

of Karnataka the Government is not in a position to take up the project? They are saying that the project is not feasible. May I also bring it to the notice of the Government that the ore which is being produced in Hospet region is being transported to Madras while the Madras port is not in a position to absorb the entire ore? If this Harihar-Kottur line is completed, I think, half of the ore can be diverted to Mangalore Port. Keeping this in view, will the Government re-examine the whole matter and see that that this line is completed early?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I will look into this matter.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has stated that it will be easier to take up such projects if the State Government could provide some funds. An experiment in this respect has been made in Maharashtra. I want to say that the State Government has also some priorities of its own. I represent Bombay city. No attention has been paid to the sub-urban services in Bombay for the last 10-12 years. Will the Government adopt a policy to raise funds by issuing debentures to the citizens living in Bombay and utilise the same for city's development so that they get their due and the Government is able to raise finance?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has raised a very basic issue. Before I give any reply to it. This point has to be examined thoroughly.

[English]

Quality of Edibles for Railway Passengers

*22. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the edibles sold on Railway station between Delhi and Nagpur are of poor quality; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to improve the quality of edibles made available for Railway passengers?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) There have been some complaints in this regard.

(b) Steps taken or proposed to be taken for further improving the catering services include introduction of casserole service and economy meals, modernisation of base kitchens, intensifying inspections and action against the contractors or staff responsible for lapses.

[Translation]

SHRI BANSWARI LAL PUROHIT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the new Government can conveniently say that it assumed office only 15 days back and previous Government was responsible for all.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr Purohit, please put your question.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: I have just come by A.P. Express. This train used to arrive at 7 o' clock. When Shri Madhavrao Scindia was the Railway Minister, the trains used to arrive on time. But today the train was late by 2 1/2 hours. I alighted at Nizamuddin Railway Station and I am coming here straight from there. I request the hon. Minister to pay attention towards punctuality of trains. The first thing is that food articles sold at the stations are spurious ones. I would like to cite the example of vendors at New Delhi Railway Station. I purchased a packet of Pan Parag for Rs. 2/- but it was found to be spurious one. It is harmful and the passengers are being cheated in this manner. Earlier, the vendors used to display rate charts, but no vendor at New Delhi Railway Station displays rate charts Now-a-days. I purchased a piece of chocolate for my child. The vendor started bargaining. He started from Rs.8 but ultimately sold the same for Rs. 4.50. There has been sharp deterioration in the quality of eatables. I purchased 'purees' which were fried in oil of

very inferior quality. I, therefore, request you to pay attention to it. (*Interruptions*) What is there to laugh about it? I am very serious. I request you to reprimand the hon. Minister that he should improve the situation.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Purohit, you address the chair.

[*Translation*]

Please address me.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: They are taking it as a matter of joke. It is a question concerning the general public (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: I am not permitting you.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Mr. Speaker, Sir. I request the hon. Minister to do away with the practice of engaging vendors if possible and entrust this work to the department so that adulterated articles are not sold. Please break the monopoly of the contractors and entrust this work to the unemployed youths so that they could get some work. They will not only get employment but can earn profit also. Let such youth be employed on this work. They may be supplied with articles purchased for the railway department.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: There is one more question in your name. Please do not put all the question at a time.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: I request the hon. Minister to elaborate the medical measures he is going to take in this

regard. I am unable to understand as to what step he is going to take to remedy the system and how does he propose to do away with the practice of engaging vendors and what measures he is going to take?

SHRI PIYARE LAL HANDOO: When he chewed Pan Parag, there was non-representative Government. Then how could he expect pure things.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI BANWARILAL PUROHIT: Do not support the contractors.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has raised the question of contractors. The contractors are there for a long time. So far as the question of catering is concerned, I would like to state that there are contractors at 2898 stations who supply food articles in trains and supply meals at stations. So far as the question of departmental catering service is concerned, it is available at 75 stations which cater to the needs of 65 pairs of trains. i.e. 130 trains. The hon. Member has asked for doing away with the practice of engaging contractors. It is a very basic issue. This matter has been discussed a number of time during the last many years. As things stand now, our decision is to maintain the status-quo. If the hon Member desires the matter to be considered afresh, we are prepared to do that. So far as the question of remedying the situation is concerned, he is aware that the casserole service has been in operation for the last 4 years and efforts are on to make further improvements in it. Beside, there are 75 to 76 modernised kitchens or dining stalls from where food articles are supplied and arrangements are also there for supplying them in a number of trains. We will introduce some modernisation and make some improvements in the existing system so that fresh food could be supplied to the passengers in the trains. Some concrete steps have

been taken in this regard. As regards the point raised in respect of Delhi-Nagpur section, I would like to state that special attention in this regard is being said to 4 big stations on this section viz. New Delhi, Jhansi, Itarsi and Nagpur. The hon. Members are aware that the right to implement the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act has been entrusted to the Railway authorities. Inspector and doctor examine the food articles and action has been taken in certain cases. There is a need to impart training to the staff and the process of imparting training to them has already begun. Efforts are also under way to ensure proper supervision.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the food supplied from base kitchens is satisfactory to some extent. But my question relates to the vendors, retailers, pan and cigarette sellers and what I wanted to point out is that the Government has no control over them. As I said, vendors carry as many as 20 to 25 items with them, but they do not display the rate chart. People are being cheated and the vendors charge the prices arbitrarily. I therefore, request the hon. Minister to exercise control over them and ensure that such cheating does not take place. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps he proposes to take in this regard?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the points raised by the hon. Minister would be examined and further action will be taken in this regard. (*Interruptions*) .

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he proposes to make the Delhi Railway Station an ideal railway station. Lakhs of people come to Delhi from other parts of the country every year. Food articles on railway stations are prepared in very unhygienic conditions. Flies go on buzzing on these articles and people carry a very bad impression about it. I request the hon. Minister to make at least one station in the capital as an ideal railway station. You can well imagine the condition which might be prevailing in other stations

when the condition of the railway stations in the capital itself is so bad.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the question of New Delhi Railway Station is concerned, we shall look into the complaints. But the issue is not confined to Delhi or for that matter to capital only. My view is that our effort should be to see that clean and best quality food items are made available on all railway stations throughout the country and people should get these things without any difficulty. But I assure the hon. Member that in case there is a need to pay special attentions towards Delhi, we will definitely do so.

[*English*]

SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU: During the Janata Ministry, cheap and quality meals were served to the passengers. Immediately after Prof. Madhu Dandavate left the Railways and our young prince, Mr. Scindia stepped in, Railway had taken to monarchical look and the commuters were deprived of that quality and cheap food and there was a look air-conditioned bogies cars, saloons and all that. May I request the hon. Minister that from that monarchical look would he step down to the common people's look and revive cheap and quality meals which were given during Janata's time?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The food that is presently being served through the departmental catering service has resulted in a loss of Rs. 71 lakhs during the last financial year. The total sales turnover was Rs. 65.71 crores and there is a loss of Rs. 71 lakhs. The last time when the prices of food items were revised was in October, 1987 and before that the prices has been fixed in 1985. So, it is obvious that the food that is presently being served on the Railways is causing a considerable amount of loss to the Railway system. So, I really do not know what the hon. Member has in mind when he suggests that we should serve food that does not cost more than what it costs at present. On the food that is being served at present, the Railways are losing money and

therefore, there is a reason for increasing the cost of the food rather than decreasing it.

SHRI IBRAHIM SULAIMAN SAIT: There is a general deterioration as far as the quality of food is concerned. Now we have introduced the container system and given up the thali system. I think, 30 to 40 per cent of the cost of food goes to the container and actually what food we get costs much less. The container is thrown away and this 30 to 40% goes waste. Will the hon. Minister consider to give up that system of container and introduce the *thali* system again? That is much more beneficial. The container system is neither economic nor hygienic. Moreover, there should not be monopoly of contractors. But in case there is going to be monopoly of railway system, the departmental monopoly is going to be dangerous. Therefore, there should a consideration for the contractors and the Department both, and both should be allowed to serve the passengers. There should be competition. Once there is competition, then alone quality food will be improved. If there is monopoly either of the Department or of the contractors, food is going to get deteriorated. Therefore, this should be considered by the Railway Minister.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Sir, I appreciate the general points that have been made by the hon. Member. I would like to put only one matter straight and that is the cost of the casserole. He felt that forty per cent of the money which the passenger pays for the food goes for the casserole. That is not correct. The cost of the casserole just now is Rs. 1.55. The vegetarian meal that is packed in it is served at Rs. 7 and the non-vegetarian meal at Rs. 9. I agree that is a fairly high price for the casserole and if you include the price of the little plastic or whatever tumbler that comes with it, which is also a disposable item, it comes to Rs. 1.85. But if you compare the price of the casserole with the investment in the *thali* and then the cost of keeping it in a proper hygienic, usable condition, I feel that it would either balance or perhaps weight more in favour of the casserole than against it. However, since the hon. Member

has made this suggestion, I will look into it, though my own feeling is, on the basis of the information that I have in my possession, that the casserole would be better proposition, more so because it is possible to serve hygienic food in the casserole. You can keep the food warm in the casserole and you can prevent all kinds of external pollution or any kind of dust, etc. settling on the food because of the casserole. So, the overall advantage, in my view, is in favour of the casserole and against the *thali*.

Payments to M/s Jyotsna Holdings Limited

*23. **SHRI. L.K. ADVANI:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) the outcome of the inquiry made by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission about payments made by M/s. Sumitomo Corporation to M/s. Jyotsna Holdings Limited with reference to conditions in the tender documents in respect of an ONGC contract;

(b) whether the ONGC had also sought legal advice in this regard for taking necessary action; and

(c) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M.S. GURUPADASWAMI): (a) to (c). ONGC has obtained the opinion of the the First Additional Solicitor General of India. According to this opinion, the remuneration paid by M/s. Sumitomo Corporation to Jyotsna Holding Limited is in violation of Clause 31 of the Tender Conditions. He has further opined that action can be taken by not giving further business of ONGC to the consortium of Japanese Firms which functioned under the name of M/s. Sumitomo Corporation. ONGC have been instructed to take action accordingly. ONGC have also been advised to resort to arbitration or to file a suit for appropriate relief.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, this question