Permit

[K. P. Unnikrishnan]

system, I do not know why the Railway authorities should question it. The Railway authorities have started questioning the desirability of having the national permit system itself. Your putting a restraint on the national permit system has resulted in racketeering and corruption in the system itself. I do not know how we are going to carry all our traffic or movement of people. Today I know about the movement of people in the south Indian States, the movement of people from state to state, the inter-State movement of pilgrims, tourists and so on, and, particularly, the movement of people in the so-called video-coaches has developed so rapidly that the only thing that is preventing it from developing further which is the demand of the people is the absence of free distribution of a legitimate number of national permits. Therefore, I do not accept the objections raised by the Railway authorities in regard to the national permit system.

There has been an argument that some States are losing revenue. Why can't you have a pooling of the revenue of three or four States in a zone? After all, primarily, this kind of transport is limited to a zone. Therefore, it is very important that we pay urgent attention to this matter.

Similarly, I want to draw the attention of the House to a problem of bullock carts which is the most important thing in the transport structure of our country where there are more than 30 million bullock-carts. Frankly, I did not realise it till my friends, Prof. Ramaswamy, who has been doing a lot of work in the Institute of Management at Bangalore drew my attention to it. There are more than 30 million bullock-carts in this country and that means more than 30 million families are dependent on this mode of transport. Now, 85 to 90 per cent of these bullock-carts do not have even tyres which any sensible transport policy and system would have provided. This is destroying our roads, our assets in turn. In theory at least we say that we are wedded as Prof. Dandavate reminds us to a Gandhian philosophy; we are wedded to *Ahimsa*. But the basic thing is to prevent cruelty to animals. The ques-

tion is whether you look at it from the point of view of a sensible national transport policy affecting the most important and vital transport instrument or whether you look at it from the point of view of *Ahimsa*. There is an immediate need of paying attention to the renovation of bullock system which will be the most cost efficient system by introducing even tyres and improving the design of the bullock-cart itself.

I would like to refer to a few other matters. There is also the problem of road safety. I would like to say something about the air transport also.

In the Soviet Union, you will find that more the distance you travel, not only telescopic rates are in operation but cheaper rates. I was told that it is one of the means by which Republics have been encouraged to come together. Here my friends Shafi Qureshi came and abolished the telescopic rates and today it is in computer under a different point to point basis.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: He introduced microscopic rates;

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN: Therefore, it is very important that if a man from North-East has to come to Kerala from Kashmir to Kanyakumari or from East coast to West Coast and if he wants to use the modality of air transport system, he has to be encouraged to do so and the only way of doing it is by providing telescopic rate and also a special rate.

In my State, the migration of half a million people—it is very important as nobody can be shut out—demands new airports and airport facilities in the State of Kerala.

The Calicut airport was promised in the year of a grace of 1950 by Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in this House. In 1980, we were told that it will be ready by 1983-84.

We are now 1985, and we are told that it will be ready by 1988?

Is this the way to approach the problems of a State which contributes thousands of crores of rupees every year by remittances of people by sweat and toil?

Therefore, through you I would request the hon. Minister concerned to pay emergent attention to this problem and see that the construction work of the Calicut airport is speeded up.

I conclude by saying that there can be only an integrated transport policy. While each of these problems can be solved in their respective ways, there has to be an integrated approach within the Government itself. In spite of the Transport Division of the Planning Commission, there has not been enough coordination within the Government itself. In spite of the Transport Division of the Planning Commission, there has not been enough coordination within the Government and that has been a grave lacuna to which the Committee itself has invited your attention.

Similarly, we must improve our coastal shipping facilities for movement of bulk commodities and also introduce new systems of hydrofoils and so on in the coastal areas as well as in the development of navigable waterways.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI (Howrah): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Since the beginning of the debate, I have been hearing that after five years of struggle Prof. Madhu Dandavate has been able to get this matter discussed today. While I appreciate his efforts, I would like to remind him since he is a shrewd parliamentarian that this is not a point to accuse the Government in this matter in the sense that in Parliament, many more committees recommendations do come and many more suggestions will be given but hardly there is any scope to debate all those recommendations and all those committees' reports and that is the usual closed practice not only in India but in the House of Commons also.

I was just calculating how many reports do appear in a year in Parliament based on recommendations. And it is the task of the Committee to go into the merit of

those recommendations. Prof. Madhu Dandavate might be scoring a point in the sense that while recommendations do come from a parliamentary committee, even they cannot be discussed in the House because Members of Parliament are involved. But when recommendations come from a Committee, Member of Parliament do not participate, there is much scope for the House to discuss and debate it and possibly from that point of view, Prof. Madhu Dandavate has referred this matter and that is why it has not been discussed for the last many years.

In 1978, the matter was referred to the Committee. Under the supervision of the Planning Commission, the report was made in 1980 and the action taken proposals and the recommendations were published in a book in 1982. It was made clear in that book which were the recommendations accepted by the Government in principle and which were the recommendations which could be accepted and which recommendations have not been considered. I would have been extremely happy if Prof. Madhu Dandavate would have referred at least these points to the credit of the Government.

Prof. Madhu Dandavate could have examined the document in the sense that the whole object of the Committee was to provide guidelines and counsel for inclusion of proposals in the the Sixth Plan which is about to be ended and he could have also enquired as to which were the proposals which had already been implemented within the Sixth Plan period or about to be implemented.

The Opposition Members have very intelligently ignored or deliberately avoided one aspect. They have put the whole burden on the Central Government. But if you see the whole thing, you will find that most of the things, if we really mean business; are to be dealt with by the State Governments. For example, if I want a new railway line or expand a railway line, first the land has to be acquired by the State Government. And it has been seen that money has been deposited, but in spite of that, there

[Shri Priya Ranjan Das Munshi]

was delay on the part of the State authorities in getting the land. I am not talking of West Bengal, but I am speaking generally.

Now I will confine myself to development of roads which is the most the important thing. In the case of district roads, who is the executive agency? It is not even the State Government, it is the local self-governing units, Zila Parishads and Panchayats which are concerned with rural people. A brahmin village pradhan of a Brahmin dominated village, takes care of his village discriminating against Harijans, and the pradhan of the particular political party dominating that particular village takes care of the interests of that Party-zone. There is this discrimination. I can substantiate with documents to prof. Madhu Dandavate and other Members how this has happened in the last few years in our country. In the last few years, in every matter we have been only politicking without taking care of the totality of the problem.

Who is the executive agency in respect of State highways? The State PWD. I may refer Mr. Amal Datta to one point here. The PWD Minister of their Government has stated that the funds for developing roads had been taken away by other Departments. Then the Chief Minister, in order to save the prestige of the Government, made those funds available for construction of roads. This is what is happening. Mr. Indrajit Gupta is absent now I may say that we have the worst road conditions today in the country only in West Bengal, the condition is horrible. Again, in respect of national highways, the executing authority is the State Government. Only money is to be granted by the Central Government. Money is granted, any by the time the tender is called and by the time the work starts monsoon sets in. I do not know what is the conspiracy. Deliberately the work begins during the monsoon so that it gets washed out in the rains resulting in escalation of cost. This is the position as far as programmes for development of roads are concerned. This point should be taken note of.

Mr. Indrajit Gupta referred to the

question of construction of the second bridge on the Hooghly. He knows what is happening there. He knows that the executing authority here is not the Central Government but the State Government. If you want to speed up the progress of the construction of the second Hooghly bridge, I want Mr. Datta to change the Chairman there * *— but his term has been extended for reasons which I do not know. He has spoiled the whole thing. I am prepared to say with a sense of responsibility that, if an inquiry is instituted, I can prove that a lot of scandals are there. The Chairman's term is over, but it has been extended...

AN HON. MEMBER : Chairman of what ?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI : Chairman of the Second Hooghly Bridge Construction Authority. Mr. Indrajit Gupta is not here. But what can he do? has to defend the Government there. So, these are certain things which are happening.

Mr. Amal Datta says that coal can be carried by sea and that will be much cheaper than carrying coal by railways. It may be so; I have not calculated. But I would request him to name one port near Dhanbad or Raniganj or Asansol where ships can move. I do not know of any such port I do not know how he says that. How can you move coal from Dhanbad or Raniganj by ship? You will have to move by road transport or wagon and then come to the ship. Let him show one coalfield in the country where such transportation is possible.

PROF MADHU DANDAVATE : He misunderstood the concept of day port-

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI : What I want to mean is not criticism alone and what I said is the sixth plan is already over. Now we have to think of the Seventh Plan. My first personal suggestion is that so far as the National Highways are concerned; please don't leave it to the mercy of the State Govern-

** Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

ments for execution. There are so many national highways. You take them over and look after them and see that they are improved. You consult the Law Ministry. If you want to expand the road or construct a new one, you face litigation. You go to the court for an injunction. I will request you to please find out a way to amend the Constitution in such a manner that so far as transport and communication development programmes are concerned, no such writ petitions are admitted. If this is not done, I am afraid nothing will be done. The great monumental achievement of the Shershah Suri's Grant Trunk Road from Delhi to Howrah, is now like a skeleton. You cannot expand it. Lot of litigation is there. I request the Minister to take care of this thing and see that a National Highway Authority is formed immediately to take care of our National Highways which lie within the Jurisdiction of the State Governments and see that proper co-ordination is ensured and also see that the State Government of Bengal change that** Chairman of the New Hooghly Bridge. I do not know whenever the construction of the Hooghly Bridge gets delayed, I could see some new party headquarters buildings are coming up. I do not know what connection it has got.

SHRI ERASU AYYAPU REDDY (Kurnool) : The Committee which was appointed in 1978 has presented its report in 1980. From the statistics which were taken into consideration by the Committee, some of them hold good, but most of them do not hold good. During the last 6 years vast technological changes have taken place and a number of changes have taken place in India itself. New industrial sectors have grown and new agricultural production centres have also grown. The mode and methodology of transport has witnessed a vast change. Therefore, what I suggest is that we must have an expert body to co-ordinate. . .

AN HON. MEMBER : You want another committee ?

SHRI ERASU AYYAPU REDDY : It is unfortunate that we are allergic and

** Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

sceptical of committees. I am not suggesting any expert committee to go into the question. I am suggesting an expert committee which will co-ordinate. It will be a committee at the national level which will co-ordinate. For instance we have a Ministry for Civil Aviation. We have a Ministry for Railways. We have a Ministry for Transport & Shipping. There are three different Ministries. But we require an expert committee at the national level to co-ordinate all these things. For instance, even transport can be divided into a number of categories-rural transport is different. Urban transport is different and again passenger transport is one thing and goods transport is another thing. And goods transport again can be divided into several things. There is transport of agricultural produce. Then there is the transport of consumer goods, transport of raw materials to industrial centres. All these things require an elaborate study and expert advice. of course, as I have stated, vast technological changes have taken place. We have now come into the age of computers and electronics and where foreign countries are thinking of monorails and electric rails and flying rails, we are still in the bullockcartage.

18.00 hrs

SHRI AMAL DATTA : We have 17 million bullock-carts.

SHRI ERASU AYYAPU REDDY : Yes, we do have bullock-carts. I am not saying that we can dispense with it. We must have bullock-carts and as suggested by my friend, something must be done with regard to bullock-carts also-what is called research must be undertaken, by which transport into rural areas by bullock-carts can be made easy and which facilitate easy transport of agricultural produce from Village centres to urban centres. That is also improved.

But what is that the statistics which were taken into consideration some of the basic statistics remain unchanged. It is true more than three and a half lakh villages . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. Member will continue his speech tomorrow.