

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

Shri Piloo Mody: With a smile on his face, he has taken Rs. 2 crores away from the country.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Have you counted correctly? Your mathematics is very poor.

Shri Piloo Mody: You have got only his word for it; it is not worth much.

17.42 hrs.

TUTICORIN HARBOUR PROJECT

Shri Anbazhagan (Tiruchengode): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I deem it my duty to bring this matter for the consideration of the hon. Minister by this discussion, though it is for a short period. The hon. Minister must understand the intense feeling of the people of Tamilnad and the grave doubts of the Madras Government expressed recently about the genuine interest of the Union Government in implementing the Tuticorin Harbour project. Tuticorin has been port from times immemorial. It has been in the days of ancient Tamil kings an important port exporting goods to the western as well as to eastern countries. Even at the time of the Britishers, they had many schemes to develop the port and in the year 1919 they had a scheme and spent about Rs. 30 lakhs. According to the present value of the rupee it will be, I feel, more than Rs. 10 crores. They had other schemes also to develop the port but somehow the port has not become an all-weather port or deep-sea harbour. Even after the advent of freedom, the claim has been there, and the State Government had been very often pressing upon the Centre to start that scheme and make the Tuticorin harbour an all-whether port as well as a deep-sea harbour, especially when the Tuticorin deep-sea harbour is not only intended to make the Tuticorin port a beautiful one, but because of the region which is a very backward one and the economic conditions of the people there are very

poor, and the conditions may change for the better because of the port development alone. The avenue for their life and their future prospects are more and more binding upon the harbour and its development. The Central Government has also agreed as early as 1959 to consider the project and at the time of the second Five Year Plan, Mr. Nehru had given an assurance to implement the project, and he has more or less inaugurated it by accepting it in principle. Afterwards, our late Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, inaugurated it in the month of November, 1964.

17.45 hrs.

[SHRI C. K. BHATTACHARYYA in the Chair].

The scheme is not a haphazard one. There have been many reports on the scheme. The Chatterji scheme of 1954, the Sethusamudram Committee's scheme of 1955, the Chacko scheme as well as the Mathrani scheme of 1959, and also finally the Intermediate Ports Development Committee's report of 1960. All these stand in good stead to support the project. Because of the Intermediate Ports Development Committee's report, the scheme was accepted and it was implemented to a certain extent.

Now, I feel that because the figures given in the reports and the statistical figures that have been given in respect of the traffic potentiality of the Tuticorin harbour vary from each other. Even after it is being inaugurated the Ministry is more or less vacillating in proceeding with the implementation of the scheme. I doubt whether the Ministry is sincere and keen in implementing the scheme. It should not consider the scheme from the commercial point of view, or from a moneylender's point of view. It should take the project as one designed for the welfare of the area, for the welfare of the region, for the development of Tamil Nad. The Chief Minister of Madras has stated very clearly that it is a must for Tamil Nad. From the point of view that we should have a Sethusamu-

dram canal in the future, which will cut short the route from the western-coast to the eastern coast, for the coastal shipping as well as for the mariners from foreign countries, I hope the Tuticorin harbour will be of great asset and saving in the economy of our country in view of the shipping that is going on developing sea trade.

Not only that, I feel that the import-export facilities are increased in the southern part of the country, the foreign trade, will certainly improve to a great extent. I am sure that Tamil Nad is one of the foremost States where labour is co-operating with the capitalists; the labour is co-operating with the industrialists and there is a large scope for the development of so many other projects towards the industrial progress of the country. The Madras State Government has come forward to facilitate such a project as the Tuticorin harbour for developing the area, by industrialising it, by giving facilities to so many small-scale industries, and establishing such other facilities like link road, for the supply of electricity and for water supply for the future development of that area. The Madras State Government has spent more or less a crore of rupees for that. When the Madras State Government has spent more than a crore of rupees, besides doing everything to facilitate the project, the Central Government is not sure to proceed with the project. When it is doubtful and when the rumour is afloat among the public, the people of Tamilnad get an agitational feeling. I would like to tell the House that on the 23rd of this month Tamilnad observed a 'Demands Day'. On the 'Demands Day' most of the leaders belonging to different political parties joined together. They have passed unanimous resolution at hundreds of meetings, where lakhs of people gathered together, demanding that the Central Government should go ahead with the project. On the 'Demands Day' they have pressed the claim of the Salem steel plant also, but this is not the occasion for me to

put forward that claim especially before the hon. Minister for Transport. The claim for the steel plant at Salem has been there for long. Even the Congress Ministry there had given an assurance to the people of Tamilnad that they would start it. There was sympathetic consideration for the Salem steel plant but somehow it has not yet become an accomplished fact and the Union Government has not come forward to accept it and allow the State Government to go ahead with it. These are things which have more or less injured the feelings of the people of Tamilnad. When you have already injured the feelings of the people of Tamilnad by not allowing them to have the Salem steel plant, now when you are not going to proceed with the Tuticorin project as already assured to the people there it will only amount to adding insult to injury to the people of Tamilnad.

Sir, the people of Tamilnad are not accustomed to agitation, but when they start any agitation they will not stop until they are successful. I would like to say that the necessity will not arise because the Ministry there is defending the rights of the people. I hope the Union Government will not go back on the assurances given to them, but it seems to me, from the manner in which the people who are in power cherish the memory of the late Prime Ministers that they do it more by flouting the assurances given than by keeping up the assurances.

I have got statistics to show that the Tuticorin Harbour project will be a conducive one to the economic growth of the country, that in no way it will be a failure and in no way it will be a loss. As per the traffic survey of the port of Tuticorin, a survey made in the year 1958-59 by the National Council of Applied Economic Research, it has a traffic potential of about 2.4 million tons. The figures were doubted after four or five years and then another figure was given, that it will be only 2 million tons. Then another figure was arriv-

[Shri Anbazhagan]

ed at by saying that out of the 2 million tons of traffic expected in the year 1970-71 only 1.7 million tons will be through this harbour and the balance 0.3 million tons will be through the existing port there. Still another figure was given by the hon. Minister, that it may be 1.55 million tons. Above all these figures, a final figure was given by one officer in his department who has been an expert in degrading anything—I think so—and in finding out figures to suit his own convenience, to suit his own animosity towards anybody or towards any department. In order to discount the value of the National Council of Applied Economic Research, in order to discount the real research work of this Council, this officer—I need not mention his name, but I want the hon. Minister to know that I am referring to the officer who went into the matter lastly—has said that it will be only 1.15 million tons. I do not want to complain but I understand that he wanted to go to the National Council of Applied Economic Research as a Deputy-Director General but since he could not get the post, he wanted to ventilate that feeling here. But I feel that the hon. Minister who is an expert in economics, who knows the country well and who has got something to do with Madras, he will not rely on the advice of the Ministry alone but will find out the real truth behind the figures that are supplied to him.

I wish to say here that in the year 1964 itself the figure of import-export, that is, the traffic potential was arrived at a figure of about 1 million, 9.7 lakhs to be accurate. If it is so, at the rate of 5 per cent per annum on an ordinary port in the development of the country and at the rate of 10 per cent when the harbour is a shore-side harbour—it is a full-fledged harbour, an all-weather port—when you have got facilities for transshipment and also for bunkering and such things, naturally the import-export capacity of this port will be twice or even four times.

I wish the hon. Minister to note all these things and consider the scheme favourably and implement it fully, without creating any more doubts in the minds of the people of Tamilnad. I want the hon. Minister to judge things by the real worth of them, not merely on the basis of economics. We know that economic statistics are very often misleading. The value of the rupee has come down, the inflation has changed the face of the country and recession has come in. In that context, I think it is the bounden duty of the hon. Minister in charge, and also the Finance Minister, not to intervene in any planned schemes that are already accepted by the Government. It is their duty to see that the necessary money is granted and the projects are implemented. By the "necessary money" I do not mean the Rs. 1 crore that is allotted this year, which is not at all sufficient. The Government should come forward with the allotment of at least Rs. 5 crores this year, according to the original plan.

If the Government is not capable of finding that much money, let it get a loan from Japan, which country is willing to give this money for the development of the port of Tuticorin through which it wants to take salt and other chemicals from our country. So, Japan is willing to come forward and help the Tuticorin harbour in its development and the Chief Minister of Madras has stated this in clear terms.

I want the hon. Minister to go into this matter as soon as possible, as early as possible, get financial clearance to this project and implement it expeditiously so that the people of Tamilnad get some soothing effect from their present agitational approach to this problem.

The Minister of Transport and Shipping (Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao): What is the time allotted for this discussion?

Mr. Chairman: This is a half-an-hour discussion.

Shri Anbazhagan: When I brought this motion, I requested the hon.

Speaker to allot at least one hour. He said that if there are more hon. Members participating in the discussion, time will be allotted to all of them. I hope Mr. Chairman will bear this in mind.

Mr. Chairman: In Half-an-hour discussion under the rules after the first speaker only questions are asked.

Shri Randhir Singh (Rohtak): In certain respects, Tamilnad is the pride of our country and this harbour is an ancient harbour which is associated with the sentiments of this region. According to the information available to me, this harbour was to be completed by 1969 with an outlay of nearly Rs. 24 crores, of which only Rs. 5½ crores have been invested in the project so far. According to the schedule, Rs. 18 crores were to be spent on the project up till now. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, what are the impediments, what are the genuine difficulties or bottlenecks that impede the completion of this harbour. This is something connected with the trade and commerce of this region. I would like to know what the difficulties are, if at all there are any difficulties, in what way he will meet those difficulties and whether by the deadline of 1969 he will be able to complete the construction work of this harbour.

18 hrs.

Shri V. Krishnamoorthi (Cuddalore): To talk about the economics of this project at this stage is more or less like inquiring about the paternity of the wife after giving birth to two or three children. The Government has already spent Rs. 5½ crores. As Shri Randhir Singh pointed out, the project ought to have been completed by 1969 and till now Rs. 18 crores ought to have been allotted, but so far only Rs. 5.50 crores have been allotted.

The Estimates Committee in the Sixty-ninth Report in 1963-64 has stated that the Tuticorin Project should be taken in conformity with

the Sethusamudram Project because it is an integrated project. They have given a recommendation like this to the Government: "The Sethusamudram Project should be taken up for the development of Tuticorin as a major port." The Sethusamudram Project is India's Suez Canal. If the Sethusamudram Project is integrated with the Tuticorin Project, it is the Committee's prophecy that the saving involved will be 368 miles to Madras, 304 miles to Visakhapatnam, 265 miles to Calcutta, 220 miles to Chittagong and 118 miles to Rangoon. So, the economics of this project should not be taken purely on the basis of the Tuticorin Project but it must be looked into in accordance with the project report as well as the report submitted regarding the Sethusamudram Project.

When the Government allots so much of funds to other ports which are taken up afterwards, like Paradip and other ports, why has the Government not allotted sufficient funds specially for this? In support of my question I may submit that according to the preliminary project report the Government ought to have allotted Rs. 1 crore for 1963-64, Rs. 2.50 crores for 1964-65, Rs. 4 crores for 1965-66, Rs. 6 crores for 1966-67 and Rs. 6 crores for 1967-68, but they have allotted only Rs. 1.95 crores for 1965-66, Rs. 1.93 crores for 1966-67 and for this year they had allotted Rs. 50 lakhs and after a prolonged debate they have allotted another Rs. 50 lakhs. Why is this partiality being shown? Is it because it lies at the other end of the country? I want a categorical answer from the Minister and I request the Minister kindly to increase the funds so as to complete it in time.

Shri P. Ramamurti (Madurai): I am not looking at this problem from the point of view of Tamilnad; I am looking at the problem from the point of view of the country as a whole. India has got a vast coastline of over 3,000 miles and the number of ports that India can boast of even after 20 years of independence is hardly six.

[Shri P. Ramamurti]

If the Government of India is thinking in terms of the potentialities of this particular harbour, I must say that the Government has got an extremely pessimistic view of the entire economic development of his country.

If the country is going to develop economically, obviously this country can take in not only this Tuticorin Port but half a dozen other ports as well and in a very short time as such. Under these circumstances for the Government of India and the Shipping Minister to have come forward with that statement clearly shows that certain doubts have begun to be exercised in the minds of the Government. I am not bothered whether it is the Shipping Minister or the Finance Minister; ultimately, probably the deciding factor is the Finance Minister; however much the Shipping Minister may want to have it, ultimately, I know, he has not got the final authority in this. Therefore, it is a question that what is exercising the minds of the people over there is the fact that the statement of the Shipping Minister is being taken to mean that an attempt is being made by the Government of India to scuttle this whole scheme. I am putting it very straightforwardly, without mincing matters in any way. After all these years, for the Government of India to come forward with this statement that the potentialities are now estimated at 1.15 million tonnes as against an estimate of 2.4 million tonnes, some years ago, made by the Institute of Applied Economic Research, to come forward, after so many years, to say that it is now expected that it will be only 1.15 million tonnes, because some officers in the Department had estimated like that, is now taken by the people concerned there as an attempt to scuttle the whole Report. You give the dog a bad name and hang him. That proverb is eminently suited to this. If you do not want to do it, you say so openly that you are not going to do it. But don't create all these problems, that the potentialities today are

lower and, therefore, we are now trying to have another committee consisting of the representatives of the State Government as well as the Central Government which will go into this question. As far as this committee is concerned, I am sure, its Members will not agree at all because once the Central Government has made up its mind not to have the port, the Central Government representatives will stick to that position and will always underestimate the potentialities. Who is going to decide ultimately? After all, if it is a question of finding out the potentialities, the State Government can give the estimates tomorrow. To have a joint committee to re-assess and re-estimate the potentialities is nothing but a deliberate attempt to scuttle the whole thing.

I say, please do not scuttle the whole thing, do not have such a pessimistic understanding with regard to the potentialities of the development, not alone of this particular region, of the country as a whole. This country can have at least half a dozen ports more if this country has got to develop. We have got the potentialities for that. Therefore, I say, go ahead with this project. I would request the hon. Minister to immediately fight for it. All that I can urge upon the Shipping Minister is to fight for it. I cannot say anything more because the Finance Minister is not here. I say, the Shipping Minister will get the backing of the entire House, at least as far as we on this side of the House are concerned, and let him go ahead and fight for it in the Cabinet. That is what I would request him to do.

Shri S. Kandappan (Mettur): I hope this Tuticorin project will get the sympathetic consideration it deserves at the hands of the sympathetic Minister, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao. I would like to ask for two clarifications arising out of this Half-An-Hour Discussion.

Firstly, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, once they appoint a committee to go into the feasibility

of a particular project and that committee makes an exhaustive study and goes into all the pros and cons, all the aspects, of the project and submits a report saying that it is feasible and that it is an economically viable project, why it is that they want to appoint another committee casting aspersions on the previous committee. This is a general question which pertains to this project as well as to other projects. Many committees are appointed one after the other. Here, the first committee appointed was an expert committee—it was not a committee of laymen—and they gave a report, I would like to know from the Minister what prompts the Government to have rethinking on this and to have successive committees instead of implementing the project as recommended by the previous committee.

Secondly, when the question of building of railways in Tamilnad was taken up some years ago, it was said by the Planning Commission as well as by the Government that the industries, in Tamilnad, had not developed and, therefore, they were not able to give more railway lines and, on the other hand, it was said that since the infra-structure needed for the movement of goods was lacking in Tamilnad, the industrialists were not able to put up industries there. This is a vicious circle. When you make any study of traffic potentialities, when you say the hinterland near Tuticorin has not developed, the people there feel that unless the port is there in concrete shape, they cannot put up the industries there. This is a vicious circle. I would like to know from the Minister, when these things are hypothetical, how they can doubt the feasibility of the project on the ground that the industries have not developed there. These are the two clarifications that I would like to have.

The Minister of Transport and Shipping (Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao): I have listened with great interest to the speeches of my hon. friends

and cannot help expressing the feeling that the whole debate is somewhat unreal. I do not really believe that the hon. Member who gave notice of this motion really thinks that the Central Government is not serious about this project, and I must also say that try as the hon. Member, Mr. Ramamurti did to work up passion in his speech, I could not really detect it even when he said that the Central Government wants to scuttle this and if a Committee is appointed, even the Central Government representatives would not agree and so on. I have listened with great admiration many times to the hon. Member's speeches in this House, but, if I may respectfully say so, I missed something in today's speech which I had found in his previous speeches. I think, the whole debate really has been held because it is necessary for members of the Opposition also to tell Tamil Nadu—it is no longer Madras....

Shri S. Kandappan: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: The Constitution has not yet been amended.... *

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: I am sorry. You are right. I stand corrected.

Shri P. Ramamurti: *De jure* it is and *de jure* it will come up later.

Mr. Chairman: That is because of internal sympathies. . . (*Interruptions*).

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: I will be brief I really cannot work myself up because most of the members who spoke are fully familiar with the background of this subject. They are fully familiar with what the Government of India were trying to do in this matter and I have a feeling that this debate is somewhat unreal.

But there is one thing which I should like to say and that is with regard to what my distinguished friend, Mr. Ramamurti said about the Finance Minister and the Shipping Minister.

[Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao]

I did not know that there could be such distinctions drawn between one Minister and another in a Cabinet which has a collective responsibility. I would like to assure him that, as far as the Government of India is concerned, whatever may be the allocation or allotment of a particular portfolio to a particular Minister, the Government of India speaks with one voice..

Shri P. Ramamurti: I agree.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: It is a collective responsibility. He has a partiality for the Minister.. (Interruptions)

Shri P. Ramamurti: I agree that the Government functions collectively, but that does not mean that every member of the Government things also along the same lines. How can it be?

Dr. V. K. R. V. I hope not.

Shri P. Ramamurti: I would make a distinction between his thinking and the Finance Minister's thinking.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: Even in the distinguished Party to which the hon. Member belongs, all the members do not think alike.

Shri P. Ramamurti: I am making a distinction between his thinking and the Finance Minister's thinking on the matter.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: If I may say so, all this distinction which is being drawn is not going to help anybody. He may tell me that the Shipping Minister can do nothing, but then the notice for the half-an-hour discussion should have been given to the Finance Minister and the Finance Minister should have been asked to come here. I hope, I am not quite as feeble and as helpless as my very respected friend, Mr. Ramamurti, is trying to make out here.

There was this talk of difference between the Finance Minister and the Transport Minister. I can tell him

from my knowledge of the Finance Minister, that he is a person who has a right to ask questions, because he is dispensing the finances of the country; and at the stage at which the economy of the country is today, he has every right to ask whether it is economical or not. I could also tell this House that the Finance Minister is a person who not only thinks in terms of economy but also thinks in human terms and I do not think that we should henceforth dwell on this particular possibility of difference between one Minister and another Minister at all.

Another thing that I want to mention pertains to what my distinguished friend the Leader of the DMK Party, said about some officers of the Ministry. I very much regret that references should have been made to officers because, I think, it is a very well known fact that the report was not accepted by my Ministry. It was examined in an inter-departmental meeting. In the Ministry there were discussions. Discussions were also held with other people and what the Ministry put forward was 1.55 million tonnes. After all, it is an internal document of the Ministry; it is not a public document; it is not a Committee that was established. After all, you do have within every Ministry these things—notes being written and reports being prepared by various officers. You should not start attributing motives. I very much regret it. I do not think there is any question of spite towards research organisations and so on the part of the officer referred to by the honourable Member.

Shri Anbazhagan: May I seek a clarification from the hon. Minister? In December, 1966, there was a conference between the State representative and the Member (Transport), Planning Commission Shri Tarlok Singh. In that conference they had arrived at certain figures, and the total traffic that could be anticipated in 1970-71 was to be taken as 2 million

tonnes as against 2.4 million tonnes estimated previously. This was in December, 1966. But because of the figures that were sent by some other officer, namely 1.15 million tonnes, Government have arrived at 1.55 million tonnes.

Shri S. Kandappan: Within a matter of a few months, this change has happened.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: As a matter of fact, it was at that very meeting that it was suggested by the Member (Transport), Planning Commission; Shri Tarlok Singh, wanted that an inquiry should be made into the economics of this. It was at the instance of the Planning Commission and not at the instance of the Ministry of Transport that this inquiry was made.

When I joined the Ministry and got this report, I read it through; I was not personally satisfied with the report and I said that the whole matter should be gone into thoroughly. The estimate put forward as a result was 1.55 million tonnes. What was the other estimate? It was 2 million tonnes at Tuticorin including the original port. The difference now is between 1.7 million tonnes and 1.55 million tonnes. If I might express an opinion as an economist and an economic statistician, I think that to be very rigid about 1.55 million tonnes or 1.6 million tonnes or 1.7 million tonnes in regard to what might happen in 1970-71 is trying to show too much of confidence in the accuracy of such statistical projections.

What I am trying to say is this. Even if we take the figure of 1.7 million tonnes even if we take 5 per cent rate of growth,—these are the two things advanced by my hon. friend opposite—we find that during the first fourteen or fifteen years, the port would not be able to pay back the interest and the loan instalments in the manner that it should. That does not mean that the project should be abandoned. On the contrary, in answer to a question in the Rajya Sabha only this morning, and in answer

to a question which I answered some time ago in the Rajya Sabha, and in fact, in the statement that I made at Madras in the distinguished presence of the Chief Minister of Madras, I had said that the project was not being abandoned. The Chief Minister of Madras, talking about me had said:

“He has made all parties to it anxiously, giving hopes here and there but never giving out what he is intending to do. However, I find an aroma of good-will which I value very much. It is quite easy to discard a proposal. It is easier still to repudiate it; but the most difficult thing is to review a proposal with a critical mind and with good-will in the background. I hope the Tuticorin harbour project will receive such good-will at his hands.”

This is precisely what I am doing. On the basis of the estimates, the port show a considerable amount of financial deficit in the first fourteen or fifteen years and somebody has got to pay it. The House knows very well that as far as the ports are concerned, the money spent is treated as loan to the port, and the port has to pay back the loan as well as the interest on the loan from its earnings. In this particular case, there was this difficulty. After all, one has to remember that unfortunately in the case of this project, the details of the project were not worked out and so on in the normal sense in which we understand a project, and were not passed. That has been one major difficulty. It was accepted in principle. In fact, the work got started in 1964 or 1963, and the money went on being given and financial sanctions went on being given. But what we call a whole project in the normal sense in which a project is passed was not passed; somehow or other, somebody forgot or something happened.

Shri S. Kandappan: It is very curious.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: It became, therefore, my responsibility to place the entire project before the Cabinet.

As soon as I did it, this difficulty of loss during the first 18 years came up. I tried to find a way out. That was the reason why the hon. Member sitting opposite knows very well that when I was in Madras in some other connection I had the good fortune to hold discussions with the Chief Minister of Madras and some of his distinguished colleague as well as with the ex-Chief Minister of Madras and the ex-Industries Minister of Madras and we discussed the whole thing threadbare. I explained the various problems involved and what I said then and what I say now is what I have said in my statement also. I am surprised that my hon. friend Shri P. Ramamurti thinks that the statement shows that the Central Government want to scuttle the project or that my hon. friend Shri Anbazhagan says that the statement shows that Government are vacillating and so on; there is no question of vacillation at all. There is no question of vacillation. It is a question of making certain calculations, final calculations. The traffic potential can increase if the Madras Government are going to industrialise that region. Let me say that this is not a project started by the new Government of Madras.

Shri V. Krishnamoorthi: We have been saying for years together; industrialise that area....

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: I am not yielding.

This is not a project that has been started by the present Government in power. It was started by the Congress Government.

Shri V. Krishnamoorthi: They were saying like that.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: I would beg of my hon. friend to let me complete my speech because already it is 6.20. I am sure he wants to go home; so do I. As far as the Tuticorin Project is concerned, the hon. Member

knows quite well that we are trying our best to see it go through.

The point I am making is that there is no difference as far as this project is concerned. The Congress Government started it. They have spent so much money on it. Now the successor Government legitimately wants to see it completed. But in view of the economic difficulties that have arisen, the idea was to try and find out in what way we could improve its economic viability. In the meanwhile, so that the work on the breakwater should not stop, we got the provision increased from Rs. 50 lakhs to Rs. 1 crore. I am hoping that the Chief Minister will agree as we had discussed in Madras, because already we have selected an officer, a very senior officer to go there and sit down— it is not a committee of these two; I said there should be no committee; these two officers will sit down and collect mainly material in regard to the prospects of the hinterland, material in regard to the possibility of new industries being established there, such as, for example, fertiliser or something else which will lead to a lot of traffic. Once it is done, the idea was that the Chief Minister of Madras and myself as Central Minister of Transport, will sit together and finalise the traffic potential and ways and means to improve the economic viability, what should be done to make it more economically viable. As soon as that is done, the final scope of the project will be determined and I will place it before Government. In the meanwhile, nothing stops. That is why we have given this extra Rs. 50 lakhs.

Shri S. Kandappan: I wanted a clarification..

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: Shri Kandappan asked a question about one committee. Actually no committee has so far really gone..

Shri S. Khanapan: I raised it in a general way, not only in regard to Tuticorin.

Dr. V. K. R. Rao: If I may, give a brief answer to the point, if there are not more than one committee, I do not see how economists, statisticians,

publicists and others will be having a good time in this country.

Then the question was raised about the Sethusamudram project. I would say: let us not link up the two. As regards Sethusamudram, it is still being surveyed. We have not yet completed the various surveys. Many issues and problems are involved in it. I would beg of my hon. friends of the DMK to please not mix up Sethusamudram with Tuticorin.

Mr. Chairman: Also Shri Ramamurthi's party.

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao: No, he did not make that point. Shri Krishnamoorti, Shri Anbazhagam and perhaps Shri Kandappan also referred to it.

From our point of view, it is better to keep Tuticorin to itself. I can tell you in my own estimation there would

not really be any fundamental difficulty in the way of the acceptance and the completion of this project. But certain procedures have got to be gone through. We are not dealing with only one State; we are dealing with a number of States, and what we do will have to be such as will be acceptable to every other State in terms of principle, which every other State would be willing to accept as something reasonable.

I hope I have given a satisfactory explanation and in view of this my hon. friends will see that there is no more agitation.

18.25 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the clock on Tuesday, August 1, 1967/Sravana 10, 1889 (Saka).