

12 25 hrs

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1971-72—
GENERAL DISCUSSION *Contd*

MR SPEAKER We will take up the discussion of the railway budget. We have about 40 minutes. I think we can accommodate quite a few

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA (Serampore) How much time is allotted for this, Sir?

MR SPEAKER The time likely to be available is 10 hours. Already we have taken four hours 40 minutes. The balance time available is 5 hours 20 minutes. There is enough time for all of you to participate.

SHRIMATI IAKSHMIKANTHAMMA (Khammam) Sir, yesterday, I was mentioning some of the points about conversion of lines and some new lines in my State. There was previously some survey undertaken in respect of the Bhadrachalam Road to Dandakaranya. A formal survey was made. I would like to know what has happened to it. A complete, detailed survey was not taken up. They have now stopped further action. I would like to know why they have stopped a detailed survey of this line.

There is another line which the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been often representing and the agent of the Andhra Pradesh Government in Delhi has also written to the Railway Ministry about it. It is the Vizag-Kiriburu railway line. The Mineral Development Corporation is carrying minerals on this line and this is not open for passenger traffic. This line passes through the picturesque Araku valley where there is a lot of tourist attraction. Besides, there are many mining areas in that locality. A number

of representations have been made by the people from that area as well as the business community for opening up this line for passenger traffic also. Such a measure would provide not only employment to the tribal people living in that area, but also raise the standard of living of those people. It will also help the development of the local industries, the forest produce and the exploitation of mineral wealth in that area. As this line passes through, as I have already mentioned, the picturesque Araku valley with extensive orchard plantations as well as the 'Sorri' caves, the tourist traffic will increase tremendously if this line is opened for passenger traffic. This will earn the much-wanted foreign exchange for our country. I request the Hon. Minister to visit this place, not only the Minister but I request the hon. Members also to visit this place and see how nice, how fine a place it is, and how we can develop this as a tourist centre. The Tourist Department as well as the Ministry of Railway should have talks in this matter and see that this area is developed.

As per the report of the *Economic Times* dated 25 December, 1970, it is learnt that the Railway Board has agreed in principle to open this line for both passenger traffic and private goods traffic, but nothing has been so far done. The State Government as well as the people there, including the business community, are all very anxious about the speedy implementation of this line since they have accepted in principle, the opening of this line for passenger traffic also. A lot of mineral wealth is also lying there.

There is another proposal, and that is for the electrification of the Madras-Vijayawada railway track. This is pending before the Government since 1966. Some talks have been going on between the authorities concerned, and this scheme was included in the Fourth Five Year Plan and, after final sanction, the terms and conditions of the draft agreement were sent to the Railway Ministry. I do not know

what has happened thereafter, whether a clearance has been given or whether the Government has accepted it or not. I would like to know what has happened, because it is very important in view of the railway traffic between Madras and Vijayawada which is increasing enormously because of the increase in the goods traffic such as movement of foodgrains, fruit, coal, etc.

Now every day 400 tonnes of coal are carried to the Nellore thermal station. When the Ennore thermal station is ready in less than an year, more than 3000 tonnes of coal will have to be carried every day over this section. So, there is need for speeding up on this line. Only electrification will be able to meet the demand. The Railway Minister visited Hyderabad in 1968 and said that the scheme would be included in the fourth plan, but no clearance has been given. Once you decide on electrification, the State Government also will have to fulfil certain formalities. The State Government had already placed an order for the conductor costing Rs. 95 lakhs and it must have arrived in 1969. The whole thing would cost Rs. 2 crores to the Andhra Government. If clearance has not been given yet, I request the minister to see that it is given immediately so that electrification of the line between Madras and Vijayawada may start.

Regarding recruitment of Class IV staff in the South Central Railway, under the Home Ministry's order, all Class IV staff will be from the local areas. But since the Railway Service Commission is located at Madras, more than 80 per cent of the people are recruited from that area and sent here. They are recruited as Class IV employees. Within three years, a nominal test is held and they are made clerks. This injustice to the local people should be removed by shifting the Railway Service Commission from Madras to Hyderabad.

It has been mentioned in the budget that thefts have become the order of the

day. This should be considered as a national problem and not of the railways alone. Sometimes the States do not cooperate in the investigation to the extent they should. Somehow the minister should see that the States cooperate by making them a party to some of the damages, if necessary. All the political parties also should cooperate with the railways because it is national property. They should not be indifferent to what is happening in the railways. They should contribute to the efficient functioning of the railways.

The former Railway Minister, Mr. Nanda, tried to do something in this direction. He used to sit in places like Mughalsara, notorious for the thefts, and he sought the cooperation of the public in this regard. He could achieve something by this I am told thefts were reduced to nearly 50 per cent during his stay there. He could check ticketless travelling also by taking the cooperation of volunteers. Yesterday some communist member opposite was making fun of sadhus. I think they are allergic to whatever is good in our culture

There is a doubt in everybody's mind that these regular thefts on a large scale cannot take place unless they have the connivance of the railway staff and railway police. Goods are stolen from the station and sold in the nearby shops. How is it that they are not able to check it? Railway motor belts are stolen and used in some local mills. Why cannot they have some raid and recover the stolen property of the railways? Apart from the Railway Protection Force you have some people drafted from the State Police. When you draft people from the State police you have to ensure that they are honest and efficient.

Now whenever any theft of railway property takes place once the property goes outside the railway premises the RPF take the stand that it is out of their jurisdiction. But these rules about jurisdiction have been framed for convenience and not for evasion. If the property goes

[Shrimati Lakshminanthamma]

out of the railway premises they should take the co-operation of the local police and catch the culprits and punish them. In this matter the co-operation of the public is very important. The public should be made to feel that it is their property that is being lost. If the public make it a point to bring all such instances to the notice of their elected representatives and Ministers and if the Ministers take them seriously then the officers will be very careful and the thefts will be minimised to a great extent.

SHRI P. R. DAS MŪNSI (Calcutta South) : Sir, I congratulate the Minister of Railways for submitting his budget in time after the return of the ruling party in the elections by committing themselves to socialism. The budget speech is a very formal one. I am sure the hon. Minister is aware that hon. Members are also committed to their people and, therefore, to a certain extent their demands should be given due importance.

I represent the Calcutta South constituency which is thickly populated and is cosmopolitan in its composition. That big constituency has only one booking centre at Hazra which is not able to cater to the needs of that constituency. The people of that constituency have been clamouring for facilities in the matter of booking and reservation and other things. So, my first demand is provision of more booking centres in Calcutta South.

Secondly, there are so many junctions inside the Calcutta traffic zone of the railways. Yet, there is no overbridge and every week two or three people are killed at the important level crossings. We have been demanding that some over-bridges be built at these points, specially at Kasba Ballyganj spot. I find that in the budget speech of the Railway Minister there are some proposals in this respect. I say that some provision should be made for over-bridges in the area I mentioned.

The traffic problem of Calcutta is being considered by the Railway Ministry for a very long time and the position has reached such a stage that the assurance given by the Railway Ministry are taken as a part of a drama by the people of Calcutta. There were assurances about tube railways, circular railways, under-ground railways and metropolitan system. Now the people are hesitating to believe any of the assurances of the Railway Ministry for solving the traffic problem inside Calcutta. In the present budget also there is some reference to survey and so on. I do not know how long it will take. The people of Calcutta who have to go to their offices and business premises daily are put to a lot of inconvenience and if the assurances given to them are treated in this cavalier fashion, the people of Calcutta will not only agitate before the Railway Ministry, but they will do something serious which the Government has to take care of.

Then, in the Diamond Harbour Section and the Canning Section, there are only 5 to 7 local trains which cannot cope up with the needs of millions of people coming daily to Calcutta offices and suburbs. I would just say about the Circular Railway in Calcutta, that it is a drama going on, assurance after assurance, and that nothing is happening.

About the problems of the Northeast Frontier Railway, my hon. friend, Mr. Goswami from Assam yesterday referred to them and gave his views. I agree with him. I would like to inform the House and the hon. Railway Minister that in these days of civilisation, after 23 years of independence and democracy in India, there is one district headquarter in the State of West Bengal, that is, Balurghat, which is a largely populated zone, is still continuing without a railway station and the railway line. This is the position after 23 years of Independence and democracy in India and the growth of the railway administration.

I would also like to inform the hon. Minister that the late Prime Minister,

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, and the present Defence Minister, Shri Jagjivan Ram, so many times assured the local people that it was coming up soon. But nothing has so far happened. I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister, Shri Hanumanthaiya, that he should at least try to do some thing positive about it within a short time.

Then, I would like to come to the problem of absorption of the Howrah-Sheakhala and Howrah-Amta Light Railways. As you know, the employees of the Martin Light Railway are now facing starvation because the Martin Light Railway has been closed down. It is all due to the unjust bureaucratic attitude of the management. These employees have made various representations to the management and they have made many protests and gone on deputations. The hon. Member of the Rajya Sabha, Shrimati Purabi Mukhopadhyay submitted a scheme with concrete proposal. But nothing has been done for the employees there. Yet, it was decided by the Ministry of Railways, after taking into consideration all aspects, not to take over these Light Railways because of the fact that the Companies have eaten up all of their reserves and have failed to effect the required Replacements and Renewals thereby reducing the Railways to "Junks". Then, the Government decided on 16.12.70 that—I quote :

"The staff of the Light Railways would be absorbed by offering them jobs in the categories in which they will be found suitable ;

they will be appointed as fresh recruits since they get the terminal benefits from the Light Railways."

In this connection, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that the employees of the Shabdara-Saharanpur Light Railway were absorbed. But the employees of the Howrah-Amta and Howrah-Sheakhala

Light Railways have not yet been absorbed. They must be absorbed immediately.

Now, I have heard from reliable sources that efforts are being made by some political parties, particularly, the C.P.M., to provide subsidy to the management and to have it regularised and allow them to run the railways. Coming to the nature of the management of this poor Light Railway, I would like to place before the House some figures. The Manager draws a salary, including allowances, of Rs. 5750 ; his Assistant draws a salary, of Rs. 2680 and another Deputy Manager draws a salary of Rs. 3435, etc., etc. This is being allowed under the socialistic pattern of society which is under process. These are the big monopolists and private enterprises which are creating trouble for the employees. It is dangerous to see that a particular political party committed to socialistic programme, committed to social justice, should arrange to provide a subsidy to the management, regularise it and allow them to run the Railways.

Once again, I would like to inform the hon. Railway Minister that if such action is taken by the Railway administration to put all the bureaucrats in the chair again and to provide subsidy to the management the people of Calcutta, the people of West Bengal, will march and shout against the Railway administration and even against all the political parties that are behind this conspiracy.

Many hon. Members have talked about the law and order situation in West Bengal I say, 50 per cent of the Calcutta crimes would be stopped if the thefts of the Railways are stopped and if the Railway properties are fully protected from thefts, Railway crimes are associated with the political crimes. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that he should tone up the administration and if the railway thefts are stopped, 30 per cent of the crimes of Calcutta would be stopped. There are various yards where these crimes are taking place. They are : Shalimar yard, Kaseipore and Chitpore yard ; Beliaghata

[Shri P. R. Das Munsii]

and Kankurgachhi; Balliganj railway siding; Jadavpur and Dhakuria railway siding, Uttadauga to Barrackpore zone etc. All these have now become under the control of political criminals under the patronage of a particular political party. They manage to open wagons at the night. They provide criminals inside. The bombed the Jadavpur University Vice-chancellor's building. In the recent death of Nepal Roy, MLA, we find that this is connected with this crime and these railway thefts from these sidings are patronised by one particular party which I do not want to name. They do it in cooperation with some personnel and some railway police people there. I would therefore request the Minister to tone up the Railway Administration to protect the Railway's properties.

The statistics relating to law and order reveal that 11,454 thefts of properties have taken place in 1970, in respect of Railways. As Members of Parliament we are privileged: we get an attendant and police also if necessary when we travel in First Class. What about the poor third class passengers? I would like to tell the hon. Minister that there should be some police protection to the III Class passengers in the mail and express trains especially in the midnight.

The increase in III Class fare is expected to produce only Rs. 11.60 crores. Extra revenue from change of upper class fares is estimated to fetch Rs. 1.60 crores. We should not put more pressure on the common man as we are committed to pursue the policy of socialism. Our attitude progressively should be to do away with monopolists and monopolistic trends and we should help the common man and lighten his burden. I request the hon. Minister will give his deepest consideration for the convenience and benefit of the common people who are the third-class passengers, who travel in the railway.

It is said that General Managers have been told to behave as family members

with the employees. The General Managers actually treat the employees as their servants and not as their colleagues. This is not proper for the healthy development of trade unions in the country. This is not good for the Railways. Therefore, I would request the Minister to inform the General Managers and zonal authorities that they should behave with their employees and their trade union officials as companions, as colleagues, as members of one family.

Finally, I request the Minister to take steps to stop the Railway crimes so as to stop the political crimes in West Bengal and also to take care especially of my constituency, (Calcutta South) in which Booking Reservation Centre and over-bridge are essential.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA (Bhavnagar): At the outset, I shall deal with one important project, namely the construction of the broad gauge railway line from Bhavnagar to Tarapur. The railway authorities had submitted the survey report long before. During the last debate on the railway budget, I had raised this point, and the then Railway Minister Shri Nanda had replied that the survey report was under examination by the Railway Board. I hope that by now the Railway Board would have completed the examination, and I would request the hon. Minister to take up this project for quick implementation.

This is an economic and viable project. The State Government has given top priority to this project and the figures show that it fulfils the criteria for construction of railway lines. It is a matter which has been pending for long. I would, therefore, request the hon. Minister to expedite and implement the same.

The proposed broad gauge line is useful not only to the concerned region or area, but it has its own importance for

the whole of India, because it connects the westernmost part of our country with the rest of India and through a port town. Therefore, this is a very useful and important link for the whole of the country. So, it is not as if it is useful and important for the concerned area only.

Coming to the budget, I would submit that this budget is a budget of the routine type. It is not a planned budget. No further amenities have been proposed; there are no new constructions of any line proposed; nothing further is proposed to be done to give more facilities to the travelling public. I do not find any measures to redress the hardships of the travelling public.

The hardships are so well known, and they have now become a permanent feature of the Indian railways. For instance, there is the overcrowding problem. The Administration does not care to take any steps to reduce this overcrowding. We see that all the mail and express trains are overcrowded. As for the third class, how do the people travel in the third class? They have no sitting accommodation. The overcrowding is not only in the bogies, but it starts right from the booking windows; people stand there for hours together and find it difficult to get either the ticket or the reservation. After nearly twenty-five years of Independence, the people expect that at least this overcrowding should be stopped. For solving this problem, it is necessary that new trains should be introduced. For instance, there are the Divisional Railway User's Consultative Committees, and many times, the Members suggest the introduction of new trains in order to curtail the hardships of the travelling public. But the Administration negatives all the suggestions and proposals made by the Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committees and the Zonal Railway Users' Consultative Committees. Their scrutiny is always done with a negative outlook. If you go through the minutes of the Divisional Railway Users' Consultative Committees

and the Zonal Railway Users' Consultative Committees, you will find that all the suggestions or proposals made are ruled out by the Administration without exception, because they do not want to scrutinise any suggestion with a positive outlook. This is the trouble with the Administration that they do not want to accept the suggestions which are beneficial to the travelling public, with the result that the hardships of the passengers are never attended to.

In the compartments, the fans are mostly out of order. There is no adequate lighting arrangement. There are no lamps or bulbs in the toilets. So, the people are obliged to travel in darkness or in faint light. This affects also the security of the passengers. When we ask the railway authorities why proper or adequate lighting arrangement is not there, sometimes, we are told that the bulbs have been stolen away and sometimes we are told that there are no bulbs in stock or that some other railways had taken away the bulbs and there were no spare bulbs available with them. Therefore, the trains start without proper lighting.

In paragraph 45 of the budget speech, hon. Minister has made some reference to passenger amenities. This paragraph reflects the impression that the provisions of amenities, is more or less complete. But I would submit that this reflection is not true, because the factual position is otherwise. Take, for instance, a basic amenity like provision of waiting halls. What do we provide in the waiting halls for the third class? There is just a big hall; there also, the fans are not working and at some places there are no fans at all; and there are no drinking water facilities. We see coolers at some stations, but the coolers are always out of order, and no cooler is working on the platform. The hon. Minister says that he is giving free service in this regard....

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member's party had been allotted 17 minutes.

[Mr. Speaker]

Does the hon. Member want to take all those 17 minutes himself or does he want to give some time to the other Member from his party also who wants to speak ?

SHRI P. M. MEHTA : I want to give some time to the other Member from my party also.

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member may continue his speech next time when the debate is resumed. Today, after lunch, we are going to have Private Member's business. So, he may speak on the next day, that is Monday. Meanwhile, he will have enough time to think about other matters also.

13.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the Clock

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after lunch at Fourteen of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT)
BILL *

(Omission of article 314)

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

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

The motion was adopted.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : I introduce the Bill.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT)
BILL *

Omission of articles 291 and 362 and amendment of article 366

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

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

The motion was adopted.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI : I introduce the Bill.

14.05 hrs.

HEALTH (PERIODICAL MEDICAL CHECK-UP OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT) BILL *

श्री धनुषा प्रसाद मंडल (समस्तीपुर) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं प्रस्ताव करता हूँ कि संसद सदस्यों की शक्तिशालि भारतीय चिकित्सा विज्ञान संस्था, नई दिल्ली में समय समय पर चिकित्सीय परीक्षा तथा तत्संबन्धित मामलों का व्यवस्थापक कार्यालय के विशेषक को पुनःस्थापित करने की धनुषादि की शक्ति।

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