

हुए कहना चाहता हूँ कि साउथ इस्टर्न रेलवे में सब से खराब स्थिति है और 24 घंटे के अन्दर 100 से अधिक गुड्स ट्रेन्स कंसिल की गईं। साथ ही यह भी सूचना मिली है कि रेलवे के पाम दो दिन से अधिक का कोयला नहीं है और अगर वर्क टू रूल जारी रहा तो और भी गाड़िया बन्द हो जायेगी। इस स्थिति को सामने रखने हुए मैं मंत्री जी से चाहूँगा कि वह स्थिति को स्पष्ट करते हुए अपना एक वक्तव्य दे।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, इसमें पहले कि रेल मंत्री को बोलने के लिये आप बुलाये, मैं एक बात की ओर ध्यान दिलाना चाहता हूँ। सदन की यह परम्परा रही है कि जब पार्लियामेंट की बैठक चल रही हो और कोई रेलवे दुर्घटना हो जाए जिसमें काफ़ी व्यक्ति मारे जाये तो मंत्री महोदय को स्वयं सदन के सामने आ कर उस बारे में वक्तव्य देना चाहिए। लेकिन खेद की बात है कि 9 तारीख को ग्वालियर के निकट एक रेल दुर्घटना हुई जिसमें पांच लोग मारे गये और 44 व्यक्ति घायल हुए। घायल होने वालों में मध्य प्रदेश के आर्म्ड फोर्स के लोग भी हैं। यह कहा जाता है रिपोर्ट के अनुसार कि डिब्बे पटरी से उतर गये। उसके बारे में सदन में कोई बयान नहीं दिया गया है। ऐसा लगता है कि यह नेरो गेज है इसलिए उसकी चिन्ता नहीं की जाती है।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: In the course of your speech you can say.

रेल मंत्री (श्री एल० एन० मिश्र) : तथ्य हमारे पास नहीं थे। लेकिन अब वह प्राप्त हो गया है और मेरे साथी इस पर बकवत देंगे।

श्री रामाबलर शास्त्री (पटना) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, एक ट्रेड यूनियन लीडर श्री सदानन्द झा का 11 तारीख को गोधो में मर्डर किया गया है। वह रेलवे का ट्रेड यूनियन लीडर था। अगर सरकार को कुछ मालम

हो कि क्यों मर्डर किया गया है और दिन में मर्डर किया गया है, तो मैं चाहूँगा कि मंत्री जी यह बात जरूर बताये। और नहीं तो जानकारी हासिल करके बताये। मेरा खयाल है कि रेलवे आभिषम भी मर्डर में शामिल है, ऐसा मेरा सदेह है।

13.35 hrs.

RAILWAY BUDGET 1974-75 GENERAL DISCUSSION—contd.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI L. N. MISHRA): As I have pointed out yesterday, I am really very much grateful to the hon. Members who have participated in the discussion on the general budget of the Railways. Number of valuable suggestions have been made and I am especially grateful to those Members who have been good enough to support the proposals contained in the Budget. About 53 hon. Members have participated in the Debate and I am glad to say that out of them 32 have extended their support to the Budget proposals. The Debate has been very constructive on the whole and very helpful.

The main point is on the question of the freight and fares. There are two points of consideration which have got a vital bearing on this aspect. In view of the difficulties of the common man we wanted to keep the burden of the common man as less as possible. And, we wanted to get some more resources from the affluent section of the society. This has been the guiding principle in the matter of fixation of fares and freights. There will be 25 million tonnes of additional goods to be transported and there will be an increase of 3 per cent on passenger fares. The deficit now is something in the neighbourhood of about Rs 99.75 crores and this will go up to Rs. 189.1 crores and therefore we had no escape but to take recourse to increase in the freight and also in the fares. We could not have transferred to General

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Finance also as the effect would have been inflationary; in these days of rising prices it would not have been advisable to throw the burden on to the General Finance. Therefore we had to take recourse to increase in fares and freights.

Hon. Members will agree with me that the financial health of the Railways has to be restored not only in the interest of this premier Public Sector undertaking but also in the interest of the general economy. In framing the proposals, as I have stated two objectives have been borne in mind, adjustments in fares and freights have been formulated on a selective basis and they are in line with the socialistic concept that weaker and vulnerable sections of society should be protected.

It is in this context that foodgrains have not been touched. They will continue to be carried at concessional rates below-the-cost rates. The Railways will suffer a loss of nearly Rs. 48 crores on this account in the coming year.

On the same grounds, commuters holding season tickets have been exempted from increase in fares. Milk, fruits and vegetables carried as parcels will not be subjected to additional surcharge. Class III passengers have been asked to pay only marginally more than the present level of fares. Most of these people belong to fixed income groups—they include class III and Class IV employees and also vendors. They have been left out. They hold suburban season tickets and they travel to the place of duty in places like Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. To bridge the gap Third Class passengers have been asked to pay only marginally. They pay fares only marginally more than the present level of fares.

A point has been made by some Members that the distribution of burden is inequitable. Some arguments have also been advanced in support of

this. We have attempted to get Rs. 16 crores and odd from III Class Ordinary passengers. I am trying to get Rs. 4 crores a little more—from the passengers travelling by air-conditioned and First Class. I am afraid, the argument is illogical. I may point out that for proper appreciation, the yield from increase in fares should be related to the number of passengers. Last year, nearly 128 crore passengers excluding season ticket holders travelled in III Class onwards while in air-conditioned class only about 3 lakh passengers travelled.

This fact should not be overlooked. Each air-conditioned traveller will now pay from Rs 15 to 160 more for each journey while each III Class passenger will have to pay only from 5 paise to one rupee.

In the case of 1st class also the rise has been from Rs. 2 to 16 per ticket and about seventy-three lakh passengers excluding season ticket holders travelled in 1st class last year and naturally, the yield from them has been much lower than from the III class passengers. While 73 lakhs passengers will have to pay only Rs. 4 crores, 128 crores of passengers will pay about Rs 16 crores.

Honourable Members would have observed that despite the proposed increases in fares, freight, transshipment charges etc. railway revenues would still fall short by Rs. 52.79 crores. This gap has to be covered as mentioned in my speech. Some comparison has been made about the performance of the Railways, especially, the financial part of it. I shall say a word about it. I wish I too had been in the same happy position in which my predecessors were. Railway finances had surpluses. The country had accumulated sterling balances. There was no problem of loss in revenue. Unfortunately, we are not in that position.

There was no labour unrest as I am facing to-day. I would have been in

the same happy position but for this. At present we are also in the worst financial position

I would like to keep the burden on the common man to the minimum level. I want to shift the burden from the common man to the affluent sections. So, the affluent sections have to pay more for luxury and upper class travel.

In conformity with this approach Air-conditioned class used by the rich and affluent will cost enormously more. Fares have been hiked by Rs 15 to Rs 160 each ticket. Still increases have for example, been proposed for travelling by the two Rajdhani Express for the Air-conditioned class. The existing fare of Rs 379/- from New Delhi to Howrah will be increased to Rs 520/- a rise of as much as Rs 141. Similarly travel in the Rajdhani Express between New Delhi and Bombay Central will cost Rs 116/- more from Rs 349/- to Rs 465 - per ticket.

Then I will come to First Class and A.C. Chair-Car. For First Class and A.C. Chair-Car categories also, availed of again by comparatively well-to-do sections of our community, an increase ranging from a minimum of Rs 2/- to a maximum of Rs 16 has been proposed. As against these steep increases proposed for the upper class travel, the increase in the case of Third Class Passenger is the modest and has been kept down to the utmost extent possible. The rise in Third Class fare by ordinary trains has been kept at 5 paise rising to a maximum of Rs 1/- per ticket depending upon the distance travelled. Even within this modest rise in Third Class fare I have taken care to exempt the more vulnerable sections from the fare hike.

The same concern for common man is reflected in the changes proposed in reservation charges. For A.C. class the reservation charges have been increased five-fold from Rs. 1/- to Rs. 5/- For first class, reservation charges have been doubled from Rs 1/-

to Rs 2 - and for the A.C. Chair-Car from 50 paise to Rs 1/- But there will be no increase in reservation charges in respect of Third Class.

Another area, where I have tried to take care of the common man is in respect of accident compensation. Until recently the amount payable as compensation in case of death or disablement of passenger in rail accidents was related to the passenger's income. This has now been replaced by a system of uniform payment of compensation. Rich and poor will get the same compensation. The amount of compensation payable has also been increased from Rs 20 000/- to Rs 50 000/- in case of death or total disablement.

The question has also been raised that the number of accidents has increased. I have got the figures to show that the number of accidents has gone down this year. In the year 1964-65 the number of accidents was 1293; 1965-66 the number was 1261; in 1968-69 it was 908; 1971-72 the number was 844; 1972-73 it was 815 and from April 1972 to January 1973 the number was 692 and this year upto January 1974 the number has come down to 665.

I will call my budget as developmental and the role of Railways is that of a catalyst. The faster we go in developing new lines, greater will be the impetus to all-round advancement of the country, especially of the far-flung and backward regions. Judged by this standard this year's Railway Budget amply reflects a new deal for the backward regions of the country.

The Railway budget for 1974-75 I submit, is a bold attempt to carry forward the socialistic and developmental policies of the Government.

In the context of the supreme need to restore the health of the railways, an earnest attempt has been made to pass on the burden to the affluent sections to the maximum possible, as I

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said earlier. At the same time case has been taken to keep the levies on the common man to the bare minimum, and even within this, specific exemptions have been provided for the poorer and more vulnerable sections of the community, as in the case of season ticket-holders and freight on foodgrains.

I now come to coal. Coal has been a matter of great deal of criticism in this House. First I shall take up the freight part of it and then I shall come to the movement part of coal. There has been criticism of our proposal to increase the freight on coal. As hon. Members know, coal is the most prominent commodity that the railways carry. It occupies the first place in terms of both originating tonnage and tonne-km. During 1972-73, it formed about 29.16 per cent of the total originating tonnage it accounted for only 17.81 per cent of the total earnings. Coal is at present charged outside the scope of the general freight structure on a special scale which is below the actual cost of operation. The railway's losses on transport of coal have been increased from year to year as follows. The estimated loss would go up from Rs. 33.25 cores in 1973-74 to Rs. 37.67 cores in 1974-75. With the steep increase in the wage bill and the prices of other inputs, a stage has now been reached when it has become imperative to ensure that the loss sustained by the railways on this streade of major traffic is neutralised.

In my budget speech I had explained that our weak railway finance could ill afford a burden of this magnitude. I have, therefore, proposed to bring the freight rate for coal into the standard freight structure. I might point out here that the freight rates on coal have always lagged behind the increases given to the price of coal. The pit-head price of Grade I Bengal-Bihar coal which was Rs. 20.71 per tonne in 1961-62 went up to Rs. 38.09 per tonne in 1973-74. The fruits of these increases have been enjoyed mostly by

the private people till a year and half ago when coal was taken over

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra):
Now it is being enjoyed by none.

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: Increase in coal price have inflated the fuel bill which constitutes about 20 per cent of the working expenses of the railways over the year. This has badly affected the cost of operation.

I may mention here that though coal is a vital raw material for industry, it constitutes only a small element in the overall cost of ultimate products. The proposed adjustments in coal freight will have, therefore a very small impact on prices of end-products. For example, in respect of coal moving to thermal power stations, the effect will be 5.74 per cent on the average of the price of electric current. On cement prices, its impact will be only 1.49 per cent. Similarly in respect of iron and steel the effect on the prices of products like bolts, nuts and plates etc. will be less than one per cent.

Then, I come to the question of coal loading in spite of all difficulties, coal loading this year has been 92.7 per cent of last year's loading. The daily average number of wagons loaded from different coalfields during the current financial year up to the end of January 1974 was 7450 wagons as compared to 8038 wagons in the previous year, which means a shortfall of about 600 wagons a day. Of these 600 wagons, 529 wagons are in Bengal and Bihar alone. I mentioned Bihar and Bengal alone with some purpose. The whole area has been plagued by labour unrest most of the time.

While, by and large, all demands have been met currently in the outlaying fields there has been a drop in the loading in the Bengal Bihar fields to the extent of 529 wagons per day this year. In the first three summer

months, power shedding seriously affected train movement in the eastern sector.

To get over the serious food shortage in different sectors in the country in May, June and July, the railways had to concentrate on a record movement of foodgrains. In August 1973 the locomen's strike severely affected loading of coal. During this period, the railways used all available resources in maintaining supplies to power houses, essential industries and steel plants. Actually, the railways have moved 0.16 million tonnes more of coal to steel plants and washeries till January 1974 as compared to levels reached last year.

In the early part of February, 1974 the Carriage and Wagon staff agitation combined with heavy absenteeism of staff on the South Eastern Railway, affected the smooth movement of coal to the steel plants.

Hon. members have spoken about cancellation of trains for want of coal and argued that if the railways cannot get coal for themselves, how can they give coal to others. Yes the railways have cancelled their trains for want of coal but this has been done with a view to attend to the needs of essential services like power houses, movement of foodgrains and some priority industries. Goods trains have been cancelled rarely. It is the passenger trains that have been mainly cancelled and this too only with a view to give priority to the movement of essential commodities required for social needs. This state of affairs might have to be continued till the labour situation improved. I am not in a position to give any positive assurance in this regard at this stage.

Then there is the question of allotment of wagons for coal. Points have been made about the procedure for allotment of wagons for coal and I would like to say a word about it to allay the misgivings of hon. members. The distribution of coal to different consumers is based on a programme sponsored by the different Ministries of the Central Government, State Gov-

ernments and other authorised agencies. The railways allot wagons in accordance with these programmes. For instance, the Coal Controller programmes for the movement of coal and hard coke to different steel plants.

The Linkage Committee, consisting of representatives of the Ministries of Mines, Railways, Irrigation and Power, and Industrial Development, make out programmes for movement of coal from different coal fields to power houses and industries. Movement of steam coal to industries and of soft coke etc., is sponsored by the State Governments and other bodies authorised for such sanctions. The actual daily allotment of wagons for movement of coal against these approved programmes is done by the Joint Director, Coal in the case of the Bengal Bihar coal fields and by other sub-allotment offices in respect of outlying fields. Day to day supply of wagons is done by the zonal Railways according to these approved programmes.

Some allegations have been made against the wagon allotting officers in Calcutta. I must assure hon. members that this matter would be seriously looked into. In the meanwhile, I have decided to post one additional senior officer in Calcutta. His only job would be to look after the allotment and movement of coal wagons. He will be overall in charge of this aspect of the problem.

I am also putting one senior officer in the Ministry of the rank of Additional Member to look after the coal problem and to assist the Member (Traffic) exclusively in this respect.

A very important problem was raised about the development of backward areas. This has been the idea which I had initiated last year with such zeal and enthusiasm as I have and I have been trying to follow this policy of development of backward areas. Arguments have been made, editorials have been written, that this Budget and last year's Budget also, is faulty in the sense that instead of moving around developed areas, it is going to

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the backward areas where from the revenue earnings would be very less. Yes, I do confess and admit that in the beginning the revenue earning will be low.

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But what is our intention? Do we not want to develop the backward areas? Do we not want to open up those areas which remained closed for centuries? You know for example, the north-eastern region. If we want to give it a railway line only on the basis of the financial return, the north-eastern region will never get railway lines. There are some areas in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh North Bihar, some parts in Madhya Pradesh and some parts in Andhra Pradesh. I do not want to go on mentioning them. Indeed there are some areas in almost all the States which need development. They have no means of transport and communication and if we want to give them a railway line or other transport only on the basis of financial return these areas will never get it. So with this point in view, I have made an unorthodox approach to the problem. I want to give them railways and I am sure in course of time those areas will develop and make the railway lines economically viable.

In Europe also, some discussions had taken place as long back as in 1916 on the question of power and transport. If I remember aright, it was perhaps in Vienna. It was the conclusion of that conference that power and transport create their own demand. If we want to give transport and power only when a demand is created you will never get it. With this approach, I have tried to include some projects in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other States also. (Interruptions) Orissa also.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY (Cooch-Bihar): What about North Bengal?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: I am glad to inform the House that the Convention Committee on Parliament has approved

this approach of ours. This total allotment in the fifth five year Plan for the consumption of new railway lines is only Rs. 100 crores out of the total plan investment of Rs. 2,350 crores excluding the Metropolitan Transport Projects. Most of this amount will be required for completing projects already in progress and those connected with the core sector of the economy.

The total outlay on new lines will be only a small fraction of the available plan outlay. Thus, restoration of dismantled lines or the construction of short-length new lines in under-developed areas will not erode the fund resources required to build up the transport capacity in the fifth plan. The outlay of new lines may be compared with the Plan provision of Rs. 1,774 crores for construction of roads.

At the moment, the total outlay proposed for the construction of new railway lines and restorations in 1973-74 is Rs. 1468 crores, out of which Rs. 1 crore is for the construction and restoration of unremunerative lines in backward areas taken up under the new policy. In 1974-75, the proposed outlay for new lines and restoration is about Rs. 12 crores, out of which under Rs. 2 crores is earmarked for the construction and restoration of railway lines in backward areas taken up under the new policy.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Where you have made a reference to the 12 lines unfortunately, you have put a rider at the end of your speech by saying that allocations have not been made available and sanction is awaited from the Commission. So, though you have mentioned them, you have put them on the map probably they will not come up for a long time.

SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT (Kolaba): What about Apta-Mangalore?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: At the end of my speech, if you want to put some question, I shall answer them. If you are permitted to put questions you

may put them and demand an answer only then.

Now, you must have seen that we have been working with this approach, and the small investment of new lines will not come in the way of the progress of projects connected with the transport needs of the core sector of the economy.

I also bring to the notice of the House that the total capital-at-charge of the railways is Rs 3,886 crores, out of which the unremunerative branch lines account for only Rs 75 crores. Therefore the backward areas to have a case and we will look into it with sympathy.

I have already said in my budget speech that subject to availability of funds it is intended to restore the lines which were dismantled during the second world war or on account of floods, etc., in the past. I am pursuing it. Restoration of these lines as justified fully and they are on the same footing as other uneconomic branch lines which are being maintained as they are considered to be an essential facility in spite of their unremunerative character.

It is with regret that I have to mention one point. Some hon. Members in the course of their speech here said that Bihar and UP have got favoured treatment at my hand in the matter of construction and restoration of new lines. This is unfair and not based on facts. For the information of the House I should like to give State-wise figures of the cost of works in progress and those included in 1974-75 budget.

The North Eastern Region, with 172,000 thousand sq kms and a population of 19 crores gets an allocation of Rs 33 crores. I shall give the figures of allocation for the other States. For West Bengal, Rs 22.70 crores, for Bihar, Rs 28.50 crores, for Uttar Pradesh Rs 52.20 crores it has a population of 8.83 crores and an area of 2.91 thousand sq. kms—for Haryana, Rs 7.81 crores; for Jammu and Kashmir Rs. 14.2 crores; for Rajasthan Rs. 2.79

crores, for Gujarat Rs. 45.78 crores for Madhya Pradesh Rs 16.15 crores, for Orissa Rs. 48.99 crores—it is one of the most backward areas—for Maharashtra Rs. 35.30 crores, for Andhra Pradesh Rs 33.80 crores, for Mysore, Rs. 44.62 crores; for Kerala Rs. 15.60 crores and for Tamil Nadu Rs 12.54 crores. The total outlay in 1973-74 for new lines in backward areas taken up under the new policy is Rs 1.09 crores.

I shall now refer to the North Eastern region and say what I feel about it. Last but not the least is the long neglected problem of development of North Eastern Region—Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. There is crying need for opening these areas and construction of new railway lines in this region. Something really pioneering has got to be done to do justice to these people. This matter has been discussed at various levels and it is my considered view that the less a special machinery like the Transport and Communication Authority is set up specifically for this purpose it will not be easy to develop this area. All the States of the North Eastern Region and the Ministries on Railways, Transport and Communications can be associated with this body. This body must have special funds earmarked for them. At the present moment it seems to be the only way for speedy development of this region. I have already taken up this issue with the Ministries of Planning, Finance, Transport and Communication. I have no doubt in my mind that something really and tangible would be done. Our Prime Minister is very keen that we must move expeditiously to open up this region.

Yesterday some hon. Members referred to the question of Service Commission office having been opened at Muzaffarpur and Ranchi. It has been my policy that each zonal railway must have its own service commission. Those offices were opened in pursuance of that policy. A new service Commission is being opened at Secunderabad. Shri Raghu Ramiah will be

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happy about it. I also propose to open a sub-office of the Calcutta Commission at Kemda (Orissa) and two sub-offices of the Bombay Commission, one at Ahmedabad and the other at Jabbalpore, on the same pattern as the sub-office opened at Ranchi.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about Rajasthan?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: I agree that something has to be done so far as the Northern Railway is concerned. When we discuss the Demands I shall come before you with the proposal.

Sir, some of my friends said that they are not happy with the Railway Board. A number of criticisms have been made against the functioning and the working of the Railway Board. I am the Minister in charge of Railways and I am in touch with them every day. Before I took charge of the Railway Ministry I too had some queer ideas about the Railway Board. But, now I must say—not that I have become a convert—that I have not found anything abnormal about the Railway Board. They are an executive body of the Railway Ministry. They are the Secretariat of the Railway Ministry. They have been working hard and there have been no occasions when they have not cooperative with me, whenever any decision is taken either at the political level or by this House. I have good words for them that they are a hard working lot. They have been working hard and they have been trying to solve the problems. Therefore, I would request the House to be fair to this body. But if the House wants the abolition of the Railway Board of course, I will have to carry out the instructions of the House. But, I would seek the indulgence of the House to say that they are doing a fine job. If we abolish the Railway Board, then, it will be difficult to face the situation, especially in the present state of crisis. Therefore Sir, the Railway Board should be considered as a part of the Railway Ministry. In fact, it is under the

Railway Ministry, it is an executive body of the Railway Ministry and it is the secretariat of the Railway Ministry. This pattern has been copied by the Posts and Telegraphs also. Two important Committees, the Administrative Reforms Commission and the Kunzru Committee have supported the continuation of the Railway Board. The Steel Authority also is more or less based on the pattern of Railway Board. We have such examples in UK and other countries. Of course, there might be some mistakes. I do not say that we do not commit mistakes. Mistakes are committed even in those Ministries, where there is no such Board. But, you cannot say that the Railway Board is a white elephant. If the Minister feels that he is not being allowed to function and that the Board comes in its way he will be the first man to come forward with the proposal to abolish it. The Minister should have the guts and I think he has got the guts to say that if the bureaucracy comes in the way of the functioning of the Government, that will have to go. We should take a reasonable attitude in such matters. Harsh remarks do not pay any dividend. There is no use of quarrelling with your own tools. After all, we have to implement our policies through the General Managers, through the Divisional Superintendents and through the Members of the Railway Board. We should not condemn them outright, in season and out of season. So, I would beg of this House to take this into consideration.

Some suggestions were made about the vending contracts and that I have decided to abolish the vending contracts. A decision was taken by one of my predecessors that in the case of those vendors who have already done six years, the contracts should be reviewed. Some pressures were built up and this was not implemented. Now, what I am going to do is to review these contracts. We should try to see that they do good service to the public. After all, who are our masters? The people are our masters. Comp-

agents have come that the vendors are not performing their duties and that the food-stuffs supplied are not up to standard. Here, the important point is the vested interests that have grown should be removed. I have got a report, a very very authentic report to the effect that benami contractors are in the field. A single individual is able to get a vending contract for 30—40 stations. Complaints have been received that they are not performing their duties well, and the food-stuffs supplied by them are not up to standard.—I would not say it is horrible. One Hindi poet, from Hathras who is a well-known scholar, showed me such food stuffs. So, I am going to review all these contracts. If their performance is good, they will continue. If their performance is not good they will have to go. These benami vendors have to go. It will be my endeavour to see that the vested interests are removed from this field.

Then I come to the Railway Protection Force, about which so many complaints were made. Any force will have some defect or weakness. Further, the RPF is not an old force. It might have some weakness. But this organisation, I have been during the 13 months of my stay in this Ministry, is unavoidable, whatever its faults might have been, if the Railways have to function in the present situation, we will have to depend on this force.

The present strength of this force is about 60,000. My proposal is to increase it to one lakh, by adding 20,000 for the next two years, and give the members of this force more amenities. Now on many matters they are not on par with the CRP and other forces. I have decided to bring them on par with the CRP in the matter of amenities, facilities, uniform, salaries etc, because, it is only with their help that we will be able to run the railways efficiently.

For instance, the question of pilferage was raised. I will give figures to show that pilferage is not going up. Efforts have been made to see that

pilferage is coming down. Take Mughalsarai, Garhara and Burwadih. It would be seen that pilferage has gone down. In Mughalsarai and adjoining areas, which I have visited, the value of consignments stolen came down to Rs. 35,750 in 1973 from a figure of Rs 2,11,270 in 1971. Therefore, I will say that this force has been doing a good job and it deserves the support of this hon. House. There might have been some defects here and there. If hon. Members write to me in the matter, the Railway Board will go into those complaints. But for individual cases the whole force should not be condemned.

There is one personal matter which has been raised about me, and that concerns my extra curricular activities. Some of the hon. Members feel that I do not give enough time to the railways because I am more involved in politics. There is no doubt about it that I am a political animal. Politics has been in my blood and it has been in my family for generations. We are political beings. I cannot say that I will not engage myself in politics. But it will never be at the cost of the Government or the railway administration. I would not have referred to this personnel matter but it was raised by one or two Members of Parliament, especially those coming from my own State. Any Member who comes to the Rail Bhavan will be convinced that I attend to all matters connected with the working of the railways, if necessary by sitting upto 8 or 9 O'clock. If my political activities offend somebody, I cannot help it. My political activity has to be continued and it will be continued but never at the cost of the performance of the railways.

Coming to the performance of the zonal railways, some hon. Members wanted to know the performance of the east zone. Some hon. Members complained that I have not given any information zone-wise. I would like to say a word on zone-wise performance.

[Shri L. N. Mishra]

It was anticipated that originating revenue earning traffic in 1973-74 would be 10 million tonnes higher than in 1972-73. This anticipation has not, however, materialised; in fact, the physical performance has turned out to be the lowest since 1963-64. To the end of January, 1974, the originating revenue earning traffic registered a fall of 9.02 million tonnes, as compared to last year, and a shortfall of 17.29 million tonnes against the traffic targeted to be carried. This shortfall against anticipations has occurred in practically all categories of traffic such as coal raw materials for and finished products from steel plants, iron ore for export, cement, fertilizers, petroleum, oils and lubricants and other general goods and affected all the railways. The Railways most affected are (1) South Eastern (shortfall 5.88 million tonnes) (2) Eastern (shortfall 3.91 million tonnes) (3) Northern (2.44 million tonnes) (4) Western (1.52 million tonnes—it has been the best perhaps, and (5) North Eastern (shortfall 1.01 million tonnes).

In consequence, gross earnings have suffered and, at the end of December 1973, were short of budgetary anticipations by Rs. 815 crores. In January, the decline has not abated. The total drop in gross earnings against budgetary anticipations to the end of January 1974 was Rs. 90.87 crores.

Coming to punctuality, the overall punctuality performance of Mail/Express trains on Indian Railways has been 71.3 per cent under broad-gauge and 72.8 per cent under metre-gauge on the average in the current financial year upto December 1973. I admit that it is not satisfactory. These are no doubt the lowest figures recorded in the last few years. Here too the situation in the Eastern is fairly few years. Here too the situation in the Eastern is fairly bad (53.2 per cent). In South Eastern it is 57.4 and in Western it is 61.9 per cent. In Northern, which was badly affected by the

labour unrest, the figure was 74.2. The performance of the North Eastern and the North-East Frontier Railways has also not been up to the mark.

My hon. friend, Shri Shankar Daxal Singh, raised the question about Guards this morning. We are having trouble at the moment. Out of 18,000 Guards on the Indian Railways, about 1000 Guards gone on 'work to rule' agitation from 10th March, 1974. The 'work to rule' agitation is now in force on certain divisions of Eastern, South Eastern and Northern Railways and in a few isolated places on other Railways. The demands of these Guards are that their pay scales recommended by the Pay Commission and accepted by the Government should be revised. Talks were held by the Board with the Guards along with the representatives of the recognised Federations and also with their Chairman, Shri R. P. Yadav, who is the Member of this House. It was made clear to them that while some marginal adjustments within the frame work of the Pay Commission's recommendations could be made, it will be very difficult to make any major changes in the pay-structure. It has also made clear to them that categorical unions cannot be recognised on the Railways and that the Railways are working with the aim of having one union in one industry.

This is the position about the Guards. I would again appeal to them to come back to duty. They are already on duty. They are resorting to 'work to rule' tactics. They call themselves to be on duty. But they are not properly working. I am not interested whether they are 1000 out of 18,000 Guards or, even if they are 500 or 200 Guards, I request them to come back to normal work. Whatever anomalies are there, they will be looked into.

Lastly, I would like to make an appeal to the railwaymen. They are the real people who keep the Railways moving. Since the last few

weeks, as the hon. Members are aware, we have been again hearing about strike threats in the Railways from any day after April 10th.

The call for a strike programme in April, 1974 has been announced after a Convention in Madras in February by a group of employees and outsiders.... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI (Patna): Who are the outsiders?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: Outsiders are those who are not employees of the Railways. They are outsiders like you. You are outsider; you are not a railway worker.

I must say that it is totally ill-conceived. Even worse is the endorsement of this programme by the All-India Railwaymen's Federation at a Convention held by them with the Categorical Associations and other Trade Union organisations in Delhi again in February. It is a matter of great surprise to me that eminent Trade Union leaders too had attended this Conference and blessed this kind of destructive move.

It is quite clear that those who speak this kind of language, they not only want to stir up trouble but to paralyse a vital transport system of the country. It is no service to Trade Union movement also.

I am constrained to say that all that they are really working is for only chaos and anarchy in the country which in the end will paralyse the national economy and bring hardship to the common man. Loss of rupee one to Railway means a loss of Rs. 10 to national economy. Total loss due to the strike and other agitation to the Railways in the current year has already been of about Rs. 80 crores.

I must confess that I am really pained to hear of the development. Even since I took charge of this Ministry, it has been my constant and sincere endeavour to understand the

problems of the railwaymen and find solutions speedily and to the utmost extent possible. The Pay Commission's recommendations have already been accepted and the railway workers have started getting concerned benefits. If anything more has to be done, I would like to assure the railwaymen through this august House that these things can be discussed and thrashed out. My mind is not closed on any reasonable issue and I would be the last man to do this.

Our people in the country today are in difficulties because of the rise in prices and short supply of essential commodities. Any strike in the Railways at this stage would only further aggravate the difficult situation on the price front and accentuate the difficulties of the masses in this country. Strike in the present situation is a luxury which the country cannot just afford.

I have already stated that I am in favour of applying the 'one industry-one union' principle in the Railways. As I have said in my budget speech, I had convened in February this year a Conference of Trade Union leaders to discuss the feasibility of introducing this reform in Railways. By and large, there was consensus in favour of this step at this Conference.

I am aware that this can be brought about only with the cooperation of the workers. In suggesting the new set-up, I would like to state clearly that I am in favour of a secret ballot to test the representative character of the existing Unions.

Before long, I hope to be able to give a concrete shape to the scheme of one Union in the Railways and take the necessary steps towards its realisation.

From the forum of this august House, I would like to make a fervent appeal to my railwaymen and their leaders to give a second thought and reconsider their decision. They should pause and ponder as to where the

[Shri L N Mishra]

genuine interest of the workers, the trade union movement and the country at large lie

More specially, I would like to appeal to the workers and their leaders not to resort to strikes or any agitation for a minimum period of next three years. With such an assurance of peace on the labour front, I am confident that all outstanding problems can be approached and tackled in a constructive spirit and with expedition.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah) Yesterday I had raised the question of struggle in the NF Railway regarding execution of ten-hour duty. He is completely silent about it. Hundreds of persons have been arrested and more than 600 have been suspended. He is silent about it.

SHRI L N MISHRA I am not silent. I will look into them.

I have an announcement to make. I have also decided that the hill concession tickets as were introduced last year should be introduced this year also. I am making this announcement in the House so that the public may get sufficient time to make the necessary preparations. There are return journey tickets issued on payment of one and a half single journey fares in First and Third Classes for visiting specified hill resorts from stations more than 800 kms away. These tickets will be available from 1st May to 30th September 1974.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER Now we take up the General Budget.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE I had raised a point yesterday about NF Railway.

SHRI NOORUL HUDA (Cachar) Under MISA railway-men have been arrested. We demand an answer from the Railway Minister as to why they have been arrested. (Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore)

This is nothing new. This has been the convention here. If important points have been raised in the debate by leaders, he should reply to those points at least.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER Please sit down. I paused for some time after the Minister had finished. They did not make any point. They only wanted to exercise their lung power. If they really wanted to put some questions, I would have allowed them and that is why I paused and did not jump to them next item. But if it is only an exhibition of who has got how much of lung power, then, of course, it is a different question. (Interruptions) If you want to put a question, I will allow you. Mr. Samar Mukherjee, The hon. Member may please resume his seat. I am my legs. If any Member wants to put a question, I will allow. The Minister may note down the questions and then reply, but if three or four of you get up, I do not know what you want me to do.

Mr. Mukherjee

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE It was agreed in August 1973 that this ten-hour duty for locomen will be implemented within six weeks. However, there were different interpretations and the locomen again resorted to struggle in December. All those facts were known, there was a debate in this House and on January 20, there was another agreement to which the Railway Administration including the Deputy Minister were signatories. In that agreement, it was agreed that this ten-hour duty will be executed from the 15th of February, but it has not been executed. So, the Locomen in the North-East Frontier Railway have insisted that this should be implemented forthwith.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER You are making a speech. Why not you put your question?

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: My question is: hundreds of locomen have been arrested and some of them under MISA. The Railway leaders are still in jail and penal transfer orders are being served on the Railway leaders. The Government, despite the agreement, are not implementing the ten-hour duty and they are creating this trouble. Last night I got a report from RDSO, Lucknow, that the Acting Secretary of the Union there has been served with immediate transfer orders to Bombay.....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now you are making a speech.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: I want a reply. Yesterday I told Mr. Mohd. Shafi Qureshi, the Deputy Minister.

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, क्या यह सच है कि आल-इंडिया रेलवे लोको मैकेनिक स्टाफ एसोसिएशन के लोगों ने 24 या 25 नवम्बर से 24 जनवरी तक वर्क टु रुल किया था और मंत्री महोदय के इस आश्वासन पर कि वह उन की मांगों पर विचार करने के लिये कोई कमेटी विठायेगे और किसी का किमी भी प्रकार का विक्टिमाइजेशन नहीं किया जायेगा, उन लोगों ने 24 जनवरी को वर्क टु रुल को खत्म किया ? क्या वह भी सच है कि ठीक उस के बाद सौ से अधिक लोको मैकेनिक स्टाफ के लोग ट्रांसफर या सस्पेंड कर दिये गये और उन के दो आदमी एम० आई० एम० ए० के मातहत झांझा में गिरफ्तार कर के भागलपुर के सेंट्रल जेल में रखे गये हैं और लोको रनिंग स्टाफ के दो आदमी भी एम० आई० एस० ए० और डी० आई० आर० के मातहत गिरफ्तार कर के भागलपुर जेल में रखे गये हैं ? अगर यह सही है तो मंत्री महोदय के आश्वासन का क्या हुआ और इस तरह वह कैसे रेलवे मजदूरों को कान्फिडेंस में लेगे ?

श्री नरसिंह नारायण पांडे (गोरखपुर) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय वे कमीशन की रिपोर्ट

में कुछ एम्बिग्विटी रही है और डिफरेंट कैंटेगरीज के साथ उस में न्याय नहीं किया गया है। उस से रेलवेज और विभिन्न कैंटेगरीज में कई एनामेलीज पैदा हो गई है, जिस के कारण रेलवे कर्मचारियों में असंतोष बढ़ रहा है। क्या मंत्री महोदय इस सदन को यह आश्वासन देंगे कि इस बारे में कोई रिप्रेजेन्टेशन मिलने पर वह उस पर सहानुभूति पूर्वक विचार करेंगे और एम्बिग्विटी को खत्म करेंगे ?

मंत्री महोदय ने पिछली बार यह आश्वासन दिया था कि बरौनी बाराबंकी रेलवे लाइन भी मुजफ्फरपुर की रेलवे लाइन के साथ साथ बनाई जायेगी और उस को 1974 में पूरा कर दिया जायेगा। क्या मंत्री महोदय इस बारे में कोई आश्वासन देने के लिए तैयार हैं ?

श्री रामशेखर प्रसाद सिंह (छपरा) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने अपने जवाब में यह संकेत दिया है कि जिन लोगों के कटेरिंग में छः बरस से ज्यादा हो गये हैं, वह उन के नवीनीकरण के सम्बन्ध में विचार करेंगे। लेकिन इस सम्बन्ध में एक कमी रह गई है। जो नये लोग बहल किये जायेगे, उन के बारे में कोई फ़ाइटेरिया फ़िक्स नहीं किया गया है। क्या मंत्री महोदय उस में हरिजनो और अनएम्पलायड ग्रैजुएट्स को प्रेफरेंस देने के सम्बन्ध में कोई सर्कुलर जारी करेंगे ?

क्या मंत्री महोदय एन० ई० रेलवे में वर्तमान चार डिबिज्जिंग के प्रतिरिक्त पाचवा डिबिज्जिंग बनाने पर विचार करेंगे ?

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore): I want to ask regarding the Howrah-Amra, Howrah-Sealdah light railway. This has been closed 3 or 4 years back. Prime Minister herself gave categorical assurance that it will be reopened if the West Bengal people vote for congress. The West Bengal Government is now under Shrimati Indira Gandhi.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Put the question....

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:
You will understand....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I understand; I am not so dull....

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:
Sir, Mr. L. N. Mishra gave an assurance that it will be reopened.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If I were a teacher, I would penalise you for this long-drawn repetition of one single point: Why it has not been opened?

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA:
I am specially pointing this out because they are making statements after statements. One statement is made by Mr. Qureshi; another statement is made by Mr. L. N. Mishra. I therefore want to know categorically what is the position in this regard. I want to know categorically from the Railway Minister, whether this light railway will be re-opened either in broad gauge or in metre gauge without depending on the State Government contribution.

SHRI B. K. DASCHODHURY:
While appreciating the hon. Minister for whatever he has said a out extension of new railway lines in backward regions, I would like to know whether he has seriously considered the construction of a new railway line in the NF railway from New Mainaguri to Sitai which is the most backward region. This matter was also dealt with by me in my speech on the Railway Budget. I want to have an assurance from the Railway Minister in this regard.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA (Telli cherry): The hon. Minister made an appeal to the workers not to resort to strike. I would like to know this from him. What will be his stand on the question of bonus? What are the positive steps she is going to take in regard to opening dialogue with the workers? What are the concrete steps he is taking about this point, namely, one industry, one union? How is he going to implement it?

SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT:
Regarding the Apta-Dasgaon Railway line the preliminary work has been completed but in the budget presented in the House by the Railway Minister there is no provision made in the Budget. Under these circumstances I want to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that this will go through.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): The Railway Minister said comparatively lesser amount is coming from air-conditioning accommodation and more from third class passengers. More people travel by third class. But he has not said anything with regard to the increase of amenities and facilities to third class passengers. Another important point: The retired railway employees wanted a minimum of Rs. 40 as pension. This has been their long-standing demand and they have repeatedly demanded this minimum pension. What has been the attitude of the Government in this matter regarding this demand of minimum pension of Rs. 40 demanded by the railway employees who have retired?

SHRI ANNASAHEB GOTKHINDE (Sangli): I have called the Minister's attention to the contradiction in speeches of last year and his year. Last year promise was made regarding Miraj Latur Railway conversion. No mention has been made in this regard in this year's budget. I want an assurance from the hon. Minister in this regard.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Sharma, you made such a good speech. Why do you want to spoil it?

SHRI A. P. SHARMA (Buxar): We would definitely like to have an assurance from my hon. friend, the Railway Minister with regard to bonus. The Bonus Review Committee is already seized of the problem. I want to know whether the Railway Minister could give an assurance that he would implement the recommendations of the Bonus Review Committee if such a recommendation is made regarding the bonus.

PROF. S. L. SAKSENA (Maharajganj): What have you done for a line from Gorakhpur to Maharajganj—a backward area?

SHRI L. N. MISHRA: We have already accepted in principle the suggestion made by the hon. Members. On 1st December, a Committee was set up under the chairmanship of my friend Shri Qureshi. The Committee has made good progress. They have made an analysis and they will be able to finalise the implementation part of it as early as possible. It was stated that some people have been arrested in the Frontier Railway side. They volunteered to start the labour duty. They did not give notice and they did it voluntarily. The never informed the Station Masters or anybody. The moment the time is up, they leave the rain. This kind of action on the part of the railwaymen cannot be tolerated. I do not want to go into details of it I cannot do it overnight. First we decided that this recommendation would be implemented within three years instead of eight years. Like that we are implementing the recommendation. When the karmen agitated, action was taken against the railwaymen. Shri Shastri Ji spoke about victimisation of the railwaymen. In December or in January, I do not remember the date just now, we had a discussion and an assurance was also given by me that there would be no victimisation of the employees. If there has been any victimisation done, it might be brought to my notice and I would look into it.

Regarding the Pay Commission, that is a very difficult question. The Finance Minister is sitting here. We have given full thought to it. We have had a number of discussions over this and some decisions have also been taken. I do not want to touch the recommendations of the Pay Commission as it is not easy for me to do that. Already I have announced, I think, last year, about catering, that if five or more matriculates people from

themselves into cooperatives, they would get preference in the matter of running the canteen. Harijans will also get preference. Minorities will also get preference if they form into cooperatives. This is not only with regard to the vending contract but it is also with regard to running the book stall. I am prepared to give that in Delhi Station. A number of hon. Members want that facility to be in bigger stations. I am prepared to do that provided they form themselves into cooperatives. If unemployed graduates do that for vending as well as for book stalls, I am prepared to accommodate them and I won't charge any rent for one year.

As regards Barabanki-Samastipur railwayline, we have a schedule for it. At the moment, I do not have information with me but I shall try to find it out and tell you the progress made. I am told that it is going on according to schedule. If that is behind schedule, I shall try to make it up.

Regarding Howrah-Amra line, that will be a broadgauge and not a narrow-gauge. We have difficulty in getting land. You know about it. The land has not been available there. There were difficulties also in getting it. But, we have got full cooperation from West Bengal Government. Shri Siddhartha Shanker Ray and myself, after discussions, are going to take up the construction work very soon.

About the acceptance of the recommendations of the Bonus Review Committee, I may not like to comment anything at this stage.

14.45 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. RAILWAY ACCIDENT NEAR BIRPUR ON CENTRAL RAILWAY

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Earlier, before the Railway Minister began his speech, Shri Vajpayee raised the question regarding the derailment of train