

11.30 hrs.

**RAILWAY BUDGET, 1981-82 —  
GENERAL DISCUSSION — Contd.**

**MR. SPEAKER :** Now, we resume the general discussion on the Railway Budget. Prof. Parashar to continue.

**PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR (Hamirpur) :** Yesterday I talked about the new concept of freight psychology enunciated by the Railway Minister, Shri Kedar Pandey, in his Budget speech. I also talked about the continuous decline in the earnings of the Railways in the past three years. But I am happy to note that improvements have taken place recently. I would quote from the *Economic Survey* which says :

"... Coal movement to steel and cement plants declined during April to December, 1980. "This decline is because in the context of limitations on total coal loading, special efforts were made to meet the priority requirement of thermal power stations in the pre-monsoon months. Movement to priority industries like steel and cement was increased from August onwards synchronising with the improved power generation. From October 1980 onwards, overall coal loading went up and coal loading to these key sectors recorded substantial increases compared to the levels in the earlier months..."

Shri Kamalapati Tripathi did his best to tone up the working of the Railway's and I am happy that Shri Kedar Pandey is determined to take it up to new heights. The target for freight traffic in the Sixth Five-Year Plan is 309 million tonnes. I hope it would be achieved. It will not be out of place to mention that the highest peak so far recorded in the Seventies was 232 million tonnes and that was in the year 1975-76. I hope, with the constant watch and supervision of the hon. Railway Minister, the freight earnings will increase. This calls for a radical restructuring of the Railway finances, and unless this is done, nothing will be achieved. The Railways, I must point out, are carrying a huge social burden : according to the figures supplied by the Railway Board, Rs. 66.76 crores are contributed by the Railways as social burden for carrying various low-freighted items and another Rs. 27 crores on account of uneconomic railway lines which are 132 in number, so, Rs. 93.76 crores are the total burden on account of social burden on the railway exchequer. I would request our Railway Minister to see to it that this burden is shared by the General Revenues also. Why should we not expect the General Revenues to come to the rescue of the Railways and make ample finances available to them ? Otherwise, this ultimately results in the sagging of the capital finances of the

Railways. The Railway Convention Committee, in its wisdom, has given the report that, unless there is a surplus Railway Budget, unless there is surplus in their earnings, they could treat payment of dividend to the General Revenues as deferred dividend—so that the payment would be deferred for the future. This is a very good idea.

I would request our Railway Minister to see that a special fund for the new railway lines is created. It should be dovetailed with the Development Fund which also accounts for some of the unremunerative activities of the Railways. The Railways are a commercial venture, but more than that, they are a national undertaking. All parts of the country have a claim on this. In this regard I would request the Railway Minister to reconsider the point of exemptions he has given. He has increased the freights. He has, of course, given a very welcome suggestion that six per cent concession will be given on the freight on movement of goods to the North-Eastern States *via* Howrah. This is very good idea. But, for the rest of the country, he has exempted only three items, namely, salt, firewood and charcoal. This is not sufficient. I would suggest that he should take a hint from the last Budget presented by Shri Kamalapati Tripathi where items like sugar, food-grains, pulses, kerosene, vanaspati and fertilisers were exempted. In addition to these, I would also suggest that vegetables and things like fruits which are perishable should also be exempted. The Hill States like our State, Himachal and Jammu & Kashmir are vegetable—and fruit-growing States and their economy would be hit hard unless these exemptions are given...

**MR. SPEAKER :** Arrangements should be made to transport them as quickly as possible.

**PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR :** I very much appreciate your suggestion, Sir, that there should be quick movement of fruits, vegetables and other things from one part of the country to another. This is what the Railway Minister said—that he wanted to initiate a freight-oriented approach in the Railways so that goods trains move faster. In addition to this, I would request that some of the border areas of the country are suffering from what one might say inadequate linkages. For example, he, talked of tourism. I welcome his suggestion that there should be a separate Directorate of Tourism in the Railway Board. This is a very good suggestion. But tourism cannot develop unless places which are of tourist interest are linked with the net work of railways. In that context I would suggest that at least there should be one

train from Pathankot to New Delhi or Delhi for the people of Himachal Pradesh and the tourists from this part to Himachal Pradesh. Now all the trains from Delhi go to Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh has been neglected. There has been a crying demand for a train from Pathankot to Delhi exclusively for the people of Himachal Pradesh and the tourists from other parts of the country. Now what happens? All the tourists rush to Jammu and Kashmir and nobody thinks of Himachal Pradesh. You know, Sir, Himachal Pradesh has a better tourist potential or at least an equally good potential as Jammu and Kashmir. I would request the hon. Minister to think over this.

A suggestion has been made by some of the social organisations for starting a Chamunda Express. Chamunda is the name of a Goddess of Kangra in Himachal Pradesh where our Prime Minister recently visited in the month of November...

PROF. N. G. RANGA (Guntur):  
It is Goodness Chamundi.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR : Sir, if that Chamunda Express is started from Pathankot to New Delhi or Delhi, it will serve the purpose of these areas.

Secondly, there is no direct train to Simla from the Bombay side. At present you are running Ranchi Express which only duplicates the task of the Howrah Express. Howrah Express is one of the oldest trains and in the same track you have started the Ranchi Express and you have extended it upto Chandigarh. Why not extend it upto Kalka? I have been pleading with the Railway Board. Sir, the entire rake goes to Kalka for cleaning, washing, maintenance and everything. But why should take passengers only from Chandigarh? This is a point which the Railway Board should consider. They are losing money on this. If the train can emanate from Kalka, it can render a better service to the people of Himachal Pradesh and also Haryana than if it starts from Chandigarh which is a capital city. Kalka is only 26 km. away. In this regard I would plead that there should be a direct railway train from Bombay to Kalka to cater to the rush of the tourists from western India and also from the southern parts of the country to Simla and other areas.

Sir, I would not confine my attention to Himachal Pradesh alone. I would plead with the Minister that a special train from Dehra Dun also because the hilly areas of UP are neglected. I want a train from Dehra Dun side. Not only trains, but

there was a survey for a railway line from Dehra Dun to Dak Pathar. I would suggest that this line be laid early so that ultimately Dak Pathar can be connected to Paonta Sahib. There is a proposal to construct a railway line from Panta Sahib to Jagadhari. If that materialises, then there will be a direct link from Jagadhari to Dehra Dun which will be very useful for military movement also because Chandigarh is going to be the headquarters of the Western Army Command. This line will then connect all the military cantonments in that area and it will provide a direct route which would link three States of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana as also Punjab.

Similarly, there are a few other surveys. In Bihar, for example, international tourists come to Budhi Gaya and they also go to Rajgir. Shri L. N. Mishra ordered a survey for a line connecting Rajgir and Budhi Gaya and ultimately Patna. Though the surveys in Bihar are also taken up for consideration, I would plead, as a general case, that all the surveys ordered by his predecessors—either by Shri L. N. Mishra during his regime as Railway Minister and started by Shri Kamalapati Tripathi were all negated by the Janata Party government simply because they were ordered by the Congress government and Congress Party government and I would plead they should be taken up for construction so that the backward areas of the country including Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are served better.

I would also plead for a special plan for the Railways. The Railway Minister, unfortunately, has not talked of the corporate plan which is a fifteen year plan of the railways which was drawn up in 1976. 1976 was the year of the Congress regime and I am afraid thereafter it might have been shelved or, in case it has been shelved, it should be revived and planning should be done in such a way that there should be improvement or priority given to items which are needed from the national point of view. I can take up the figures and suggest that the Railway Minister has been good enough to earmarked 7.5% of the funds in the Sixth Five Year Plan for new railway lines. In the earlier plans, say, in the Second Plan it was a much higher amount. It was about 12.5%. In the Fourth and the Fifth Plans it was 4.7 and 5.3 per cent respectively. This 7.5 per cent allotment is not at all sufficient. It should be increased and ways and means should be found as to how the railways should be able to contribute its own share for the construction of railway lines and the missing links, and for certain line conversions like conversion from Katihar to Joghani which will make an international line upto Nepal.

[Prof. Nartn Chand Parashar]

Sir, there are very important suggestions which the Railway Minister has considered but the most important suggestion is how to tone up the efficiency and operational aspects. During the last five years I find from the records that the operating ratio has been deteriorating. It has touched 90 per cent. The operating ratio can be defined as the ratio of the earnings to the total expenses of the undertaking. It has from 82 deteriorated to 90 which means there is additional expenditure on staff. At the moment 55 per cent of the railway revenue are spent on staff and staff welfare, 20 per cent on fuel and only a very limited portion of the railways revenue is left for the benefit of the country. As such, the railway has to look forward to the general revenues and the Planning Commission for additional funds. When the railways are a commercial undertaking why do they not contribute out of their own earnings to the general development of the country. So, I plead with the hon. Minister to create sufficient funds to undertake some important activities like new railway lines, improvement of railway stations, traffic facilities to passengers and other things.

Sir, there are a few things which make up the memory whenever the Railway Budget is passed and then for one whole year we forget everything about it. Sir, we have to suffer at the hands of the Northern Railway because their recruiting agency, namely, Northern Railway Public Service Commission is having its headquarters at Allahabad. We had been making strong demands in the Fifth Lok Sabha that this office should be shifted to Delhi or a sub-office be opened at Chandigarh or Jullundur so that the North Western States are given their due. Today it is not possible for a poor man from Himachal Pradesh or Jammu and Kashmir to appear for an interview for the post of a clerk at Allahabad. So, Sir, yesterday I supported the plea for re-organisation of the Railway zones. I would repeat my suggestion today that a North Western Railway should be created immediately by re-organising the North and Western Railways so that people of the North Western States can get the full benefit of railways.

My last submission is to the hon. Railway Minister, Shri Pandey. At the moment the nation looks up to him to make the railways the sinews of the nation in its march towards progress. Opposition parties with their black-mailing tactics are determined to create blockades in your way. They are ready to launch 'Rasta Roko' and 'Train Roko' programmes. I would request the hon. Minister to take the nation on the march for progress

under the leadership of Shrimati Indira Gandhi and make the railways an agent and symbol of national economy and national integration.

SHRI GULSHER AHMED (Satna)

Mr. Speaker, I admire the Minister for Railways for making some very good administrative and innovating changes in the working of the railways. The first important change or innovation that he had made is that he has segregated modern wagons fitted with roller-bearings and central buffer couplers to the operation of express stream of freight traffic.

Another important change that the hon. Railway Minister has made in the working of the Railways is that he has increased the use of electric and diesel engines in certain sections. The first one is in regard to open box wagons for coal, steel, cement materials and export-ore; and the second is in regard to the covered wagons for foodgrains and fertilizers. These changes have made the Railways to transport added traffic much more efficiently.

12.06 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*].

The third important change that the hon. Railways Minister has introduced in the working of the Railways is that he has replaced the steam engines by diesel and electric engines. The result has been that nearly 500 steam engines have become surplus. In this process coal has also been saved by the Railways. That coal can also now be utilised by industries.

Another very tangible change that the hon. Minister has introduced is in regard to the running of single destination trains with the same locomotive eliminating detention and stay in intermediate terminals thus ensuring considerable improvement in rolling stock and also saving time.

The hon. Minister has said that metre gauge can be made to work much more efficiently if a little improvement can be made. He quoted the example of some foreign countries. He has said that in some of the foreign countries the metre gauge engines are running at a speed of 150 K.M. and with a little adjustment much improvement can be done in the metre gauge system. For that the Minister has made a proposal for conversion of metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines. Some kind of provision has also been made in the Budget. Now, Sir, I cannot understand why you should go on changing metre gauge into broad gauge.

PROF. N. G. RANGA Only in some areas.

SHRI GULSHER AHMED : May be only in some areas. Prof. Dandavate has stated while speaking on the Railway Budget that a lot of pilferage takes place in transshipment. I would like to make a suggestion in this connection and I request the hon. Minister to examine it. I request him to send some officers of the Railway Ministry to some of the European countries to see the working of the railways there. In the European countries they have got a system of only changing the wheels. They do not change the entire railway traction from metre gauge into broad gauge. They only change the wheels. I was travelling from Moscow to Bulgaria. I saw what they were doing. They were changing the wheels of metre gauge trains into broad gauge; they were also changing the wheels of broad gauge trains into metre gauge. In one hour or so they were able to do this work. We can also think of some such device or some such technique, because, that will save a lot of money. This is better than changing the entire railway traction from metre gauge into broad gauge. This is my respectful suggestion and I request the hon. Minister to send a team of his officers from the Railway Board to some of these European countries to study this system. The same system can be introduced in our country with advantage if it is found to be economical and feasible instead of resorting to conversion of the entire railway system from metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines. He has proposed to spend a lot of money on this.

Then another significant thing he has stated in his budget speech is that the Research, Design and Standards Organisation of the Railways have made some discoveries about the meter gauge standard. There was some international conference where some kind of design of the track had been proposed by our experts and scientists and it had been accepted by other countries. If that is the position, then I do not think that there is any necessity of converting the meter gauge into broad gauge.

Now, I want to make a strong plea to the Minister in regard to the construction of a new railway line in my constituency. I come from an area which is a backward area. Previously it was called as Part 'C' State, known as Vindhya Pradesh. You will be surprised that when Vindhya Pradesh was called Part 'C' State, its capital city, Rewa, was not connected by the railways with other important places. At that time I had made a very strong plea, when Mr. Shastri was the Railway Minister, for construction of a new railway

line from Satna to Rewa. The then Railway Minister had agreed to my proposal and afterwards a survey was conducted. But when Vindhya Pradesh was merged with Madhya Pradesh in 1957, this proposal was abandoned. Since then nothing has happened in this area in the matter of railway line construction. I have gone through the present Railway Budget proposal. There has been no mention about my constituency. When the merger of Vindhya Pradesh with Madhya Pradesh took place, this proposal for construction of a new railway line between Satna and Rewa was shelved. In the last year's budget there was some mention about a new railway line construction from Lalitpur to Chhatarpur, Panna, Satna, Rewa, Sidhi and Singrauli where we have got a lot of coal. Now, in this budget I do not find the name of any of these places for railway line construction. It is neither in the survey scheme nor in the list of construction of new railway lines which is going to be taken up in the Sixth Plan. I would like the hon. Minister kindly to enlighten us as to what happened to the survey conducted in this area. I do not know whether it is still being surveyed or a fresh survey is yet to be conducted between Lalitpur and Singrauli and from Singrauli to Khajuraho and then to Banda. Khajuraho is a place of historical importance. There is a suggestion from a lady hon. Member here that Khajuraho and Banda should also have a new railway line connecting Singrauli. I am pleading for a new railway line and I hope you will have a survey conducted in this area.

Another point is about the late running of trains. Many of the hon. Members of this House will be having this point to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister. Now the late running of trains has become chronic and we are all affected and the general public is suffering from this. This point was also highlighted during the last year's debate. One of the positions is such that within one year, a number of trains are running from 8 to 10 hours behind schedule and sometimes the Mail and Express trains are running 12 hours behind schedule. When we ask the railway authorities the reason for the inordinate delay in the running of trains, they simply say that chain pulling is going on all over the places and therefore the trains are running late. I understand that pulling of the chain can be stopped if some kind of device is invented. I have been told that in the Western Railway, in some trains, alarm chain is fitted in the latrine and if some passenger want to stop the train, he has to go to the latrine and the moment he pulls the chain, the door of the latrine is automatically closed and with

[ hri Gulsher Ahmed ]

some instrument only the latrine doors can be opened. I feel that this device may be introduced in all the passenger trains where the incidents of chain pulling are abnormal. I have been told that system is prevalent on some lines in the Western Railways. I do not know how far it is true. If it is true that such a system is prevalent in some parts of the Railways, why not introduce it everywhere ? The moment the passengers know that we are Members of Parliament, they start talking all kinds of nonsense. This is because every train is late. This has become a nuisance now. Just for the sake of a very small distance, even a furlong, the people pull the chain. And if it is a big city and the train is passing through it, the train is stopped at various points by pulling the chain. For God's sake, save us from this torture and agony from which we suffer while travelling by trains.

Another complaint that I have to make is with regard to the condition of the latrines in the first class compartments. There are no mirrors. No fittings are there, where we can put our soap, brush etc. Particularly in the train by which I travel, Kutab Exp., from Nizamuddin to Satna, I have found that sometimes the bathroom or the latrine water is leaking and it is impossible to use that. Same is the case. I am told, in respect of the Jhelum and Punjab Express train s. When you are doing to raise the fare, you must give due consideration to these small amenities that you can provide in these compartments.

Then, the food that we get during the railway journey leaves much to be desired. I do not know how the foreigners react when they travel by our trains. We get puris cooked eight hours earlier and in very dirty pots; the vegetables and dal all cold; and you cannot eat the chapatis that are given. Even if you travel in an airconditioned compartment, you get the worst kind of food and nobody likes to eat. When you are charging about Rs. 200 for a distance from here to Satna cannot give me a good breakfast and good food. Then, there is no dining car. I think, this is the feeling of most of the members here that in the long distance and fast trains, dining car must be provided.

I have got a great problem in my parliamentary constituency. My constituency consists of six assembly constituencies of Satna and two assembly constituencies of Jabalpur and that area is known as Murwara. We have two cement factories and 200 lime kilns in that area. That area in Madhya Pradesh has got all kinds of valuable mineral ; it has got the largest

mineral wealth, but there is no railway line. The result is that only lime stone is being exploited. As I said, we have two cement factories and a number of lime kilns, but other minerals like ochre are lying there unexploited. I think, we have got the largest minerals in that area, but we have no railway lines. There is one railway station called Roopand between Katni and Bilaspur. I have been told that near that railway station, there are a number of valuable minerals, but because there are no railway facilities, no yards, although people know that valuable minerals exist there, they cannot exploit them and invest money for that purpose. A number of industries can be started there based on these minerals. We have the best quality lime in that area and in such a large quantity that it can be exploited for years to come. It can bring in crores of rupees; but because of lack of railway facilities, these minerals are not being mined. I would request hon. Minister to pay special attention to that area.

The extension and expansion of Satna R.S. is very important. Sometimes it happens that at one time 3 trains come. But only one train can stop at the Platform. The other trains have to wait at the sidings. It takes half-an-hour for the next train to come to the platform. For the last 24 years, all of us, including MPs., Ministers and speakers have been writing to the Railway Ministry saying: "There is no convenient connection between north of Bhopal and Bhopal. To solve this problem, one bogie in the Kashi-Bombay Express should be provided." But we have been told every time that it is not possible. I cannot understand this. If we have one bogie, half I Class and half II Class. We have been demanding this for the last 30 years. I, as speaker of Madhya Pradesh Assembly, has written for a number of years. till it has not been done. It is easy for me to come from Satna to Delhi direct, but not so for going from Satna to Bhopal. I have to go to Bhopal because it is the capital. For journey between Satna and Delhi, I take 12 hours. I start at night, and come here in the morning. There is no change anywhere in between. (Interruptions) I think the Minister will have mercy on me. I am 60 years' old. This is a genuine demand.

I want a fast train between Banaras and Ujjain; and I have written a letter to the Minister to this effect. There were two religious places. The god is the same. This train should run from Kashi to Allahabad, Satna, Katni, Jabalpur, Itarsi, Bhopal and Ujjain. The Minister has said, "It is not possible." If that is not possible, an extra bogie, with half



I class and half II Class berths should be provided in the Kashi-Bombay Express. That will serve our purpose. Otherwise we are put to a lot of inconvenience. People from Chattarpur, Panna, Sidhi and Rewa districts — M.L.As., Ministers and MPs and the public—have to travel to Bhopal from Satna. Unfortunately in the Kashi-Bombay Express, there is only one bogie of First Class. It is very difficult to get any kind of accommodation in first class. So, I request the hon. Minister to solve this problem of ours. He should attach one bogie in the Kashi-Bombay Express.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : 46 minutes have been allotted to CPM. There are 3 names. I now call Mr. Basudeb Acharya.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) While the Minister for Railways was presenting the Budget, I was listening with hard attention to find out whether he mentions the number of persons killed in accidents during 1980-81, more particularly about those killed after he assumed the charge in November 1980, whether he has any word of remorse or regret for those who were killed, whether he has any words of condolence—even though hypocritical—for members of the bereaved families. I found none. He had mentioned nothing about the accidents at all. He also did not have any word of appreciation for the Railways workers including trolley-men and gangmen, due to whose vigilance and devoted working, many of the accidents could be saved. It has led me to a serious doubt as to whether there is something called heart, functioning within the body of our Railway Minister and if at all it is there how it could be immune from feelings.

Even in his statement which the Railway Minister made in the House on 17th February last, he did not express a word of condolence for those persons killed in accidents. The Minister stated in his speech that with the administrative and innovative steps taken three months back, the railway operation is now back on the rails. What are the facts? If you see the figures of accidents you will find that in the year 1971-72, there were 4918 accidents; in the year 1979-80, there were 12189 accidents and in the Year 1952-53, there were 12783 accidents. Even compared in the background of the incidence per million train kilometres, the figures of 1970-71 was only 10.5 which has risen to 24.27 in 1979-80. It means that the railways have been operating in reverse gear, as far as the accidents are concerned. Hence it would, in the fitness of things, only be proper to rename the Ministry as the Ministry of Accidents and Derailments.

The Minister has very kindly apprised the House of some details of the measures he has taken for so-called improvement in operational efficiency on pages 3 & 4 of his speech. The most important question is have the Ministry discussed these measures with the staff concerned? Did they taken into account the question whether such changes would increase safety hazards for the travelling public? This is precisely the point that has been raised by the All India Loco Running Staff Association. The points raised by them are as follows :—

1. The authorities have dispensed with the Train Examiners' certificate about vacuum which was given in Mechanical V form as a result neither the Driver nor the Guard knows whether the vacuum brake would properly operate or not.

2. The authorities have dispensed with the elementary precaution of adequate brake-power which is cent per cent for coaching trains and 85 per cent for goods trains. Without this adequate brake power it is not possible for any one to control the hurtling mass of loads they haul. Naturally the failure to stop the train within adequate distance is blamed as "Human Failure" though in reality it should be termed as brake-failure or mechanical failure.

3. The third point is about 'Jumbos.' For running these Jumbos the Minister has admitted that intermediate wagon examination points have been abolished. But the records show that at least 7 per cent of wagons are over-aged and more than 23 per cent of wagons are kept in use although they are overdue periodical overhaul. Even the Prime Minister the other day had complained that as against normal sickness of wagons in line which was earlier 4 per cent or below has increased to nearly 5 per cent.

All these measures have been proved to be safety hazard in the Railways. Much has been talked about workers' participation in the management. As far as the Railways are concerned, they give wide publicity while setting up corporate enterprise group for ideal measures and for workers' participation. Have the Railway Ministry discussed these changes with C.E.G. and obtained approval from the organised labour? Do they think that they can impose unilateral changes without the consent and active cooperation of the Railway workers. Both these accidents and loco-men struggle are interlinked. There was a great demand in this House for a separate debate on this subject. The Minister has no objection and that is on record. I again demand that there should be a separate debate on the Railway accidents because I have lot of material with me.

[Shri Basudeb Acharya]

I live in a place where there is automatic signalling. I am told that when a wagon gets delinked, from the main train, the signal will show green and on this score alone there have been many accidents, specially in the Chandil section in South-Eastern region. There have been complaints about deployment of untrained reserved personnel due to which in the Sealdah Division alone there were five accidents and in the North-Eastern Railway there were two accidents. So, I once again demand that there should be a special debate on Railway accidents. (Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI KEDAR PANDAY) : You have got this splendid opportunity. You can talk about Railway accidents also. You can take this opportunity and speak at this time itself.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARYA : No, A special debate should be arranged.

SHRI KEDAR PANDAY : You have got the opportunity now.

AN HON. MEMBER : There are so many points besides accidents. We want a good discussion on accidents only.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARYA : Let us come to the Plan outlay. The Minister has informed us that the Plan outlay for the Railways in this Sixth Five Year Plan for 1980-85 is Rs. 5,100 crores. Really this is a substantial step up over the outlay of Rs. 3,400 crores indicated for the now defunct 1978-83 plan. This has been placed in a manner to earn appreciation but what is the naked truth? Only a fortnight back in the Consultative Committee meeting the Minister informed us that the Working Group of Railways has estimated that a sum of Rs. 11,817 is the need-based requirement of the Railway and because the Planning Commission has allotted only Rs. 5,100 crores the rehabilitation programme of coaches etc. would have to be substantially pruned. It means more use of over-aged wagons and rolling stock, possibly more accidents. Even in the *Economic Survey* last year it was pointed out that lack of expansion of Railways is causing serious bottlenecks in creating a proper infrastructure for expansion of the economy. The National Transport Policy Committee also recommended and we also feel that transport development should be given better attention than it has received so far. It, however, recommended and we also recommended, increased use of electricity in the field of power which is particularly suitable for Railways. The proposed mode of transport will continue to be real and right. The Plan outlay does not therefore

reflect these ideas. They are unable even to allot 50% of the need-based requirement for the railways. The Minister claims that an appreciable dent will be made. However, 1980-85 has been called, 'rehabilitation' plan. Let us consider the fiasco of the planning. The sixth plan anticipates that by 1984-85 about 319 million tonnes of freight will be offered to the railways. We were told in the last consultative committee meeting that it would require 100,000 wagons more to meet it. But with the plan allocation having been pruned down, the railways can move only about 255 to 260 million tonnes of freight-earning traffic by 1984-85. This is the fiasco of the planning.

The *Economic Survey* presented this year also hits out at the railway's inability to handle the freight that is offered to them. On page 16 it says :

"The ability of railways to carry a substantially expanded volume of freight in the coming years will be crucial for medium-term economic performance."

On page 13, it says : "The performance of the railways continued to present serious problems in 1980-81."

Now let us examine the budget proposals of our Railways Minister. There is a proposal for a total increase of rail tariff to the extent of Rs. 356.26 crores. This is the third increase in a row. Only last year there was an increase of Rs. 204.24 crores. Last year we were told that the proposed increase was pending the decision on the recommendations of the Railway Tariff Enquiry Committee. Now after a heavier dose of increase, again we are told that this is an *ad hoc* increase. It is, therefore, natural to conclude that there is going to be further increase in the railway tariff in the near future. This increase in railway tariff is going to act as a double-edged sword as far as the common man is concerned. This, time even things of daily necessities like sugar, pulses, kerosene, edible oil etc. which are always kept out of the purview of such increases have not been spared. The multiple push to an already high inflationary trend of our economy as a result of this increase on railway freight cannot now be denied any longer. Perhaps the sole exception is another gentlemen, i.e. the Chairman of the Railway Board who described in his press conference that this is minimal increase. The net result of the rise in prices would affect both the working class and the peasantry. For the workers, there will be a sharp fall in real wages as their DA neutralisation has been pegged at Rs. 1.30 P. per point in most of the industries. For the peasantry, it would entirely wipe out the meagre gains which they secured during last year after a lot

of bloodshed and travail. This is what would happen after increase in freight charges.

There is a 300% increase in reservation charges for sitting accommodation and 700% increase for sleeper accommodation for second class travellers.

But for all other classes, the increase is only hundred per cent. Similarly, for supplementary charges for super fast trains while for all other classes the rise is hundred per cent, for second class sleeper it is 200 per cent. Is this the relief given to the poor? The Minister should know that due to this increase, a person travelling by Jammu Tawi—Madras Janata Express will have to pay Rs. 2/- more than a person travelling by Tamil Nadu Express. The time taken by Jammu Tawi-Madras Express is 54 hours 30 minutes while it is 30 hours 15 minutes by Tamil Nadu Express. The fare to be charged by Jammu Tawi-Madras Express is Rs. 106.35 while it is Rs. 104.35 by Tamil Nadu Express. So, I oppose this proposal for raising the fare.

Let us come to question of labour relations. The Minister has said that labour relations are cordial. But the fact is that there have been numerous demonstrations near the Boat Club one of which Shri Pandey himself has attended. Even two days back, there was demonstration by Station Masters' Association who had burnt their misfit uniforms and announced a programme of agitation from some time in April. The Ministerial Staff Association had submitted a memorandum to the Speaker. There had been a bare chest demonstration by loco mechanical staff. There had been a work to rule movement by the carriage and wagon staff.

What has happened to the loco running staff? In August, 1973 the Government was forced to come into an agreement for reducing maximum duty at a stretch to 10 hours. Efforts were made to sabotage this agreement because of which they had to go on strike again in December, 1973. It was announced in this House that it would be implemented with three or four years. Till March, 1979 it was not implemented. In the face of another agitation, the Chairman, Railway Board, agreed to implement the same. But as soon as the new Chairman assumed authority in Railway Board, earlier agreements etc. were thrown to the winds and the staff was ordered to work for more than 10 hours, anyone who refused was victimised. A policy of provoking the staff to unleash a war of attrition was adopted. The usual Loco Running Staff Grievance Committee was made infructuous. No meeting was called despite requests. Neither the Railway Minister nor the Chairman, Railway Board met them to solve the issues. On

the other hand, they continued to victimise anyone who protested while resorting to unfair labour practice of paying so more even over and above the rules in order to divide them. Even when the workers protested against molestation and rape of their womenfolk, they were victimised. As their appeals went unheeded and their efforts to meet the Minister or the Chairman were unsuccessful, they had to resort to a protest agitation. How did the authorities behave? I have received a telegram from Andal yesterday and I quote :

"S.S. Singh of Andal and JC Bhowmick of Asansol victimised. Loco running staff were stabbed and beaten by goondas on 23rd and 21st Feb. 1981. Railway authorities provoking goondas to disrupt law and order and create terror in railway colonies. Immediate intervention solicited."

One thousand workers have been removed, dismissed, compulsorily retired from service without enquiry and without an opportunity of self-defence. Many of the victimised loco-running staff have been evicted from their quarters forcibly by the police. Many leaders, including the Secretary-General of AIREC, Comrade N.S. Bhargoo, have been served with panel transfer orders. At least more than 15 railway workers in various other categories have been summarily dismissed, because their fathers have joined the struggle at the call of the All India Loco Running Staff Association.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If you take more time, other members in your party will not get an opportunity. There are two more members wanting to speak from your party.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARYA : Now, I come to the canteen employees. They won a case in the Calcutta High Court more than seven years ago and the Government was directed to treat them as Railway employees. The Government want in appeal to the full bench of the High Court and lost the appeal. Then they went to the Supreme Court, where also they lost. The Supreme Court ordered them to treat them as railway employees. Yet, this has not been implemented up till now. This is the attitude of the Railway Ministry and the thoroughly inefficient bureaucratic white elephant that is, Railway Board.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE : (Howrah) : The hon. Minister must take note of this. The Supreme Court also recommended it.

PROF. N.G. RANGA (Gentur) : He has taken note of it.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE : It is a long pending case. I have raised it several times.



SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Let the Government read the writing on the wall. Repression can never foster cordial relations. Efficiency cannot be achieved only through the rod. The negate earlier agreements or to deny an opportunity of mutual discussion cuts at the root of collective bargaining and steps the healthy growth of trade union movement. As the agitation has been withdrawn, I would request the hon. Minister to invite them for talks, sit with them for a discussion and settle the dispute.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I would like to inform the House that from the ruling party 35 Members have given their names to participate in the Railway Budget. From the other parties also more than one Member has given the name. Since this is a discussion on the Railway Ministry, naturally, every hon. Member would like to place before the House the problems of his constituency.

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI : From my party only my name has been given.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Therefore, I would request hon. Members from the ruling party not to take more than 10 minutes. Let the Members from the opposition also so distribute the time allotted to their respective parties equally among their own Members. In that case, no Member can say that he was not given an opportunity. If Members take more time and some are deprived of an opportunity, it is not our mistake ; it is their own mistake.

SHRI K. T. KOSALRAM (Tiruchendur) : Mr Deputy-Speaker, just now you are introducing this policy. Can you give me atleast 13 minutes ?

श्री कृष्णलाल साहू (रांची) : कम से कम 15 मिनट का समय दीजिए ।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER Not less than ten minutes.

श्री किरण रस (गिमला) : हम अपने लोक हिमाचल प्रदेश की बात करेंगे, हम को भी टाइम दीजिए ।

SHRI K. T. KOSALRAM : Day before yesterday I was hearing the speech of Prof. Madhu Dandavate, when he took credit for presenting surplus budgets consecutively for three years. But I would say that they were not based on sound economic railway management ; they were mere jugglery of statistics. He perhaps thought that he could build up his party in that way without resorting to taxation, which is unpopular. But the

result was an utter failure. On the other hand, my hon. friend, Shri Pandey has come out with a taxation proposal of the order of Rs. 384 crores. But he has included a number of new projects and conversion of some lines.

My friend, Mr. Dandavate simply announced the survey and re-survey. That is the difference between Pandayji and Mr. Dandavate. This is a fact. Can Mr. Dandavate say how many new lines have been taken up? He simply ordered the survey. That is one thing.

Mr. Dandavate talks about social burdens. I know that the railways have several lakhs of gangmen for maintenance of the track. But I do know that resorting to mechanisation is in the interests of lakhs of gangmen. I would state repeatedly that 60 per cent of the railway earnings goes towards staff salaries and another 23 per cent of the money towards the fuel cost. Every rise in the dearness allowance and every increase in the international oil price brings grief to the railways.

12.54 hrs

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

The Railway Minister wants to open up the backward area with new railway lines, for which he is raising resources to the extent of Rs. 356.25 crores through increase of fares and freight. We should commend his bold efforts.

Now, I come to matters concerning Tamil Nadu. I am glad that revered Panditji is here now. In the year 1968 the survey for Karur-Dindigul-Tuticorin/Tirunelveli line had been completed. Then, my friend, the present Finance Minister, Mr. Venkataraman, and I met Mr. Madhu Dandavate when he was the Railway Minister and said, 'Everything is ready. Now you should take it up'. Then he ordered a re-survey. This re-survey, I must be very thankful to him, was completed within six months. Last year the Railway Ministry recommended it to the Planning Commission. If you want, I can read it, but as the time is limited I will not read. Now, Panditji is here. We told him that the Railway Ministry had categorically recommended to the Planning Commission that this should be included. But in the Budget it had not been included. And Panditji categorically told us that it would be considered favourably and he assured us that it would be taken up soon. So much so, when Mr. Panday was reading the Budget, I was shocked and surprised, how it could have been excluded in this Budget, Immediately after that, we met our Prime Minister. She patiently heard us. I read everything—Panditji's assurance and all that.

Madam said, 'Don't bother about it'. I am very grateful to Panditji for his assurance that it would be taken up, for which not only I but the entire Tamil Nadu is very thankful to him because after Independence, no metre gauge has been converted into broad gauge in Tamil Nadu. That is the actual thing, so much so, it is for the first time you are taking up conversion of this line into broad gauge.

There is another grievance against the Railway Minister, Mr. Pandey. The other day, Mr. Jaffer Sharief telephoned to me—he is not here now—that there was a strike in the Madurai Division. He met me and said, 'Mr. Kosalram, you go and convince them. I am going to get this Madurai-Nagarcoil new line included in this Division'. So, categorically in the presence of the then General Manager of Southern Railway he wrote this in his own handwriting. I went there. I telephoned to Panditji informing him of the position. Panditji gave a trunk call from Delhi to Tenkasi. I was told that it would be favourably considered. Definite promise had been given by Shri Jaffer Shariff and Panditji for inclusion of new line between Nagercoil and Tirunelveli in Madurai Division. Then I went and convinced the striking employees to call off the strike. Immediately the strike was withdrawn.

Unfortunately, fifteen days back, I saw in the papers that Pandayji had written that this line will be included in Trivandrum Division and not in Madurai Division. Ministers may come and ministers may go. But if a definite assurance given is not implemented, what will people think? It has been published in the press. Now can I face the people? What will people think of Pandayji?

I would refer to Rapid Transit System at Madras. The office created for this project has been in existence for 10 years. Many surveys have been conducted for the past 10 years. For instance, the Coovum river flowing around the city of Madras can be conveniently used for having a circular railway, naturally after drying the river and desilting it. This office has been ordered to be closed now. I demand that this office should be allowed to function and this scheme should be taken up for execution.

The hon. Minister Shri Panday and Shri R. Venkataraman have told me that this office will continue. If it is closed down all of a sudden what would people think of you? Kindly consider this point.

For ages I have been demanding that Arumuganeri Railway station should have covered platforms, so that the salt produced here is stacked here safely and it should not get spoiled because of rains. Arumuganeri alone produces 10% of the total

salt production in the country. I hail from Arumuganeri. Chemical and salt industries are there. But there is no coverage at the railway station. Since my birth it is continuing in the old state. So, proper improvements should be brought in over there.

According to the Railway Ministry Report, in the country broadgauge forms only 51% of the total route kilometre and Metregauge 42% of the total while broadgauge accounts for 86.6 per cent of the freight tonne kilometres and about 77.5 per cent of the passenger kilometres, metre-gauge accounts for only 13.3 per cent of freight tonne kilometres and 21.8 per cent of passenger kilometres. Naturally, there will be a demand for conversion of MG into BG. I am sure that the hon. Minister will bear this in mind while replying to the debate.

13 hrs.

Salt is one of the major essential commodities. One or two years before, only the licensed salt factories were allotted 'C' category. After my efforts—I have been to jail and I am a Salt Satyagrahi—unlicensed salt factories also have been allotted 'C' category. In Tuticorin, for example, the licensed salt factories produce about 4 lakh tonne and the unlicensed salt factories are producing about 12 lakh tonnes. The industry Department had recommended to the Railways that the unlicensed salt factories should also be included in 'C' category. You have included it in 'C' category. But the number of wagons allotted is the same for 4 lakh tonnes and now for 16 lakh tonnes. For example, if it was 100 or 1000 wagons for 4 lakh tonnes, the same number of wagons are being allotted now for 16 lakh tonnes. I would request the hon. Minister to increase the number of wagons according to the quantity of salt produced. In my part of the country, salt is being sold at Rs. 5 for 100 kg. whereas in the north-eastern parts, in Assam and in other areas, salt is being sold at Rs. 5 per kg. It is because of the scarcity of wagons. So, kindly increase the number of wagons

13.01 hrs.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MR. SPEAKER : I have to inform the House that I have received the following message dated the 26th February, 1981 from the President :

"I have received with great satisfaction the expression of thanks by the Members of the Lok Sabha for the Address which I delivered to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on 16th February, 1981."

13.02 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till  
Fourteen of the Clock.*