activities with a view to protecting States against internal disturbances and for matters connected therewith."

The Motion was adopted

S. BUTA SINGH: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

12.29 hrs.

HIGH COURT AND SUPREME COURT JUDGES (CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) AMENDMENT BILL, 1986

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H R. BHARDWAJ): On behalf of Shri A. K. Sen, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the High Court Judges (Conditions of Service) Act, 1954 and the Supreme Court Judges (Conditions of Service) Act, 1958.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the High Court Judges (Conditions of Service) Act, 1954 and the Supreme Court Judges (Conditions of Service) Act, 1958."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ : Sir, I introduce** the Bill.

DISCUSSION ON RECENT RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): On 6th August when the House paid homage to the tragic victims of Hiroshima unfortunately, the same day we

got a ghastly news about the accident in Bihar near Palamau where Amritsar-Tatanagar Express collided with a few wagons on the bridge and as a result of that there was heavy loss of life and injury to several people. Still we do not know how many are dead. Only the dead and the God know how many have died. But I am sure, in course of time all the details will come out.

With my involvement with the railways for two years, I have always developed an emotional attachment to the railways and, therefore, whenever I hear of a ghastly railway accident, I always feel as if my own house was shaken. And with that feeling today I rise to initiate discussion on the recent railway accident.

While giving a physical analysis of various railway accidents that have taken place recently, I will, at the same time, try to offer to this House some positive and concrete suggestions by which safety can be ensured in future and at least such calamities can be minimised. They cannot be totally eliminated for the very simple reason that we have a vast system of railways which is 61,000 route kilometres with 10,000 trains everyday covering about 7.000 stations, a crore of people on the suburban and non-suburban trains travelling everyday and a large freight traffic also travelling on these lines. So. with such a vast expanse, accidents would not be totally ruled out but we must try to prevent as much damage to the system as possible so that we may be able to have a proper safety on the railways.

If you analyse the various accidents that have taken place in the course of last several years, you will find that there are various categories of accidents and they had to be daelt with in a slightly different way. We have the accidents due to human failure, we have accidents due to failure of equipments. we have the accidents due to collision of trains as in this particular case, then we have accidents due to derailment of trains caused by the fractured rails on which they run, then we have sometimes the accidents due to non-visibility as a result of fog on the railway track. We have also the railway accidents and not few—due to unmanned railway crossings of the railways. We also have certain a ccidents due to inadequate inspection

^{**} Introduced with the recommendation of the President.

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of the tracks and the train formation. And lastly, there are certain accidents due to sabotage, removal of fish-plates either by antisocial elements or by the extremists in the country. We must take cognisance of all these forms of accidents and devise the necessary safety measures.

As far as the recent accident near Palamau is concerned, it was essentially an accident by collision and I will request the Hon. Minister for Transport, I will crave her indulgence, that some of the steps I had suggested, which were there but which were discarded, if they are revived, probably the accidents by collision can be avoided.

So, let us try to find out how the accidents by collision take place. If we have either a fatigued railway driver on an absentminded railway driver, he sees that there is a red signal because there is a stationary railway train or a wagon beyond that signal, He sometimes does not take cognisance of that red signal and the entire train rams into another stationary train and as a result of that the collision accident takes place.

I am very proud that Indian railwaymen have devised certain device called automatic warning system. All hats off to the railway scientists, those working at the RDSO at Lucknow. They have devised a very interesting instrument called automatic warning system and it is mainly to avoid accidents by collision. They were formerly introduced on the high-density routes like Gaya-Mughal Sarai and Howrah-Burdwan because they were extremely high-density routes. The working of this device is extremely interesting. I would like to share with the House and also with you, Sir, the novelty of that particular device. Sometimes the driver sees the red signal and neglects it. He does not apply the brake. Now our railway scientists have devised a device called automatic warning system which is fixed up below the chamber of the railway engine and also a track magnet is fixed only half a kilometre away from the signal. The entire apparatus works on the basis and principle of electromagnetism. The track magnet is fixed up near the rail and when the engine comes just above the track magnet, the two magnets are just one over the other and the electric

circuit is completed through the signal. The moment there is the red signal, the same current passes through the track magnet. It is actually magnetised. When the chamber just comes above it, that generates an electro magnetic current in the chamber magnet and that by some device is converted into a shrill whistle. Therefore at one kilometre or half a kilometre from the red signal, if he has not applied the break he gets this shrill whistle. If the driver is very much absentminded like an absent-minded professor for instance and he does not even listen to the shrill whistle and does not apply the break, the beauty of this instrument is that within a fixed length of time, if he does not apply the break, the break is then automatically applied and that is how accident by collosion is avoided. When on these two high density routes the automatic warning system was introduced...

MR. SPEAKER: But how about the detached bogies standing on the rails?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: That does not matter, Sir. Whenever something is standing beyond the signal, the red signal is always given. Whether it is train or detached boggie, it does not matter.

MR. SPEAKER: It was not there on the track, it was beyond.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Of course if there was ino signal nearby this cannot be done. It is only within the vicinity of a signal... (Interruptions). Very often, at sensitive bridges, some distance away from that, there is a signal arrangement that becomes vulnerable. Of course, all bridges do not have that. But there are certain vulnerable bridges like that and beyond them, some sort of signal element is always there. When these types of automatic warning systems were introduced on high density routes—on these 2 routes to which I made a mention—not a single accident or collision has taken place. From that we have to take a lesson that not only they are not to be discarded but the automatic warning system should be introduced in all the high density routes. It is my humble request to the Hop. Minister that this should be taken note of and this should be introduced.

Dis. on recent Rly.

Accidents

There is a problem of track renewals. I am sorry that the Finance Minister is not here. I would have liked to help the Minister of Transport by making this plea to the Finance Minister on behalf of the entire House. Sometimes there are back-log of primary renewals of rails to the exent of 6,000 to 10,000 kilometres and this is a very dangerous phenomenon. Just as in a single accident, sometimes the bones undergo multiple fractures, similarly, sometimes due to overuse of the rails, they are likely to undergo multiple fractures. Fortunately in the Railways we have a device called ultrasonic device which is to be kept on a trolly and it is to be moved on the rails. At any place where there is some sort of fracture on the rails, immediately an indication is given and there is a flash on the ultrasonic device. It not only finds whether the rail is fractured, but it finds what is the depth of the fracture. Even that can be located on the gallibrated ultrasonic device. With the help of this it was found out that 6000 to 10000 kilometres would require primary renewal. Otherwise multiple fractures take place when heavy vehicles move in. I will request the Finance Ministry who is not present in the House, through you, that in the allocation of funds to the Railways, top priority may be given to the renewal of primary rails so that these rails which are likely to be fractured can be replaced and this backlog can be removed.

There is a question of sabotage, due to the recent activities of extremists in different parts of the country. Sometimes we find that by removal of fishplates accidents take place due to this sabotage. But for that there is a very fine device. I would request the Hon. Minister to take cognisance of that. If the saboteur wants to remove a fish plate, I would request the Hon. Minister, don't leave that job to the saboteur. You yourself remove the fish plate. I am not suggesting that she should indulge in the activities of sabotage. But what I suggest is that scientists have devised a method by which the fish plate system can be completely replaced by short and long welded rails. The rails are just fixed like that. No fish plates are necessary. The long welded and short welded rails eliminate the fish plates completely. And if this pattern is accepted on a large

scale and the fish plates are completely eliminated you will find that major accidents by sabotage can be totally climinated.

Sir, as far as tracks are concerned, the safety device is ensured. The number of interesting devices which the tracks are getting are automatic signal system and also axle countries. Sometimes what happens is, - you just referred, Sir-that train is moving and on the way some accident has taken place, sometimes the couplers between the two have broken and therefore, some wagons or some bogies are detached. One does not know when they are passing across a particular station or a particular rail. Sir, there is a system called axle counters. By that device you can count how many axles and wheels have passed across one particular point, and for instance, if you just imagine one bogie has four wheels and two axles. In that case the record will be there and from the axle counter if you find that the counts are less than what they ought to have been if the entire train was intact, then you can locate immediately that some wagons have been detached. I very much insist on the Transport Minister to try to introduce the system of axle counters effectively so that you can count. So, if you get one count, that means two wheels apart, four counts, that means two four-wheels apart. It is something like that when one scientist is asked what is the principle of an axle counter, he said that the principle of axle counter is, count the number of counts that have passed by counting the number of legs that have passed. So, four legs means one count, like that how many axles one bogie has. If that particular formula is there, we can find out safely whether the entire train has arrived or some bogies have been detached and immediately you can go on finding out where the wagons or the bogies have been detached.

Then tracks are getting automatic signalling system. In the suburban areas Calcutta, Bombay and Madras the automatic signalling system is there, it is very old and therefore, a complete rationalisation and rehauling of this system is absolutely necessary. Adequacy of brake power is a 'must' Sir. We are going in for vacuum brakes. The brake power is to be increased. In fact, very often even under adverse

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condition, if the driver is able to have the adequate brake power, and he is able to bring the entire train to a halt, in that case by increasing the brake power of every train it would be possible for us to see that by increasing the brake power of the train we can ensure better safety. So, that also should be attended to.

some accidents had taken place Sir, because of neglect of certain rules and procedures. Agreement was made about 10 hours' duty. But then that is not effectively implemented everywhere. I would like the Hon. Minister to take note of what I am saying about the steam engines. Very often the firemen working on the steam engine along with the driver are given also training for running that train for emergency purposes. Sometimes, for instance, an extremist or a terrorist attacks the engine driver and the engine driver is killed. How will the train move? Therefore, the fireman in the engine is also given emergency training to drive the engine. But taking advantage of that, in some regions of the Indian Railways some of our authorities are making the firemen work as regular engine drivers taking undue advantage of the emergency training that is given to them. But sometimes emergency is very misused. Just as it can be be misused misused politically, it can administratively also and this is one instance of that and therefore, it should be completely eliminated. Sometimes the goods trains are running without guards. Therefore, that should be attended to.

12.44 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

Sir, some of the goods trains in the South are running without the guards. This has created problems. Then intermediate inspection of train formations sometimes is discarded. You check it in the beginning and check it in the end. But intermediate inspections are necessary and that should be done also.

Some accidents had taken place because of the foggy conditions. In that case the detonators can be used on the lines and in the course of fog you can find that it can be avoided. The most dangerous situation is that of unmanned level crossing. If I mistake note, out of 40,000 level crossings in the country, about 15,000 level crossings are unmanned railway crossings. There is no staff member to attend to that. Out of 40,000 railway crossing in India, about 15,000 are unmanned level crossings. Now. what is the difficulty? According to the law, if an unmanned level-crossing is to be converted into a manned level-crossing, for that purpose, the responsibility is to be taken by the local body, the panchayat or the municipality in whose jurisdiction, the unmanned crossing falls. Not only for conversion of unmanned crossing into manned crossing, but even for recurring expenditure of the unmanned crossing, they have to take the expenditure. That is why, our experience is, majority of the local bodies are not spending that amount. Therefore, I suggest that let the Railways conduct a complete survey of vulnerable unmanned crossingsleave aside others--- which have been proved on the basis of statistics of accidents, as vulnerable unmanned crossings, and they should be converted into manned levelcrossing with the expenditure of the Indian Railways. Then only, they will be converted into manned level-crossings.

Regarding the enquiry of accidents, for very valid reasons, Railways have evolved a very good system that when accident has taken place in Palamau, an enquiry will not be made by the authorities of the Railways because they may try to defend their own position. Therefore, the Commission on Railway Safety functions not under the Railway Ministry but under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. Of course, I do not know, whether at present, Civil Aviation and Tourism are together or they are separate. Now-a-days, after every two months there are so many permutations and combinations of Ministries, not only we do not remember the Ministries, we do not remember which Minister belongs to which particular Ministry.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Whoever is there, there is a Cabinet responsibility and they will look after.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Therefore, once I suggested that put a board here, the latest position of Ministers and their portfolios. Whenever we write to them, we know what is the position.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SURFACE TRANS-PORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): There should be a board for latest position of Opposition also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Anyway, that is a suggestion made in a lighter vain. But that is not your hand. It is for the Prime Minister to decide.

There is one more thing. The Commission on Railway Safety which is under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism undertakes the job. Then the compensation is to be paid. For that, there is the Claims Commissioner. This machinery must be made more effective, because when the nearest of kith and kin died, those who survive should be paid something before they die also. Therefore, the machinery of Claims Commissioner should be made more effective. In serious cases, even judicial enquiry is necessary. I will come to that point later on.

There were various committees and commissions appointed to go into the problems of railway safety and accident. Very fine reports have been prepared and I would request the Hon. Minister to go through them again and try to implement as many recommendations as possible. On the question of railway safety, try to take full assistance and cooperation of the trade union organisations in the Railways. All over the world, it is done. In Japan, they are the foremost in taking full cooperation of the trade union organisations for railway safety. That should be done.

I make a suggestion about couplers of the train. Couplers connect two bogies together. Unfortunately in our country we still have outdated system of screw couplers. Many countries of the world have already changed from the screw couplers to the centre buffer couplers which withstands greater haulage and greater safety. Therefore, I feel that the coupler system should be changed from the existing screw system to the centre buffer coupler system.

There is one more suggestion regarding the Integral Coach Factory. Sir, you come from Tamil Nadu and you should be proud that at Perambur, we have the Integral Coach Factory which is producing one of the best coaches for which there is export order from different parts of the world. They have got a particular method of constructing the entire coach structure. They have got a metal shell and rest of the material is fixed upon that. It is not only that. In between two coaches and two bogies, there have been tubes which have the strength of material so that, whenever there is a collision, they are able to absorb the shock and as a result of that, one particular damage in one compartment is not communicated to the other compartment. I think. ICF type of bogies are most suited for our railway safety purpose and they should be strengthened so that the shocks can be absorbed.

Dis, on recent Riv.

Accidents

Patrolling of tracks is very important. Whenever disturbances take place, Railways are the first to be attacked: Because those who want to express their wrath against the Government at the Centre find that this is the moving provocation. When there were some pro-reservation and anti-reservation riots, the Railways in Bihar were always attacked; so, I asked some agitators in Bihar. "Why do you attack the Railways?" They said, "The only representative of the Central Government that is available at our door is the moving train and, therefore, we attack them". Once I was asked the question, "Why is it that the reservationists and antireservationists attack railway trains during agitation?", and I said humorusly, "Because on our trains both reserved as well as unseserved compartments are available, both reservationists and anti-reservationists who want to express their wrath against the Government go on attacking them". Under such circumstances of civil commotion, I would suggest to the Hon. Minister, if about 20 to 25 thousand men are kept to petrol the tracks which are vulnerable, the moment you see that patrolling is there, the mischiefmongers are kept under check. You can have RPF men, you can have gang-men, and if you put enough number of men for patrolling, no doubt it will mean an expenditure, but to that my reply to the Hon. Minister is this: rather than allowing people to die and paying compensation of Rs. 1 lakh per dead, it is better to spend on petrolling and prevent the expenditure on compansation. It is better to see that prevention is better than ours. I am not standing for

preventive detention, but prevention is better than cure. That should be the general law. If that is followed, then petrolling will succed.

Lastly I have only one suggestion to make I am not one among those who, immediately on an accident taking place, would demand the resignation of a Minister, because I know that in such a vast system, accidents are bound to occur, but then I would not be satisfied with the Minister saying...(Interruptions) Is it that some of them want resignation, Sir?

What I was saying was this. With such a vast system of 61,000 route kilometres, accidents can be of different types but they can be of a serious nature. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister in charge of Railways that this particular accident is of such a serious nature and people have a such misgivings that merely the Commissioner for Railway Safety under Civil Aviation and Tourism will not be able to satisfy the people of Bihar and the people in the country. Therefore, I strongly demand that a judicial inquiry into this accident should be instituted. Only a judicial inquiry will be able to satisfy not only the people of Bihar but the people in the rest of the country.

Therefore, in the end, I will say this. The dead are dead and gone. But at least such calamities should not recur. Just as one Hiroshima was sufficient to rouse the conscience of the world to take a pledge that we will not allow another Hiroshima to take place, let us take a pledge here that we shall adopt the safety measures on the Indian Railways that one Palamau is sufficient and we shall now allow the repetition of this experiment to take place and allow innocent lives to be lost This assurance has to be given, and that can be given only through a judicial inquiry into this particular episode; that only will crease confidence among the people that no bureaucratic niceties are coming in the way of railway accident inquiry. Therefore, judicial inquiry alone will satisfy.

I have not only offered my critical analysis but also suggested concrete measures to ensure railway safety. I hope and trust that the Hon. Minister, during reply, will take cognizance of the concrete measures suggested and not merely tell us that 'the matter is under consideration' or, if pressed more, then 'the matter is under active consideration', then 'the matter is under further active consideration', rather than giving a reply...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He will consider it.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Let them give concretely in a timebound manner which of the steps the railway administration is going to implement, so that safety on the railways can be assured.

[Translation]

PROF. NIRMALA KUMARI SHAK-TAWAT (Chittorgarh): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, the railway accidents move us deeply. Today, in this scientific age when the entire country is marching forward, such accidents are a matter of shame for us. Recently, during the last few weeks, some terrible railway accidents had occured. I do not want to go into the details of all those accidents, but I just want to submit that the railway accident at Palamau on the 6th August was very tragic. In that accident, several mothers lost their sons, several women lost their husbands and several parents lost their children. Such accidents do not speak well of our country. According to official records, 44 people had been killed in this accident. However, it is unofficially reported that more than hundred persons had died. Several dead bodies were extricated, but many bodies are still buried under the debris.

What was the cause of this accident? It could have happened either due to technical fault or due to human failure. However, the cause of this accident was entirely human failure. Because, if some wagons of a goods train get detached and the driver as well as the guard neither intimate it nor do they display any danger signals then it is evident that the accident is man-made and has been caused due to negligence. The Gauri Express also met with a similar accident 288 kms. away from Hawrah and 10 people were killed in that accident. Similarly, the Bombay-Howrah Mail met with a similar accident near Ranchi. One common element in all the

Accidents
[Prof. Nirmala Kumari Shaktawat]

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three secidents was that they had accurred due to collision with a goods train. Because of these accidents which take place due to negligence of the Railway employees, the common people have developed a feeling that it is unsafe to travel by train. The Railway Ministry must look into it. If such a feeling of insecurity is created among the common people then how will we move forward?

I would also request that although some compensation was paid to the victims of the rail accidents yet more payment of compensation is not enough. It was possible to identify only 30 dead bodies and compensation was paid in those cases, but what measures are to be taken in respect of those victims whose bodies have been mutilated beyond recognition? I would like to put this question to the Hon, Minister. Besides, the amount of compensation is also very meagre. You pay only Rs. 5,000 to the next of the kin of the dead in case of a railway accident, whereas you pay Rs. 1 lakh to the next of kin of a victim of an air-crash. Death has occurred in both the cases (Interruptions) There are several anomalies here. Till today only Rs. 5000 are paid in respect of the dead.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: The compensation is Rs. 1 lakh.

PROF. NIRMALA KUMARI SHAK-TAWAT: It is, of course, adequate but on making inquiries I discovered that in several accidents the victims have not received compensation. The families of the victims of the accidents are running from pillar to post. Therefore, I would urge you to streamline the procedure in this regard.

I would also submit that through scientific methods, high technology has been adopted in railway signalling system and it is being further developed for which you deserve congratulations, but the railway machinery cannot be mechanised to ensure safety and the human factor would always be there. But special efforts will have to be made to avoid accidents. It is, therefore, suggested that efficiency and capability must be kept in view at the time of fresh recruit-

ment. It you are not careful about these aspects them similar accidents would recur.

13.00 hrs.

Secondly, medical check-up of the railway crew should be conducted from time to time. Generally, it is seen that many of the drivers of the goods trains and the passenger trains are often found drunk. Under such circumstances, accidents are bound to take place. Therefore, I would suggest that surprise medical check-ups should be conducted. Again, age of retirement of the railway engine drivers must be reduced. There are many such drivers as are not physically fit for the job. Their eye sight has become weak. You must consider such cases. Therefore, I would urge that their age of retirement should be reduced. Besides, their working hours should be reduced, as too much fatigue becomes the cause of accidents. Therefore, arrangements must be made to reduce their working hours.

Besides, another cause is non-renewal of the track as pointed out by Shri Dandavate. The tracks are quite overaged which are in need of renewal. I want to tell you especially about Rajasthan. The track from Delhi to Udaipur which passes through Jaipur, Ajmer, Bhilwara and Chittorgarh is overaged. When we travel on this route we come to know that trains get late by 13 to 14 hours. The Chetak Express sometimes gets late by 13 hours. It results in...

(Interruptions)

you can call it even a mule . (Interruptions)... and sometimes I have asked your Department about the reason for not increasing its speed. The same reply is continuously repeated that the track is very old. Many Ministers have been changed during the past six years but the reply has remained the same without even a change of word. Diesel engine cannot be used due to the same reason. Your Department has acknowledged that the track is in bad shape. I want to tell you that accidents will occur if this track is not replaced. The accidents may occur in future, if not at present. So, I storngly request the Hon. Minister that at least the overaged track between Ajmer and Jodhpur should be checked and replaced, otherwise terrible accidents can take place. There is a

saying in English: 'Prevention is better than cure.' So I would request you to pay attention to this matter.

I want to point out that many accidents are caused by the terrorists also. We should pay special attention to this matter. Removal of fish-plates also causes accidents. As such, there should be proper arrangements to look after the track. Several railway crossings are not manned and if some of them are manned, the gatemen do not perform their duties properly. The result is that accidents are quite frequent at those places also. I would utilise this opportunity to point out that at the manned level crossings, your employees close the gates even when no train is expected and it results in great inconvenience to the villagers going to the nearby places. If the gates are closed in the morning then they remain so throughout the day and are opened only in the evening. If some person gets ill he cannot go across and when he tries to jump over the gates, it results in accidents. This aspect also must be looked into to prevent accidents and loss of human lives. I hope the Hon. Minister will see to it that accidents are not caused by technical faults or through human failure. Strict action should be taken against inefficient and careless officers. It has been proved beyond doubt that the accident near Palamau had been caused due to carelessness. Such guilty persons should not be spared.

With these words I conclude my speech.

{English}

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Members, the Hon. Minister is going to reply to the debate around 2.30 P.M. Therefore, the time left at our disposal is only 1.5 hours. There are many members who want to speak. Therefore, I request that each member should take 5-6 minutes so that we can accommodate all the members. I request the members to be brief and give only suggestions.

[Translation]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM (Nagarkurnool): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today we are discussing the train accident which occurred

in Bihar on the 6th instant. The newspapers have reported that 52 persons were killed and hundreds were ijured. Shri Janga Reddy estimates the number of injured persons to be in thousands. Perhaps this is his own information. I had spoken about it yesterday also during the Zero Hour. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am surprised to know that the compensation of Rs. 1 lakh is paid in respect of a person killed in an air crash but very low compensation is paid in respect of a person killed in a train accident. Is the person killed in a train accident not human? How is it that only the air travellers are deemed human beings and not the train passengers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the poor persons travel in trains and when they are killed in accidents, very little compensation is paid. I have read in the newspapers that they were given only Rs. 5,000 and in no case Rs. 1 lakh was paid. Is it justice? Can you please tell me if anywhere compensation of Rs. 1 lakh was paid in respect of train accident victims? It may be on paper only and not in practice. Can you give us even a single example? We will be satisfied to know if a single example is quoted. I would. therefore, urge that proper compensation should be paid to the train accident victims.

I want to point out one more thing, I have not been able to understand how in every train accident, the train hits a stationary goods train either from rear or from the front. It is simply beyond comprehansion. You see your previous records and the same thing happens everywhere. In every accident it is reported that the tran rammed into a stationary goods train. When a goods train has stopped at a station, the train running on the same line should be diverted to the other line. This line is not changed and as a result accidents occur. The approaching train should be diverted to a line other than the one on which the goods train has stopped. Who is responsible for it? Is it due to the person who gives the signal at the last station or due to negligence of someone enroute?

In case, in an inquiry the responsibility is pin pointed, has any punishment been given and, if so, in how many cases? If you do not punish the guilty then what is the

[Shri V. Tulsiram]

meaning of the enquiry? To what extent will you cenduct enquiries. Nothing can be achieved if the guilty are not punished after the enquiry. Without punishment, the guilty persons will not be careful and then why should they work properly and monitor the movement of trains? If you do not punish them then at least the Minister should resign and accept the responsibility. You have a look at the previous records and you would find that the Ministers had admitted their failures and had offered their resignations. They resigned and owned the responsibility, whereas you neither punish any one nor offer your resignation.

If the same responsibility is entrusted to our Chief Minister, Shri Rama Rao, he will show you how things are managed. You are here to do work and to look after the administration. (Interruptions) I do not say that all of you are inefficient or all the officers are not working properly. I do not think that all the persons are not working properly, but it is only a few who are doing their duty. But the question is how much work is being done properly and how many persons are doing their duty.

(Interruptions)

Personally, I am not against anybody. If our young Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi runs the Government efficiently and watches the interests of the poor, we in the opposition, would cooperate with him. I have already said that if there is any danger to the nation, the Opposition would support him.

There have been 300 accidents from January to June. I would give you zonewise figures: 35 in the Central, 33 in the Eastern, 48 in the Northern, 19 in the North Eastern, 49 in the North East Frontier, 19 in the Southern, 27 in the South Central, 39 in the South Eastern and 31 in the Western Railway.

This is the detail of the 300 accidents, which occurred during the last six months. What have you done in respect thereto? It means that you and your Government are inactive. You should have taken interest in

your work and ensured that there was no recurrence of such accidents. I want to warn you in this regard.

SHRI D. P. YADAVA (Monghyr): Sir, we express our sorrow for the rail accident and also pay our condolences to the bereaved families. In any accident, the Members of Parliament are affected one way or the other. Recently, 5 members of the family of a Member of Parliament. Shri Ram, were killed in an accident. It shows that such accidents affect all of us directly or indirectly.

Rail accidents have been discussed in the House a number of times and several suggestions have been given. Perhaps it may not be possible to give a new suggestion as most of them have already been given. An action plan should be chalked out by systematically analysing the suggestions received so far so as to minimise the rail accidents and also to change the mode of functioning.

In 1980, I visited Japan and out of curiosity I enquired about the working of the railways there. I asked the guide about the railway system. He told me that a particular train had been running with a speed of 250 kms. per hour for the last twenty years and there had been neither a single accident nor the train had been late even by a second. This is an example of efficiency, which was revealed by an ordinary guide.....

(Interruptions)

This is efficiency. I would, therefore, urge the Hon. Minister to pay attention towrrds Management Control System in the Railway Ministry. I come from an area where the first railway factory was established in India. There has been a steep deterioration in its working during the past 20 to 30 years. When the working of a factory can deteriorate so mush, there would definitely be deterioration in the entire rail system. Previously, the number of the skilled. workers was higher but these days the posts. of the officers like Additional C. M. E., C. M. E., Deputy C. M. E. and special C. M. E. are being increased and the number of the workers is becoming less and if the management functions in this manner it, would certainly increase the accidents.

The second point, I felt is that you are not able to effect co-ordination between the workload and the management programme. You have failed to assess the workload in a particular factory and see how to utilise it properly. The number of the factories is increasing but no factory is competent enough to make a copula. The manufacturing of the circular copula is not a difficult task. It is a simple work of casting for which you have factories in Lilua, Jamalpur and Coimbatore. You can get gaod equipment if you manufacture them in any of these factories in a planned way.

Tinsukhia mail is a long train, but the door-plates, which connect the compartments have been out from underneath. Shri Rajesh, believe me, if some person or a child passes through it, he may fall from the train and an accident may occur. Not a single 1st class compartment is in good shape. You may make an inquiry. There are a number of factories on the route on which the tinsukhia mail runs where a coach can be repaired in 10 to 12 days. There must be some thing wrong somewhere in the management, due to which you are not able to do the needful. I request you to improve the condition of the coaches. There is bungling in the matter of recruit to the new posts. The recruitment is not made on the basis of efficiency and qualification. Physically fit, alert and efficient persons should be recurited. If you recruit efficient people you will get better results. The need of the hour is to introduce scientific management, better control system, and to ensure alertness and fitness of mind. My colleagues have alreaey said a lot about the signal equipment but I must say something about the track. At present, these accidents occur the due to the fault or negligence of two to four persons. But if we do not take preventive steps and the work of track renewal is not done rapidly then a big accident may occur about the magnitude of which we cannot imagine. You will have to seek the cooperation of the State Governments in this regard. Sometimes the Ministry of the Railways advances the plea of non-availability of funds I agree to it, but you should ask the State Governments to provide a part of the R. L. E. G. P. and N. R. E. P. funds to the Ministry of Railways (Interruptions)

PROF. NIRMALA KUMARI SHAK-TAWAT: What will happen to the villages (Interruptions)

SHRI D. P. YADAVA: This can be your opinion. The villages are a part of the country. The trains pass through the villages also. Mostly it is the villagers who die in the rail accidents. Therefore, there should be some coordination with the schemes of the State Governments.....(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVE-LOPMENT (SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR): If the people of Bihar start purchasing tickets for travelling in trains, this in itself would be helpful in mobilising funds. Nobody in your area purchases a ticket.....(Interruptions)

SHRI D. P. YADAVA: If you improve the management, it will decrease the accidents. These are my suggestions. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, rail travel nowdays has become unsafe. This year in 1986, till today there have been eight serious accidents in which more than two hundred passengers were killed. Most of these accidents that took place were due to mechanical failure. Previously, one year back, the number of accidents due to mechanical failure was less but now the accidents due to mechanical failure and due to the failure of rolling stock are increasing. When the Sixth Five-Year Plan was started, we were told in this House that we should not ask for new lines, we should not ask for new trains. The Sixth Five-Year Plan was called 'rehabilitation plan'. When the sixth five-year plan ended. which was called rehabilitation plan, 14,000 km. of railway track were sick or over-aged. They needed immediate replacement. After 5 years of this rehabilitation plan, this number of sick track increased from 14,000 to 22,000 km. Out of 61,000 km. 22,000 k.m. are sick. It means that 1/4 of the total track of the Indian railways is sick. This needs immediate replacement. When this rehabilitation plan started the number of rail fractures was 2500. After 5 years of this rehabilitation plan the number of rail fractures increased from 2500 to 4500. The number of overaged engines has also increased. These overaged or sick engines particularly steam engines are being used. At present the Railway has adopted a policy to phase

Shei Basudeb Acharia

out all steam engines by the turn of the century. In the 21st century the steam engines will not be seen on the railway track. Since 1973 not a single steam engine came out of Chitranian locomotive works. But where is the plan? How to replace them? The production of electric engines has not increased to replace or phase out the steam engines. It is the same case with diesel engines, Sir, Overaged coaches are being used. You cannot travel in I Class compartment because I Class compartment coaches production is reduced. And with these 22,000 k.m. of sick track, accidents take place. We have been, time and again, assured in the House that they are taking certain steps like-

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- Introduction of modern technological aids like ultrasonic testing of rails;
- 2) Programmed rehabilitation of rolling stock;
- 3) Progressive manning of unmanned level crossings;
- 4) Educative publicity through posters and other media;
- 5) Patrolling of track to detect rail fractures and adoption of anti-sabotage measures.
- 6) A 10 point action plan aimed at indepth field inspections at different levels.
- 7. Four high level multi-disciplinary safety task force teams constituted to conduct detailed inspections; and
- 8) High level safety team constituted on zonal railways to suggest specific measures for improving safety in the identified accident-prone areas.

There have been several committee which were constituted like the Kunzru committee. Recently there has been the Sikri Committee which submitted its report in 1978. And this committee has also stated that the recommendations of the previous Accident Enquiry Committees were not implemented and the safety rules were violated. I told in this House several times how the safety rules are violated. Now examination of trains is not do ne after running three hundred kilometres, which was previously done. Now, after run-

ning 1000 kilometres, then the train is examined. Before running the train it is very necessary that a vacuum certificate is given, for the running of the train. This is not now required. Now, without this certificate the train is allowed to run even without the headlight. Three or four years back there was a serious accident in Hyderabad where 20 pilgrims were killed by the train, that train was allowed to run without the head; light. The tail lamp is also quite necessary. But the train is allowed to run without the tail lamp. I can cite one example of how a railway employee who insisted on these safety rules was removed from service, Mr. M.L.N. Murthy of Anara under the South-Central Railway refused to run the train because there was no tail lamp in the goods train. He was charge-sheeted, then he was suspended and dismissed because he insisted on the tail lamp which is quite necessary. So, you listen to the railwaymen, don't blame the railwaymen always. The Loco Running Staff Association represented how the safety rules are violated, and how the vacuum certificate is not now necessary. Three years back there was a serious accident near Howrah station. In the motor van of the train there was only one driver. At that time, Mr. Ghani Khan Chowdhury was the Railway Minister. He immediately ordered that there should be an Assistant motorman and this was complied with for some months. Now, this is done away with. Now Mr. Chaudhury has gone and with him the system of putting a second motor man also is done away with. In this way the safety rules have been violated. Next, about the duty hours of the running staff, there was an agreement in 1973 with the Loco Running Staff Association that driver and Assistant driver will not be allowed to work for more than 10 hours. The ILO Convention is also there. Our Government have ratified it and this was told in this very House, but this has not been implemented up till now. The drivers are forced to work for more than 10 hours, even more than 20 hours. The accident of the Maurya Express took place near the Gomo station because the driver of that train was to work for more than 10 hours Even some drivers are forced to work for more than 10 hours if they are not willing. Those who refuse, they are charge-sheeted, they are suspended, and they are dismissed from the service. So, the policy has to be changed. You have to replace all the over-aged tracks. You should give priority to this work, you have to replace all the over-aged engines, the locomotives now being used. And you replace all the over-aged coaches and increase the production of coaches and engines.

13.35 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH RATH in the chair]

Sir. you have circulated one Railways' Bill, I do not know whether this Bill will be considered in this Session, whether it will be passed in this Session or the next Session. But you have introduced it in the last Session. I have made some suggestions regarding the constitution of the Safety Council and Safety Commission and all these things. My request is, you refer this Bill to the Joint Select Committee. Don't rush through this Bill. It is because for the last several years, be have been demanding and in the Railway Accidents Committee, they have recommended that there should be one federation and that should be secret ballot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: So, you do not rush through this Bill. You refer it to the Joint Select Committee. We want to discuss it thoroughly before passing it, because you want to change the existing Railway Act thoroughly.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI MADHUREE SINGH (Purnea): It is regrettable that accidents are on the increase in the Indian Railways. Recently, a ghastly accident occurred near Garhwa in Palamau district of Bihar. Such accidents occur because the requisite precautionary measures are not adopted. We must find the causes of these accidents. If the cause is the overaged track, it should be replaced even if additional provision has to be made for that in the Budget If an accident occurs due to the negligence of the employees their services should be immediately terminated and future recruitment must be made on the basis of efficiency and ability of the employees. All the victims of the accident have been identified. But several

dead bodies are still buried under the debris; the same should be extricated and handed over to their relatives. The people do not get the compensation in time and they have to run from pillar to post. Therefore, I request that the compensation should be paid in time.

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA (Robertsganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the House is deeply moved because of this serious railway accident and I am much distressed because most of the passengers who were killed in this accident belonged to my constituency. The maximum number of passengers entrain and detrain at Ranukut Station in my constituency. I am deeply shocked by this accident. But I have this satisfaction that the Hon. Minister for Railways had visited that area and showed sympathy towards the people. We had watched this on T.V. yesterday. She also visited the hospital and made necessary arrangements. When she visited the Garhwa Road Hospital, she found that the arrangements were not satisfactory. As such she immediately sanctioned a sum of Rs. 50,000 from the Railway Department funds and the instruments were supplied from Calcutta.

Sir, I have often been speaking about the operation of the railways on the Chopan-Garhwa-Dhanbad section. I feel that the Railway Department has no control on this Although you have posted an section. A.D.M. in Chopan, but it is not of much help and the tribals travelling by this train are being exploited. They do not issue them the tickets and charge money from them. Therefore, I would request the Hon. Minister to deploy a special squad on this section from Garhwa to Dhanbad to find out the factual position. Sir, the condition of the railway rolling stock is deplorable. The stations are small and do not have any facilities. As I told you just now, no proper medical facilities were available at the Garhwa Hospital and the Hon. Minister had to issue instructions for special arrangements for the treatment of the victims of the accident. This itself clearly shows that there are no proper medical facilities. There is no hospital between Chunar and Garhwa. It is either at Chunar or at Garhwa. Therefore, I request you to make arrangements of medical facilities in this area. You should also consider the condition of the railway rolling stock.

[Shri Ram Pyare Panika]

The stations should be bigger as it is a tribal and hill area. Now, two main trains, Chandigarh Express and Tata Express have also started running on this route. I would like that in the prevailing situation, action should be taken first against the high officials and transfer the A.D.R.M. and R.M. of that station immediately.

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I shall tell you about the state of affairs prevailing there. You will be surprised to know that the telephone of Ranukut, station was disconnected because the Railways had not paid its dues for two years. When I took up the matter with the Railway Minister only then the telephone connection was restored. This is an example which I am giving you to show what the situation is.

In the previous years ten point action plan in regard to the safety measures was taken up by the Railway Department but this year it has been discontinued.

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): It is still in force.

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA: I would like that this action plan should be implemented vigorously.

So far as the question of track renewal is concerned, work on 19,000 kilometres is still to be undertaken. At present 3,500 kilometre long track has been taken up for renewal. I would like that funds should be provided for this purpose whether by curtailing expenditure on other items or by asking the Planning Commission or the Finance Minister to provide funds therefor.

The Railway Service Commission is also not functioning properly. Selection is not done in a proper way. Candidates get themselves recruited on the strength of money and other candidates are left out. You must adopt a stern attitude in this respect and revamp the Railway Service Commission.

Because of the rampant trade unionism in the Railways, the officers cannot transfer

bad workers. It some transfer is ordered, the office-bearers of the union interfere in the matter immediately and stall the transfer. You should point it out to the Railway Board that the agreement reached with the union that the transfers of the railway employees shall not take place is not proper. Some of the officers of the Railways have been getting their transfer stalled for the last 10 to 12 years and the bad workers continue to work at one place. You should reconsider this matter.

I would like to know what our checking staff is doing? Where was the guard when bogies were detached and left behind? When this information reached there, the train should not have been allowed to move. May I know why it was allowed to move? Training should be imparted to the employees and the procedure of selection should be streamlined so that the railway accidents caused due to human failure are checked. You will have to curb trade unionism in the matter of transfers. Besides, you will also have to approach the Planning Commission for allocating funds for the rolling stock and for renewal of 19,000 kilometre track. Otherwise, accidents will continue to occur.

[English]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore): With deep anguish. I take part in this debate. The accidents in the Indian Railways have become incidents. recently within one month, in Kharagpur division, Utkal Express would have fallen in the river Subarnarekha. An accident took place in Bilaspur division. An accident took place in Chakradharpur division. Bombay Mail rammed into a goods train. At Gomo, the goods train rammed into an Express train. An accident took place at Daltanganj where an Express train rammed into some wagons left on the railway track. Even today again an accident has taken place in Andhra Pradesh. Only a few accidents are reported but innumerable accidents are daily taking place over Indian railways and they are not reported in the press. It only shows that the health of the Indian railways is very bad and that the health of Mr. Scindia is very good. He has gone to Mexico on pleasure trip. I am glad that Mrs. Kidwai had been to that place but our State Minister for railways is

missing from the scene just now. He is missing just now. You must realise that the condition of the Indian Railways is becoming worse day by day. We said that if you do not take measures now, accidents would grow. Railway officers know that accidents are bound to occur if they do not take any measures from now.

Accidents are caused mainly due to long negligence. It is not the fault of this Minister or that Officer. The long negligence on the railways is responsible for all these accidents If you do not take steps, accidents will further grow. What will happen then is that an enquiry will take place, post-mortem will be done punishments will be awarded, we stand in silence for a while and another accident takes place.

Why these accidents are happening? It is because these days the safety rules have been given a goodbye the Indian Railways. Why they are given a goodbye? It is because the Railways have neither men nor material to absorb these safety rules. If you kindly go through them, if you kindly understand, you know the true picture. These officers will give a good picture whenever they come to Parliament. When we meet them in their chamber they give us the true picture.

How the accident took place in Gomo? It is because the brake failed. The brake of the goods train failed, the driver of the goods train gave whistle from one kilometre ahead, it could not help and it just rammed into it. These things are taking place because safety rules have been given a goodbye. You can ask the officers. You have no material, you have no men in the loco sheds and in the wagon depots. Your tracks are missing and you have no proper track of it! Your locos are not running properly. How can you stop accidents? It will be increasing day by day.

Officers are sometimes giving good figures and graphs that work is progressing well. It is mostly fralse. Sometimes they give you false reports and you believe them. May I ask you a question? You have a route relay system. In the route relay system the operators are bound to get 90 days training in the Secunderabad college. Then they are bound to get a certificate from

the DOs and DSTE. I challenge that there is not a single operator in the eastern and south-eastern railways who has passed this course. You take untrained men, put them on job and these things happen. You have stopped recruitment. You are getting the job done at some places by retired railwaymen. Many ASMs and SMs who have retired and attained the age of 58 are re-employed at the rate of Rs. 44 or Rs. 45 a day. You have no recruitment policy.

Railwaymen have lost their morale. How can they have morale if you stopped recruitment in the Railways for three years? The railwaymen's sons want that their fathers should die while on duty He goes to Sravan Mela to put water on Mahadev and pray that his father should die while on duty, so that he gets the job. Otherwise there is no chance of employment. Railwaymen are full of debts, they have no quarters and they have no morale. But officers are increasing day by day.

Naturally if you want to stop these things, kindly talk to these officers in your chamber, know from them what are the realities, chalk out programmes on the basis of priority. Otherwise you are going to face another accident within a week or so. Every week we are getting the news of one major accident for the last one month. Kindly put an end to it. Do not give us a reply that this is being done or being looked into. Be serious, look to the problem of railwaymen if you want to solve the problem of railway accident.

SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH (Inner Manipur): The Indian Railway system, the second largest system in Asia, is under one administration. It requires a lot of organisational acme to run it. It is a colossus by itself, administratively, financially and otherwise. In the Review of the safety performance of Indian Railways given along with the Budget this year, it was stated that there was not much headway made in the maintenance and replacement of certain tracks and other rolling stocks due to want of funds.

About the safety measures the report says "It requires large inputs. It cannot be taken up and has necessarily to be postponed

[Shri N. Tombi Singh]

serious matter. We have two aspects one is that accidents happen due to human failure. The other aspect is that accidents happen due to the obsolete nature and the oldage of the stocks and rolls that are being used.

The recent accident has created a lot of concern in the area. The concern is not merely felt by the people of that area but by the people in the country because they are using the whole railways.

Psychological insecurity has been created all over the country. This has to be restored. The psychological insecurity has to be removed. The one aspect that I Would like to emphasize here is with regard to punitive aspect. The Commission of Railway Safety had made enquiry. They have got some functions — inspection. regulation and enquiries. After the enquiry is over we would like to know from the Hon. Minister as to what are the punitive action taken In 1984-85, the report says that only 51 officers have been removed from service. Was it enough? Another 908 employee were given different kinds of punishments. Since this was not mentioned whether they were simply removed or charged fine, we take that they had been given very light punishment. In this connection the reports had said "accidents are never caused deliberately". The first sentence of the report under the heading Punitive Action is that accidents are never caused deliberately. With this kind of attitude from the authorities, while inquiring into an accident or a failure some margin has been given to erring officials, erring technicians or erring drivers. Just find out whether the human failure is caused deliberately or not. If they have failed in their duties, then removal or some punishment by way of fine should not be sufficient. They should be given more stringent punishment. Only then can we see that human failures can be aborted.

In this connection I would suggest that the Commission of Railway Safety should be more on serious work because so far we do not see much effect of the operation of the railway commission on safety. As I said earlier the constraint of funds should be removed and the commission on railway safety must be strenghtened, punitive measures enust be increased, so that everall situation of secidents in the whole country improves.

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With these words I conclude Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIV PRASAD SAHU (Ranchi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, on the 6th instant and a few weeks earlier also serious railway accidents had taken place in several parts of Bihar.....

AN HON, MEMBER: Such accidents usually take place in Bihar.

SHRI SHIV PRASAD SAHU: All of you are aware that Maurya Express met with an accident near Gomoh, Howrah-Bombay Express near Sikandarpur; and recently. Tata Express met with a serious accident on the 6th instant near Garhwa Road. We pray to God that may their souls rest in peace and their family members may have the strength to bear the loss. But the thing is that all the accidents that occured in Bihar are of similar nature. The moving train collides with a stationary goods train on the track... (Interruptions). This happened in Sikandarpur, Garbwa Road and Gomoh. It seems that 3 to 4 wagons get detached from the moving goods train and the driver remains ignorant of it. Sometimes it is due to vacum failure. If some wagons get detached, there should be some system to detect it. I would request the Hon. Minister that some arrangement should be made whereby a warning signal is flashed in case the wagons get detached. Something must be done in this respect.

Besides, we have come to know that there has been no renewal of track for the last several years on the line on which this accident took place. This should be investigated and the work of the renewal of the track may be undertaken. We shall have to see who is responsible for such accidents which are occurring so frequently? It is a matter of shame for the department. The guilty employees must be punished. It seems to me that such mishaps take place due to the negligence of the high officials of the Railway Department.

I would like to caution you that in Chota Nagpur, engines of the 1911 make are being used for hauling on the metre gauge line from Ranchi to Lohardaga. A distance of three hours from Ranchi, is covered in 8 to 10 hours and if the engine breaks down on the way, one will have to wait for one or two days. When the train starts from Ranchi, the engine has no fault. However despite your good intentions, unless you bring improvement in it, mishaps cannot be stopped. We must make all efforts to save human lives. Our Prime Minister is very anxious to develop new technology for entering the 21st century. The Railway Department must be streamlined and we shall have to do work on war footing to check such accidents. We are all, whether belonging to opposition party or the ruling party, prepared to extend our full cooperation.

SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY: (Gopalganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Amritsar-Tata Nagar Express met with an accident at Garhwa on 6.8.1986 and today the subject matter of discussion is how to check such accidents. the railway Discussion on accidents have taken place a number of times in the House. May I know what are the reasons that the number of railway accident is increasing? I myself visited Ranchi and Garhwa yesterday. That was a heart rending accident. In accidents other than train accidents, an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakhs is made to the next of kin of the dead. Most of the dead persons in this accident were labourers who were travelling in search of jobs. I would like to know that when insurance scheme is in force in other cases, why this cannot be implemented in the Railway by increasing 5 to 10 paise in the fare so that if, unfortunately, some accident takes place, compensation may be paid to the family members of the persons killed in the accident? Sometime back an accident had taken place at Dhanbad. The brother of an Hon. Member, Shri Ram Bahadur Singh and other persons were killed. But no immediate action is taken to know the main causes of such accidents. Not only one but several accidents of similar nature have occured but we fail to take any concrete action in the matter. A few days back Maurya Express collided with the Vaishali Express but no action was taken in the matter. A few days again remained later, Maurya Express into the Vaishali Express but no action

was taken. On the third occassion when the family members of an Hon. Member and other persons were killed in the accident, only then the matter was raised here. An Hon. Member was saying that people fravelled without ticket in the trains. I would like to know what have you done in the matter? In the meeting of the Consultative Committee, I had made a demand that one more Vaishali Express should be run because in this Vaishali train about 2200 people travel against the capacity of 1100. When the train is overloaded accidents are bound to occur. People are very much anxiour to reach their destination. Shortage of train services in the main cause of the accidents. If you want to check accident, you will have to seriously consider increasing the train services here.

I would like to submit that sometimes railway crossing is not closed in spite of the gateman being on duty. The gateman sleeps at night while on duty. I represent Gopalganj Thousands of vehicles pass daily through that highway. Accidents have occured there as many as nine times. I would like to ask as to what your Ministry has done in the matter? You should take immediate action in the event of an accident taking place. In the case of the railway accident at Garhwa, you have suspended an employee. This is no solution of the problem. You must create an atmosphere in which every employee should be conscious of his responsibility and then no accident will take place. If some accident takes place, you should fix the responsibility for it on the employee and prosecute him under section 302. Suspension is no punishment. In one accident 300 to 400 people are killed. You should take strict action against the person responsible for it.

14.00 hrs.

Shrimati Mohsina Kidwai is present here and she is the Minister of Transport. She should not ignore our suggestion and should take immediate action on it. She was saying in the T. V. programme yesterday that it was not possible for her to bring the dead to life but she would increase the amount of compensation. But only Rs. 5000 are proposed to be granted as compensation. I would request that the next of kin of the persons killed in the accident should be granted Rs. 50,000 as compensation so as to help the poor labourers in this hour of distress,

SHRI LAL VI'AY PRATAP SINGH (Sarguja): Mr. Chairman, Sir, if we look at the official figures, we find that in 1985-86 717 accidents had occured, in which about 200 persons had been killed. I am not talking of the death of some few hundred people and the loss of some few crores of rupees. 1 want to say that this makes the position of the Railway Department a little awkward. There is a 61000 kilometres route network of the railways in our country and thousands of trains run daily. It is a good thing. It is also correct that wherever railway services have been extended, development has been faster there. It will also be right to say that the Railway Minister has done a good job and administration has been geared up but I shall take this opportunity to say that there are certain areas where one feels that there is no administration or those areas have been totally neglected. I want to bring to your notice the happenings of the 28th instant of the last month. In my constituency, a terrible major rail accident occured in which about 12 persons died and hundreds were injured. It was the most terrible accident on this branch line which occurred between Vishrampur and Anuppur about which full information, perhaps, is not available with the Government because in the official records only 9 persons have been shown to have died and a few injured: but this is far from the actual position. Several persons have come to me from my constituency and according to them 5 to 6 begies were so much damaged that it will perhaps be not possible for me to describe their condition. You can yourself imagine the number of casualties.

I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to certain other bitter facts. I have already stated that in so far as the functioning of the Hon. Minister is concerned, it is beyond doubt that he has done a good job but when we glance at the branch line, we find that if you want to get a train stopped at any place you can do so by paying two rupees or by giving two corncobs.

I would request the Hon. Minister that it is almost two years when Shiv Prasad Nagar Railway Station was completed but no arrangement has been made for stopping the trains at that station. In spite of my repeated requests, trains do not stop there and that station is not being used.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, coal is found in abundance in our area and you are aware that coal is a commodity which is not easily available but if you establish contact with some driver of the train, you can have as much coal as you want in any corner of the country where there is a rail line.

About travelling without ticket I have stated my view-point earlier also at many occasions. At the booking window tickets are not issued but in the matter of seat allotment, priority is given to the people who are without tickets. Similarly, other irregularities are also resorted to. Attention is paid more towards earning money than adopting security measures and adhering to other rules. I would like to request the Hon. Minister, through you, to pay more attention towards these things in future and adopt strict measures so that the rail services may function smoothly.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI RAMSWAROOP RAM (Gaya): Mr. Chairman, Sir, today we are discussing a very serious matter in this House. A major accident took place on 6 August between Garhwa Road and Tolra stations in Palamau district of Bihar. Through this House we want to convey our heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased. I would like to submit to the Hon. Minister that the rail accidents are fast increasing.

In reply to a question of July 17, you had stated that between January and June '86 there were 300 train accidents 18 due to collision of trains, 234 due to derailment, 29 accidents on the level crossing and 19 due to bogies catching fire. We have observed that as compared to 1985 there have been lesser number of accidents this year. This shows how vigilant we are to prevent rail accidents. This reflects your desire that trains should run smoothly. But the more you want to ensure these things, the greater is the number of accidents.

It is very unfortunate that within a span of one month, Bihar had to witness two major rail accidents—one at Gomoh and the other at Garhwa. One particular course of this is that the tracks were laid during the British regime. When Shri Pandey was the Railway

Minister, he had observed while commenting on the increasing number of railway accidents that our tracks had become obsolete and were in need of modernisation and that they would modernise them. But I do not know why his suggestions and the suggestions given by the Safety Commissioners have been ignored and are not being implemented?

Dis, on recent Rly.

Accidents

[English]

The Palamau mishap once again underscores the Railways' safety management failures and their poor record in respect of track renewal, rolling stock maintenance, signalling, routing and the overall operational systems followed.

[Translation]

One crore passengers travel every day in the trains and if we cannot provide them security and safety, then I think it will pose a big question mark against the efficiency of the Government. Regarding Garhwa accident it has come to our knowledge that 6 wagons of the goods train had been detached and left behind and the driver of the train was unware of that. I consider it as derailment and not defect in the track. When there is derailment, all the high officials like the General Manager or the Deputy General Manager should also be held responsible for such a lapse. There should not be any rail accident due to administrative lapses and for this better persons should be put on the job.

I also want to submit that when someone dies in a train accident lesser compensation is given for him whereas for persons killed in air accidents compensation of Rs. 1 lakh is paid. Whether one travels by plane or by rail, human life is equally valuable. Therefore, I request the Government that the families of the persons killed in rail accidents should be paid compensation of 1 Rs. lakh each and one member of the family of the deceased should be given employment. Only then I feel some relief will be provided to the bereaved families.

You should also ensure that no accident occurs in future but I feel that the more you are taking steps to avert accidents the greater is the number of accidents.

With these words, I conclude.

LAL VYAS SHRI GIRDHARI Mr. Chairman, Sir, the rail (Bhilwara): accident in Palamau is a very serious matter. You will recall that in the good old days the railways enjoyed very good reputation and late Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Railway Minister, had resigned when a rail accident occurred during his tenure. I am not asking the Hon. Minister to resign but this much I want to say that because of that, the officials of the Railway Board had also been transferred and changes were made in the administration. Nowadays accidents occurring daily but neither the Minister is changed nor the Railway Board's officers are changed, nor any changes are made in the administration. This is the position at present. Sir, I want to say that at least action should be taken against the Railway Board officials who are looking after the traffic so that they may ensure that the accidents do not occur again. There is an urgent need to take such an action and set the things right. Similarly, you should also meet the requirements of the railways, e.g., there is immediate need to replace the old tracks. This should be done immediately so that accidents do not occur. In my constituency, Mandel, there have been 4-5 cases of derailment of goods trains. when I was travelling in Ahmedabad Mail from Delhi, my bogie caught fire. such substandard bogies are attached to the With all this mismanagement, the number of accidents cannot be reduced. Why are you playing with our lives? We travel by train but your big officers go to Bombay and Calcutta by air. They should be asked to travel by rail so that they may also come to know the difficulties, inconveniences and disorder existing in the trains. There is need to know about all these things in a definite The railways help in the development of the country. They can accelerate the pace Therefore, of development in the country. the present mismanagement should be removed. Unless you overhaul the administration from top to bottom, the things will not move smoothly and accidents will continue to occur day in and day out. There is urgent need to improve the administration. Immediate steps should be taken in this direction. With these words, I conclude,

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SHRI MANOJ PANDEY (Bettiah): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are all moved by the rail accident which occurred at Garhwa in Palamau district of Bihar. Though rail accidents occur quite often, yet the House has taken note of this rail accident in parti-Therefore, I also want to say something on this accident. I want to say something about the renewal of the rail tracks. In Bihar, the required amount is not being spent on the renewal of the tracks. It is true that the Ministry of Railways does not funds from the Planning get more Provision of only Rs. 1650 Commission. crores has been made whereas about Rs. 5,500 crores are required for track renewal and replacement of the rolling stock.

Dis. on recent Rly.

Accidents

14.19 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

This point is repeatedly raised here. Sir, through you, I want to submit to the Finance Minister, who is at the moment not present here, and also request the Planning Commission that the Ministry of Railways should be provided adequate funds so that the entire rolling stock renewal work is done is one instalment. Only then we can bring down the number of accidents. Unless we have a good track and other facilities, how can we reduce the number of accidents? Accidents occur due to human errorrs also but unless replacement of track and rolling stock takes place, the number of accidents cannot be brought down. We should complete this work with a time-bound programme. renewal and rolling stock replacement work should be completed in a period of two years or under some other time-bound programme. Unless this is done, the accidents will continue The condition of the branch lines to occur. is still worse. If the accidents do not take place on branch lines, it is because of the mercy of God. Otherwise maximum accidents should take place on the branch lines. The tracks being used at present are overaged. The trains are running on them with the mercy of God. The bogies you are attaching to the trains are also obsolete. moment the only way to bring down the number of accidents is that the Planning Commission should grant lump-sum payment to the Ministry of Railways for immediate replacement of the rolling stock and fix the responsibility of the Ministry of Railways

that this work should be completed at the earliest. The Department should be blamed for the accidents only after this has been accomplished. At the moment the facilities are lacking. We shall have to change our attitude towards the passengers also which at present is not a happy one. Even a petty officer of your Minister does not show courtesy to the passengers. In this way, we should do away with the lack of facilities. Only then we can stop the rail accidents. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH RATH (Aska): 1 am sorry for the accdient, mishap and the tragedy. Many persons died and many others have also been injured. This is one of the eighth accidents in the current year and the number of deaths has increased to over 100. To my unstarred question no. 1060, answered on 24.7.80, the Minister of State in the Department of Railways answered: "During 1984-85 and 1985-86 612 and 717 consequential train accidents respectively took place in Indian Railways. Of these—this is important—611 and 540 accidents respectively are attributable to human failure, both railway staff and other than railway staff."

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: The former Railway Minister is not involved.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH: So, from this answer, we can visualise the magnitude of the accidents caused owing to the human failure. Even the aggregate accidents is as high as 1.5 per million train kms during the eighties; and for this human failure, stringent steps should be taken and action taken. Exemplary punishment should be given to those who are responsible for such accidents.

Prof. Madhu Dandavate has urged for judicial enquiry. This matters a little whether it is a judicial enquiry or enquired otherwise. The most important factor is not that there is no enquiry on similar accidents but what all needed is what are the recommendations of those enquiries and whether those recommendations have been implemented or not.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: The advantage of the judicial enquiry is that no defaultor will be tolerated.

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): This is very serious, Two accidents occurred in one month.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH: When, we, the members, are requesting the Railway Ministry for extension of a few railway lines or conducting a survey of a few kms. of new railway lines to know the feasibility, it was said. It was said that it was not possible because of the constraint of funds. do not think that the same theory can be applicable for providing safety measures, safety of passengers and I would request the Hon. Minister to see that steps are taken for safety arrangements and to strengthen the safety machinery and take stringent action against the persons who are responsible for this mishap.

I have gone to Japan and seen the railways there, where they have got railways on the ground underground, and over the ground as usual There the accidents are rare, not that there are no accidents; but accidents are very rare there.

So, under these circumstances, the question is, why not take swift action to see that the accidents are reduced? I am thankful to the Hon. Minister, Shrimati Mohsina Kidwai who has gone to the spot and she has also gone to the hospital and seen herself the accident victims. She has also sanctioned Rs. 50,000 for the treatment of the injured passengers and also given directives to the Railway department to see that the relatives of the injured persons are taken free of cost to the spot of the accident to the Hospital and then or return journey.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Mr. Scindia also went.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH: Yes, he also went.

I also suggest that a compensation of one lakh of rupees should be given to the victims as per the Act.

Steps should be taken to see that how best these accidents can be averted in future. And for that, I think the Hon. Minister during her reply will mention about the action going to be taken.

SHRI ATA-UR RAHMAN (Barpeta): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the prevailing rate of accidents is a sad commentary on the performance of the Indian Railways, and I do not want to go into the details, as it is not possible for me to develop even one point for want of time. But one thing is there, that there is "something wrong in the—State of Denmark" as they say—in respect of our Railways which is a premier public sector organisation.

It is indeed in a very sad state of affairs. The Indian Railways has one of the highest rates of accidents in the world. As much as 60 per cent of the railway accidents are ascribed to human factor.

Now, why should it happen? We have been given promises repeatedly here on the floor of this House that the Railways were going to take action to prevent the accidents, but alas in spite of all the suggestions made by different legislators and Members of Parliament nothing happens and I do hope that suggestions made by Prof. Madhu Dandavate this time will be taken serious note of. He has made certain very very good suggestions, as he happened to be a former Minister of Railways.

And what is frightening particularly for the people coming from Bihar and other North Eastern States. I say this is on the basis of Railway Records that the North-Eastern area. I repeat, North-Eastern-Frontier Railway has the highest rate of accident in India. The next is the Northern Railway. That means the state of affairs in the North Eastern and the Northern Railways in the Northern and the North-Eastern parts of the country is indeed frightening and therefore, not at all satisfactory. I would demand that the Railways set up a special study group to go into various aspects of these shortcomings. The Railway Minister present here may kindly take serious note of the courses as to why these accidents are occurring repeatedly almost every week.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Accidents are north-oriented.

SHRI ATA-UR RAHMAN: Record of North-eastern Railways, however, is not that bad. There were only 19 railway accidents as against 49 of the N. E. Frontier Railway.

There are two factors responsible for accidents—one is human factor and the other is mechanical. The human factor can be taken—care of if the supervisory railway officials take serious notice. As one Hon. Member—has pointed out, the unionbazi is one of the factors responsible for accidents. The railway accidents will go down if the railway officials and the union officials are asked to travel in the bogey next to the engine.

We are progressing in the field of electronic devices. I was wondering if our Railways could bring in electronic devices to fore warn them of any locomotive coming from the opposite direction.

As suggested by my Hon. friend here next to me that we should go in for insurance coverage because railway travel has become as risky as travel by air. The railway accidents are becoming so frequent and are taking place at the rate of two or three times a week. This is indeed a very very serious situation, a matter for the Government to take note of.

[Translation]

SHRI SARFARAZ AHMED (Giridih): Sir, first of all I pay my homage to those who died in the rail accident which occurred on the 6th of the last month. In fact, it was a very sad and tragic incident for the whole of the country and you might have observed that immediately after the accident the entire country was engulfed in a wave of shock and sorrow. Every one was stunned. Prior to this accident, the Maurya Express had met with an accident and even earlier one more train had met the same fate. We should seriously think as to why these accidents are taking place. We should try to find out the causes behind them and also who is at fault. We should apprehend the guilty. After the accident, announcement about the compensation

is made—partly by the Central Government and partly by the State Government. But I feel, it is of no use because whatever the quantum of the compensation, the man who has gone cannot come back. His life cannot be evaluated in terms of money. We must find out the causes of rail accidents in our country; maybe negligence is mainly responsible for them. Why our employees are not doing their duty well? After the announcement of the compensation, the entire attention is diverted towards that aspect and process of filling up of the forms and completing other formalities and identifying the successors of the deceased starts. But utmost attention should be paid to the aspect of finding out the causes of the accidents. We do not pay attention to this aspect. I want to drew your attention to it because I travel mostly by trains...(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Never travel by train.

SHRI SARFARAZ AHMED: I travel by train only. In the matter of payment of compensation also, a lot of bungling is done. There also people start indulging in illegal activities. I will not go into details but I must narrate an incident in which I was involved. I was sitting in a bogie. That bogie was attached next to the engine. When the train left Kanpur, I felt that the train was running very fast. I peeped out and saw that only our bogie and the engine were running on the railway line and the remaining bogies had been left behind on the platform. Why do such things happen? We should find out the reasons for these things. This thing I had said in my last speech on the Budget also and once again I want to repeat that Chota Nagpur and Santhal Pargana areas of Bibar are very backward. Some special allotment should be made for this area. Old and obsolete tracks should be replaced. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI DAMODAR PANDEY (Hazari-bagh): Sir, most of the people who died in the train accident which we are discussing, belonged to my constituency. It is obvious that I have some expectations from the Government on behalf of them as well as their families and I am fully confident that every effort will be made to provide compen-

sation to them. We are discussing just one of the several accidents that have occurred but there have been several accidents in that area which have neither been discussed here nor have they been reported in the newspapers. I usually travel on that branch line. Therefore, I know the deplorable condition of the line. Wherever you go you will find wagons lying near the railway track. Between Bomo and Gaya the rail accidents are quite common. After every accident it is said that the Internal Security Organisation of the Railways is holding an enquiry. After the enquiry, sometime signalman and sometime cabinman is suspended. This shows that these enquiries are not done in depth. This is the reason that these accidents are occurring frequently. Therefore, I demand that these accidents should be investigated in detail and in depth. These enquiries should be held not by the Railways but by some independent body or by some Parliamentary Committee or there should be judicial enquiries because this superficial enquiry is not going to satisfy the people. People feel themselves insecure.

Sir, I want to know why accidents occur in the Dhanbad Division so frequently? It is not my contention; you can verify it from the records and figures available with you. The records will reveal that not only the maximum goods traffic but also the maximum' passenger traffic is on this track and it also brings you maximum revenue. It contributes a lot to the national exchequer. Then why do you not pay attention towards such an important railway line, on which the maximum goods traffic and passenger traffic in India is carried and through which the maximum revenue is earned? The officers there have been working for the last 10 to 20 years. Their experience should be helpful in improving the working of the railways. But, what is happening is just the reverse of it. Is it not so that this very reason has contributed to the development of vested interest and as a result attention is not being paid to improve the working? We do not want to blame anyone but want that the matter should be fully investigated and the guilty officers suitably dealt with by taking proper steps. If we feel that there has been some negligence in the system in the administration and in purchase and sale, this should be looked into. It is strange that the copular shaps. Have we never fealized

the need to have a system to look after the purchase and testing of the equipment? In case there is no such system, accidents are bound to occur every now and then. Copulars will snap and brakes will fail. If the equipment is faulty this is not due to the failure of the signalman or the brakeman. This may be due to the failure of the highest echelons of the management. Therefore, I want that this should be investigated and only after thorough investigation, the Hon. Minister should think what future steps can be taken.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY (Hanamkonda): Sir, I have to raise a number of points. The Hon. Minister of Railway, while replying to a question on 17.7.86 in this House had said that during the last six months, 300 railway accidents had occurred. He also told that out of them, 119 accidents were due to the failure of railway staff, 33 accidents were due to the failure other than that of the railway staff and 93 were due to the failure of equipment. It reveals that one third of the accidents occurred due to the failure of the railway staff and another one third accidents occurred due to the failure of railway equipment and railway mechanism-The rest of the accidents are minor and accidental. This much we know that 66 per cent of the total accidents are due to the departmental failure.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Is there no quota for the Minister?

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: It has caused a loss of at least Rs. 4 crores to the Railways. There is no mention in it about the compensation paid. You have told that a compensation of Rs. 5000 has been paid but it is not enough.

Please state what remedial steps are going to be taken by you to remove the causes of the accidents. The Hon. Minister is not listening to our points and is engaged in conversation. We want that the Railway Minister must deal with the points raised by us while giving the reply. You have stated that a number of steps have been taken, then how is it that so many accidents are still occurring? Out of these accidents, 76 accidents were due to defective rakes, 30 per

[Shri C. Jagna Reddy]

cent due to faulty railway equipment and 26 per cent due to the railway track. Attempts should be made to improve this situation. What steps are being taken by the Government in this regard? How much funds have been earmarked for this purpose?

It will be regretable if details of the compensation paid during the last six months are not revealed by you. You have given the reply only to part (d) of the question stating that the information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House. How much compensation have you paid is not known to you. It is regrettable that the details in this respect are not available with you. We want that compensation should be paid in respect of the passengers killed in the accident. You must at least pay from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1 lakh for this.

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): Sir, I am grateful to Prof. Madhu Dandavate for initiating a discussion under rule 193 on the subject of railway accidents. I am also grateful to those who have participated in this discussion. They have all given very good suggestions.

Whenever any accident occurs, it is a cause of distress and sorrow for all of us. It is specially so for those who are in charge of the Department. Prof. Madhu Dandavate, a very experienced person, has made my work very simple. It is fortunate that he also has the experience of the Railway Department, due to which he is very much interested in this matter and has given many valuable suggestions. Action on almost all his suggestions has been initiated.

If we divide these incidents which are taking place into three parts, then I think we can understand the mater in the right perspective. There are several kinds of railway accidents which I do not want to repeat. Prof. Madhu Dandavate has elaborated upon those types of incidents which come under the purview of railway accidents.

The first category is of those accidents which occur within the limits of a station. The second category is of those which occur between two stations, for example, the one that happened recently near Garhwa station. The third category is of those accidents which occur when the driver of a train bypasses the signals. In all types of accidents the safety of the passengers is of paramount importance. It is true that three committees have been constituted so far to look into such matters, and they are the Sikri Committee, the Wanchoo Committee and there was a third committee. The recommendations of all the three committees are similar in nature.

[English]

PROF MADHU DANDAVATE : Sikri Committee was the last committee.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Yes, Sikri Committee was the last Committee. But there were two other Committees before that. One was Wanchoo Committee and I can give you the name of the other Committee, but I am not getting in Immediately.

[Translation]

The recommendations of these committees are being implemented. However, due to resource constraint all of them cannot be implemented simultaneously in spite of our efforts. Whatever is essential is being done.

So far as the safety of passengers is concerned, many suggestions have come. I want to take them up one by one. As regards accidents within the station limits Prof. Madhu Dandavate has suggested that track circuiting on platform should be ensured to avoid such accidents. By this process, the Station Master gets the necessary information as to whether the railway line is clear or not in his room itself and the required signal accordingly. However, such circuiting is possible on electrified routes only. This work has been taken up an busy routes like Delhi-Bombay, Delhi-Calcutta, Delhi-Madras. Bombay, Madras-Delhi, Bombay etc. Out of the 2600 stations, work on 226 stations and loop lines has been started. 30 stations

and 100 loop lines are taken in hand every year for track-circuiting. Efforts will be made to complete this work within the Seventh Five--Year Plan.

The next point of special significance is that there is a system called axle counter which is used for averting accidents between two stations. In spite of our best efforts, we could implement this system on a very small scale because it is very expensive. It costs Rs. 15 lakhs per block section. Therefore, the Northern Railway has spent Rs. 33 lakhs for installing it on Ambala-Bikhera-Mori Section which is a very small block. The work was completed in March, 1986 and it is functioning smoothly.

[English]

This is quite expensive, as I have said, and costs Rs. 15 lakhs per block section.

[Translation]

This is our difficulty and it is a financial one, but we are not going to abandon our work because of such difficulties.

Thirdly, it is an open fact that renewal of the railway tracks is a colossal work. 19,550 kms of overaged railway track needs renewal. We plan to renew all tracks during the next ten years and much of its work has already begun. Nearly 4,400 kms will be renewed every year which would cost about Rs. 6000 to 7,000 crores. But it is a gigantic task and also very expensive. However, we would make our best efforts to renew the tracks.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Whatever amount you have earmarked for it is not enough.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: What you are saying in true. You should plead for us, so that the Planning Commission increases the allocated amount. They have their own difficulties, but this work is also very important and it would be our effort to complete this work at any rate.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: We will plead, no doubt, but you should inform your lordship as well; ... (Interruptions) He is the Chairman of the Planning Commission.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: He is making all efforts for it. Prof. Madhu Dandavate will concede that our Prime Minister has been interested in it and that is why such a large amount was earmarked for the first line for track renewal in the last budget Had he not been interested, could he allot so much of money? So, there is no disagreement on this point and the people sitting on those benches have also agreed on this point. There are no two opinions about it.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Let the departmental labour do the work, and you should dispense with the contractors.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: It is not possible to know who is the contractor for whom.

Another thing has come to light. Prof. Madhu Dandavate while talking about judicial inquiries has himself said that it is only in the Railway Ministry that inquiries regarding railway accidents are conducated by the Commissioner of Railway Safety, This system does not exist elsewhere. It is only in the Railway Ministry that the Commissioner of Railways Safety conducts the enquiries. A judicial enquiry would only fix the responsibility as to who is responsible for a particular accident. But the Commissioner of Railawy Safety, which is a totally independent body, not only fixes the responsiblity but also points out all the deficiencies and lacunae for the consideration of the Railways authorities. Therefore, I think, the way inquires are being conducted at present should continue. It has yielded good results. As Prof. Madhu Dandavate knows, the inquiries conducted so far have been impartial and the reports of the Commissioner has also been implemented.

Another point raised by the Members relates to claims There is a misconception about it Rs. 5000 are given to the family

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[Smt. Mohsina Kidwai]

of the deceased and Rs. 1000 to the injured as ex-gratia payment only and not as compensation. The appointment of the claims commissioner is made in consultation with the concerned State Governments where the accident occurs. You may be aware that in case of a death in an accident, there may be fraudulent claims for compensation and in a way these are legal proceedings with which the Railawy Ministry is in no way connected. So, naturally payment of claims is delayed. An Hon, Member has said that we have not paid Rs. 1 lakh, but according to the figures available with me, we have paid it to quite a number of people. In 1982-84, we paid Rs. 96 lakhs and in 1984-85 we paid Rs. 123 lakhs. We have already given compensation to 28 victims of the Railway accident which occurred near Raja Mandi in Agra; similarly in regard to the accident at Byculla in Bombay, in 1984. 25 people have been given compensation. We agree that our work is delayed due to legal proceedings, but I cannot say that wecan help it, because this work requires the placement of evidence and witnesses. Hence, delay is natural.

The Members have raised two or three points regarding railway track in Bihar. An Hon. Member has also stated that there have been more deaths in that accident in Bihar, than what is officially reported. I want to reiterate that I am not in favour of concealing even minor facts. You are all responsible Members of the House and you ought to know the facts. According to our reports 44 person have died and 37 have been injured. I myself went there and saw the railway engine lying on one side. Moreover, the drain did not have more than two feet of water, so one cannot say that some dead bodies have been washed away. But the body of the engine driver must be trapped somewhere. We summoned a crane also but it could not lift the engine from such a depth as it is so heavy. We have come to know that the engine has not been pulled out so far So the expected number of casualties is 45. (Interruptions)

15.00 brs.

You have also said that the number of accidents has increased very much. I have

got figures which prove that the number of accidents and deaths has decreased during the last few years. Perhaps, the Members are not in a mood to know but I want to tell you that the efforts made previously have lessened the number of mishaps. My predecessor, Shri Bansi Lal had initiated a ten point programme in which senior officers did monitoring, patrolling, checking of tracks and all other related things and all these things have brought down the number of accidents. The total number of accidents in 1961-62 was 1131. It has been 1013 in 1980-81, 1130 in 1981-82, 797 in 1982-83, 768 in 1983-84, 812 in 1984-85 and 717, in 1985-86. There has, therefore, been a decrease of 11.7 per cent. As far as lives lost are concerned, their number has also come down. In this way it has been our effort to minimise the accidents. In this connection we are trying to obtain latest equipment and electronic devices from other countries. (Interruptions). We have stopped recruitment and the resultant shortage of employees would not be more than marginal. We shall manage to do with the shortage. I assure the House that the guilty persons will not be spared and will certainly be punished. In future we shall try to implement your suggastions so as to streamline the system. I conclude by expressing my gratitude to you.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Sir, I would like to know how many persons have been punished after the appointment of the first committee.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: The wrongdoers have been punished.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: You punish the subordinate staff. How many officers has been punished?

SHRIMATI MOHSIANA KIDWAI: It does not matter whether one is an officer or a subordinate employee. All the guilty persons will be punished.