

12.02 hrs.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH
REPORTS

Shri Dasappa (Bangalore): I beg to present the following Reports of Estimates Committee:—

- (i) Twenty-fourth Report relating to action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fourteenth Report of the Estimates Committee (Second Lok Sabha) on the erstwhile Ministry of Education and Scientific Research—Special Education.
- (ii) Twenty-fifth Report relating to action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Forty-ninth Report of the Estimates Committee (Second Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance—Organisation of the Department of Revenue—Central Board of Revenue.

*DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—RAILWAYS—Contd.

DEMAND No. 1 Contd.

Mr. Speaker: We take up further discussion on Demands for Grants. Out of seven hours, 2 hours and 15 minutes have been consumed. Four hours and 15 minutes remain. Any hon. Member wishing to speak? **Shri P. R. Patel.**

Shri P. R. Patel (Patan): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for the opportunity . . .

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): Will the statement of the hon. Home Minister be made definitely at 1 o'clock and not earlier? Once it happened that such a statement came 10 minutes earlier.

Mr. Speaker: He announced that he will make it at 1 o'clock. It might be 5 or 10 minutes later.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Not earlier.

Shri P. R. Patel: I think you for the opportunity given to me to congratulate the Railway Minister on the progress done. I will take this opportunity to bring to his notice certain points and I hope they will be considered.

First of all, I will refer to Gandhi-gram. This station was known as Ellis Bridge before. That station along with Sharkhej and Sabarmati—the whole railway line is being shifted from that place to some place outside the limits of Ahmedabad corporation. I would like to know why the shifting is done, whether it is in the interests of the passengers, whether the passengers using the line have requested the Government to shift the line or is it to oblige certain interested persons of Ahmedabad? I know that it is at the instance of the Ahmedabad Corporation, I would like to know whether the Ahmedabad Corporation is the only user of this line? I would like to know whether any representative of the Ahmedabad constituency in the Lok Sabha is against the shifting of this line? I would like to know whether Government received any representations from the citizens of Ahmedabad? I would also like to know from Government whether they received protests from the villagers using this line?

It is a fact, as I am informed, that some people are owning some lands where the new stations are to be put up, and the shifting of the railway line from the old site to the new site would benefit those persons who are owning the lands there, because the value will be increased.

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

[Shri P. R. Patel]

It is a bad bargain also on the part of the Railway Administration. And the bargain is this. The Municipal Corporation is required to give Rs. 65 lakhs as charges for the removal of the station and the rails from this site to the other site. Also, the Municipal Corporation has to bear the acquisition charges for the new site. That means that the corporation will acquire the new sites, and the price of the land would not be more than Rs. 2 a square yard, while those present sites will give the corporation a value of not less than Rs. 50 a square yard. In that case, the corporation will earn from this transaction about Rs. 3 crores by selling this land for house-building. I do not know why Government wanted to do this?

I know that it is at the instance of the Gujarat Government, and the Gujarat Government has moved for this at the instance of the corporation, and the corporation has moved for this at the instance of some interested persons owning the lands there. Is it the way of obliging? What an inconvenience it will cause to the passengers! For those people coming from Dholka, Bavla and Sharkhej to Ahmedabad, this is the most convenient railway line. If the line is shifted some four miles away from the present site, what will be the cost to the passengers coming from those places? They shall have to pay at least Rs. 4 to a taxi-driver to come over to the city. Is that in the interests of the passengers?

I would submit that Government and the Railway Administration are not well informed or I must say that they are misguided. I would request the Railway Administration to give a thought to this, investigate the matter, seek the opinions of the passengers using the line and also seek the opinion of the people living in Ahmedabad city proper and then take a final decision. I think that the Municipal Corporation has not paid any instalments of the sum of Rs. 65 lakhs, and in that case the Rail-

way Administration can reconsider the matter.

I would humbly request that the hon. Minister may look into the matter and see that the people's agitation is not invited. I would also request him to call a meeting of the Gujarat M.P.s and get their opinion. I would also request him to seek the opinion of the hon. Member representing that constituency. Then whatever proper may be done.

My second point is this. I suggested last year that we are having the Udaipur-Himmatnagar link. That will enable the people of Udaipur and those living on that side to travel by this line for going to Rajasthan and other places beyond Ajmer and also up to Abu. In that case, there will be a heavy burden on passenger trains between Ahmedabad and Ajmer. We cannot have a double line upto Ajmer. From Kalol to Mehsana we are going to have a double line. To put a double line from Mehsana to Abu or Ajmer would be too costly. So I am suggesting that we can have a double line without more expenditure. We have Benildi on the Kaidla-Palanpur link. Bhildi is connected with the rest of Rajasthan. We can connect Bhildi either with Patna or with Harij or with Bechorji. That will be a track of about 15-20 miles. This will give us a double line from Ahmedabad to Rajasthan and beyond. So this may be considered.

Furthermore, I would suggest. The distance between Himmatnagar and Vijapur is about 12 miles. If we connect those, the burden on Prantaj-Ahmedabad and Ahmedabad-Abu will be less.

Here I would refer to the 21st Report of the Public Accounts Committee (1959-60) which has this passage:

"At the time of the merger of the Baroda State, the ex-State Government made over to the Central Government a sum of Rs. 112.7 lakhs in the form of a

reserve fund to be utilised *inter alia* for capital improvements, extensions and developments exclusively of the Baroda Railway system".

This part comes in Baroda territory. We can spend this amount in connecting Himmatnagar with Vijapur and also Bhildi with any of the stations I suggested. This amount was given in 1949, and today if we take the interest accrued thereon, I think it would amount in all to more than Rs. 2 crores. So this amount may be utilised for the new tracks I have suggested.

This will be in the interest of Kandla port also. Kandla is our major port. It is a promising port. We see that day by day it is developing. However, there is one difficulty in the way of its development. That is that it is connected only by a metre gauge line with Palanpur. The capacity of that line, according to an article in the *Times of India* is 120 wagons a day from Kandla. It would carry 6,48,000 tons of import traffic annually. Actually the port has to handle 10 to 11 lakh tons annually. Further, local products also have to be sent from Kandla and other places on this line. So, the present line cannot bear the burden. For that we thought it would be proper to connect Kandla with Jund by a broad gauge line. That was proposed two years back, but I find that only Rs. 1 lakh is provided for it in this Budget. How are you going to develop this line? If you do not commence the work, how are you going to finish that line before the end of the Third Plan?

Imports are increasing at Kandla, and for the development of Kandla, it is absolutely necessary that this broad gauge line should be completed as early as possible. I would suggest that the work may be taken up immediately and finished before the end of the Third Plan if possible.

In the end, I have a suggestion to make. The Railway Minister may be

pleased to ask the General Manager and other regional officers to contact the M.Ps. when they go on tour. Our Ministers are pleased to send their programmes of tour, and we meet them, but these officers never send their tour programmes. I have got certain points, as everybody has got, to be presented to them and to be solved. I hope instructions will be issued.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh (Amravati): It is a long time since I said anything with regard to the railway administration in the country. Unfortunately I have merely to reiterate what I had said about ten or twelve years ago, because those things have not been done.

It is highly gratifying that almost everybody in the House has appreciated the work of the Ministry, and there is nothing but praise showered on them. I would also like to add a word of my own appreciation for what the Ministry has done.

So far as my points are concerned, they refer to my area mostly. I have long been asking for the widening of the bridge at Bandnera, six miles from Amravati. It is very steep and very narrow. It is so steep that I think every year about 100 bullocks slip and their legs are broken, and once they suffer this injury, they simply die, there is no remedy whatsoever.

This is also an area where cotton is grown on a big scale and Amravati is the biggest marketing centre of cotton in the whole of India, if not in the whole of the world. There are hundreds of carts coming very morning and going back in the evening, and very often, because of the steepness and the narrowness of the bridge, traffic is held up, causing inconvenience to a large number of people. So I hope this matter will be taken up and the width of the bridge will be increased and its steepness reduced. The other point is connecting Amravati to Narkher, a scheme which was approved many

[Dr. P. S. Deshmukh]

years ago and even the work was about to start. Probably the second world war of something came in the way and this was not undertaken. I think this is included in the Third Plan but there is no sign of any work starting. During the last few years we have been getting electricity in this area and as a result of which many orange gardens are coming up. A railway line is needed to transport these fruits. Recently the drivers of trucks in M.P. struck work for a fairly long time and the orange growers suffered a heavy loss as the trucks were the only means of transport. Even otherwise, the railway would largely contribute to the development of the area. The track through which this line will go will not only help the orange growers but others also in this area. We require more fruits and vegetables and there will be larger cultivation of these things. The Maharashtra Government, I think, had very strongly supported the demand of the people and I hope the work on it will be undertaken without delay.

My hon. friend Dr. Aney already referred to the restarting of the narrow gauge line between Darwha and Pusa. I am happy about the Khandwa-Hingoli metre gauge line. It shows that this area was in need of these railway connections. What circumstance led to the metre-gauge line in this area also apply to restore the line between Darwha and Pusa. In fact I think Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Railway Minister had given a categorical assurance that all these dismantled lines would be put back. We were happy that Government started work on linking Umrer and Butibori. Dr. Aney was particularly pleased because I think his constituency will also benefit from it. He had forgotten to thank the Ministry for having started this work and he asked me to do so.

It is also the demand of our people to bring Amravati on the main line. At one time I had certain discussions

with certain railway officials and I thought it was about to materialise. Then there were some mistakes in calculation. They had tried to divert it from a longer distance than was necessary. I thought that the recalculation would remove any difficulties and the long-felt need of the people of Amravati would be fulfilled. If this proposal is undertaken, it will have many beneficial results because the station will also be removed from the interior of Amravati town where there is a lot of congestion and so on. Connecting Amravati with Narkher will also be easier.

I would like to make one more suggestion, and that is, about level crossings, and the time that is taken for the traffic to be allowed to pass between the closing and the opening of the gates. I have seen in not very advanced countries like Viet Nam and Thailand and so on that almost instantaneously, as soon as the last carriage passes, the gates are opened in many places automatically. I do not know why in India we have to wait so long at the level crossings especially in the out of the way places where the woes of the farmers are really very great. Very often during the nights, the porters close the gates, go to sleep and the people have to wait for a long time. I hope the administration will be able to do something in this matter and bring India on the same modern lines as other countries have accomplished, so that we need not be styled as antiquated and old and backward. I have nothing more to add.

Shri Krishnapal Singh (Jalesar): I had a motion—cut motion No. 39—in my name but I would like to speak on this motion, and just say a few words in railway trains. That is a point which has been touched by several Members, but there is still room for mentioning a few things in this connection. I come from a town, Mathura, where last year there was a very

serious accident resulting in the lost of 20 lives on one bridge. There was a mela and passengers were travelling on the roofs of all carriages. The driver and the guard stopped the train for a short time before the train approached the bridge, but all the passengers did not leave, or probably they got on the roofs again. The train moved, and 20 passengers were killed. Now, I am prepared to say that it is the fault of the passengers. It was not so much the fault of the railway administration, but there is one point which has got to be remembered, and that is, when passengers travel on the roofs of railway carriages or on the foot-boards, the railway trains should not be allowed to move. On the ground of respect for human lives the railway staff should stop the train and take action. I suppose it is an offence to travel that way, and people should be removed from the roofs and foot-boards. If necessary, help should be sought from the police. The time when these things happen is when there is a fair or a mela or some kind of festival. The railway authorities can very well know as to when there will be a rush and they can run special trains for the purpose. If they cannot do that, they can requisition the help of additional police to check this kind of thing. It is very unfortunate that so many accidents take place because the railways think that they are not able to prevent people from travelling on roofs of carriages or on foot-boards or sitting on the door-way and then falling out. That is one point which I would like to make.

The other point that I would like to make in this connection is that it would be better if some kind of survey is undertaken as regards the areas where there is too much traffic or the periods when there is congestion. If such a survey is undertaken, the railway authorities will be in a position to know as to where and when additional accommodation is required. If special trains cannot be run, it may be possible to put some third class

carriages in goods trains or put additional carriages in ordinary passenger trains. But the whole point is that something should be done to relieve this congestion which leads to accidents which is bad.

The other thing I would like to refer to is special trains for pilgrims. I understand for some reason or other, they have been discontinued. That was a very good thing because pilgrims could travel cheaply and very comfortably. For some reason or other, I understand that they have cancelled these trains. It is causing a lot of inconvenience and congestion in other trains. Therefore, I suggest that these trains should be continued again.

Closely associated with this is the question of sanitation. Due to overcrowding and due, I am prepared to concede, to the rather insanitary habit of the people who travel, the carriages, particularly, the third-class carriages are not kept very clean. A lot of *moongphli* shells, peels of fruits and other things are found lying on the floor inside the compartments. Something should be done to prevent this. I suggest that we should have a receptacle for this kind of rubbish in most of the carriages. I refer specially to the Janata trains which have got corridor carriages where the vendors travel from one end to the other and people go on purchasing *moongphli* and other things, eatings them and and other things, eating them and throwing the shells, peels, etc. on the floor. They should have a receptacle and the railway staff should advise the passengers to make use of the receptacle. I think this would definitely help us.

That also leads me to another point about travelling manners—pushing loud speaking, sitting on the seat with shoes on, etc.

Mr. Speaker: Can we check loud speaking here inside the Parliament?

Shri Krishnapal Singh: Here, of course, it is a qualification. But in the

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trains when a number of people are travelling together and talking loudly specially in the dining cars....

The Minister of Railways (Shri Swaran Singh): Here we have provided loud-speakers,

Shri Krishnapal Singh: I think it would be a good thing if the railway staff politely ask the passengers not to speak very loudly.

Shri Kashi Ram Gupta (Alwar): How can you do that when there is overcrowding?

Shri Krishnapal Singh: I think one of the reasons for loud speaking is overcrowding. They shout and push one another..

Shri Narendra Singh Mahida (Anand): You will have to conduct schools for passengers.

Mr. Speaker: When there is so much overcrowding, how will they be able to reach that *moongphli chilka* receptacle?

Shri Krishnapal Singh: That is why I say they will have to relieve this congestion first and then come to these details.

While speaking about sanitation, I would like to mention that some attention should be paid to the area near the railway station. Mathura is a very important town so far as pilgrimage is concerned. There is an open drain running along the road. Probably this is happening in other places also. When people get down at Mathura, the first impression they get about Mathura is a very unpleasant odour from the drain. It runs for about two furlongs. Railways are such a prosperous organisation that it can certainly afford to cover the drain or have an underground pipe which will carry the dirty water. I think that kind of thing would certainly add to the comfort of passengers who get down at the railway stations.

These are, Sir, two or three things which I wanted to mention. I would like, again, to emphasise that unless a survey has already been done it should be carried out now to see in what season in particular areas the volume of traffic increases and in what places there is congestion. Then the Railway authorities should make whatever arrangements are possible. I do not say that they can always succeed in providing as much accommodation as is required; but the best should be done, and if they are not successful in doing it, they must at least prevent people from sitting on the roofs of carriages or travelling on foot-boards. That certainly can be prevented. The trains should not be allowed to move if people are sitting on the roofs of carriages or are travelling on foot-boards. I hope the Railway Ministry will give some attention to this matter.

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): Sir, with your permission, I would like to speak very briefly on one or two points which I thought needed some clarification. A number of hon. friends, particularly the hon. Member, Shri Trivedi, spoke about the Railway Protection Force. He was of the opinion that this force was a useless force and it had done no useful work. As the hon. House is aware, this force was reorganised from the previous watch and ward to the Railway Protection Force in 1957. Today the strength of this force is 52,000 and it includes about 8,500 persons who are in, what is known as, the Armed Wing. They are armed with rifles and muskets. The annual pay bill on account of the Railway Protection Force is Rs. 5.84 crores.

I would like to place before the House some of the achievements of this force. In the year 1954, the number of running train thefts was 3,216. In 1962, the number has been brought down to 1,141 in spite of the traffic having doubled or trebled. Similarly, the number of yard thefts has been brought down from 1815 to 652, and

goods shed thefts from 802 to 483. In all, Sir, thefts on all these accounts—running train thefts, yard thefts and goods-shed thefts—have been brought down from a total of 5,633 to 2,276. That, I would like to submit, is a very great achievement. The best index would be the success or failure of the Railway Protection Force to bring down the amount of claims. The amount of claims paid by the Railways in 1950-51 was Rs. 3,11,73,000 and odd. In 1960-61 the amount paid was Rs. 3,34,77,000 and odd. It has been kept more or less at a stationary level during the last 10 or 11 years when the traffic has increased three or four times. If we look into the index of the claims for compensation, if we take 1950-51 as the base year and the figure for that year as 100, the figure for 1961-62 is 55.7, keeping in view the quantum of traffic carried, increase in prices etc. So, what the RPF has done is to bring down the claims by more than 40 per cent.

Then, my hon. friend has stated that we were not taking any action against RPF staff who were implicated or who were colluding in cases of theft. The RPF has been doing very good work in dealing with criminals. In the year 1962 they had to open fire on gangs of notorious criminals on 34 occasions and they succeeded in killing 17 of the worst type of criminals who used to come in big gangs to raid railway stations, sometimes armed with deadly weapons. We have been wiping out these gangs of criminals progressively, who habitually come and raid our trains.

Shri Nalendra Singh Mahida: Were any railway employees connected with any of these gangs?

Shri Shainawaz Khan: I will come to that shortly. The RPF have been doing very good work. They have been patrolling the yards and tracks and generally bringing down the crimes on railways. I had the pleasure of seeing them at work myself during the days when the emergency was at its height in the front areas

in Tezpur, NEFA and Naga Hills, standing shoulder to shoulder with their brethren of the defences forces. They are still doing very good work.

Shri Mahida wanted to know whether they were connected with any of the gangs of criminals. We must remember that it is a big force, and there are good men and bad men everywhere. I do not deny that there have been cases where there has been collusion between RPF and the criminal gangs. Whenever any case has come to our notice where there is any suspicion of collusion, we have taken the strongest action. In the year 1961 as many as 53 RPF staff were removed or dismissed from service. In the year 1962 we removed as many as 48 people from service on suspicion or because they were implicated in these cases.

The House would be glad to know that the strength of the RPF has been increased by six more battalions of what is known as Special Emergency Force, for which we are selecting all available officers from the retired army officers and some selected police officers. I hope we will be able to organise this force, train it and equip it so that it will be one of the crack forces of this country and, if need be, it can stand shoulder to shoulder with the defence forces and give a good account of itself.

My hon. friend, Shri Priya Gupta, who unfortunately is not present in the House now, complained that we are making indiscriminate use of rule 149. He feels that the railways are utilising this to curb trade union activities and to victimise good and honest trade union workers. I would like to dispel that doubt, because nothing could be farther from the truth. One of the cases in which rule 149 is used is when there is assault on supervisory staff. Since Shri Priya Gupta was a railway employee, he knows very well that when the railway employees get excited they start

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walking into the office of the works manager, sometimes threaten the officers and physically assault the supervisory staff. This sort of thing should not be allowed and we have to maintain a certain amount of discipline. It is only with that object of improving discipline and preventing such instances of assault on supervisory staff that in some cases this rule is being used. Then, in serious cases involving moral turpitude like assault on women and rape where we want the punishment to be quick and exemplary, we use this rule. Shri Priya Gupta saw nothing but all round corruption in the railways. It is only with a view to curb the corruption on railways that we make use of this rule. Then, the House is always very much exercised over accidents. Where accidents are due to failure of railway staff like negligence of duty where the safety of the travelling public is involved, we make use of this rule. In spite of all that, the number of cases in which railway employees have been punished under this rule is very small.

Then, a number of hon. Members have stated that there were accidents on the railways because railway employees were working for hundreds of hours at a stretch without being relieved. They all quoted the speech of one well-known trade union worker, Miss Maniben Kara, who quoted instances where station masters had been working at several stations for hundreds of hours without being relieved and stated that it was as a result of these long hours of over-work that many of these accidents take place. We analysed the number of accidents which had taken place during the last three years. Out of 6,000 accidents there were only two which could be attributed to long hours of work; others were for reasons other than that.

Shri Hanumanthalya (Bangalore City): Is it true that they were asked

to do hundreds of hours of continuous work?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: The section which was quoted is a branch line section where during the whole course of 24 hours two passenger trains and two goods trains pass through that station. Having passed one train he can go to sleep, have a pretty good rest and come back again when the next train comes. It is not continuous duty; it is very, very light duty.

Shri Kashi Ram Gupta: What about the duty of the driver?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: About the driver, the House is aware that after working for ten hours continuously a driver can give notice that he wants relief and after working for twelve hours he can ask to be relieved.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): But does he get it?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Yes, when he asks for it.

Shri Daji (Indore): No. Shrimati Maniben Kara has pointed out the case of a driver who had 50 hours continuous duty. Is that factual or correct or not?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: She talked about station masters only.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: She also said about drivers.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: A number of my hon. friends talked about the Railway administration not recognising certain unions and the permanent negotiating machinery (PNM) having proved a failure. I would like to submit that we have been having regular PNM meetings. I have been taking particular interest in them. Those meetings by and large have been successful not only at the Railway Board level but also at the General Manager's level and at the divisional level. But both sides at the

lower levels have to learn. In some cases our officers who are dealing at the lower levels did not have the requisite experience. On the other hand, the representatives of the trade unions who came to negotiate, they too did not show very much patience. They wanted to throw their weight about and say, "Now that we are on equal terms, we will talk like this." There is room for showing more courtesy. Negotiations are done very much better and they produce much better results if these are conducted in an atmosphere of cordiality and co-operation. We have tried to seek the co-operation of workers in workshops and whenever they have made any useful suggestions not only have we gratefully accepted those suggestions, but we have also been giving awards to people who have made useful suggestions in different workshops.

A number of hon. Members had criticized the Railway Administration for imposing this increase in freight charges. The freights and fares on the Indian Railways are the lowest of all the railways in the world. It will be interesting, if I may be allowed to give the actual figures, that the rate per ton kilometre on our Railways is 3.04 nP whereas in Burma it is 8.11 and in Ceylon it is 13.52.

Shri Kashi Ram Gupta: You should also compare the capacity to pay.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: It is the rate of comparable countries that I am quoting. I am not quoting the rates of America. I am quoting the rates of our neighbouring countries, like, Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan etc. Ours are the lowest rates in the world.

Then, one last word about departmental catering. A number of my hon. friends have spoken about departmental catering. Out of some 6,000 and odd railway stations, we have introduced departmental catering only at 97 stations. It is not as if we have ousted all the contractors

from all the stations. There are contractors working at 2500 stations on the Indian Railways. The House would be glad to learn that during the last few years the sales of departmental catering have increased from Rs. 1.7 and odd crores to Rs. 3 crores. The loss which many hon. Members said ran into lakhs of rupees during this year under review is only Rs. 11,000[-].

Shri Hanumanthaiya: You should give the correct figures ever since departmental catering at these 97 stations began, that is, for these five or six years.

Mr. Speaker: Only one hon. Member can be on his legs at a time. The hon. Minister is not giving way.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: My hon. friend knows that the standard meal that is served in the restaurants, in the dining car and in the refreshment rooms where you have approximately 16 ounces of rice, two vege-

Shri Hanumanthaiya: If the hon. Minister gives ground for a moment, I will be able to . . .

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I know what he wants to say. We give wholesome food. . . .

Shri Daji: Sub-standard meals.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: . . . for twelve annas, served in a nice *thali*. . . (Interruption).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. He has begun with the *thali*; let him come to the contents as well.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I have myself . . . (Interruption).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Hon. Members are not satisfied with the *thali* alone. They want something more.

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): It is stainless steel *thali*.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I have, without giving any prior intimation, personally visited refereshment rooms where I found hundreds of people having their meals. I have gone and asked them, "How do you like the food?" and they said, "Yes; we like it; it is good enough".... (*Interruption*).

An Hon. Member: Ask one of your colleagues, the hon. Deputy Minister. (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister is not yielding.... (*Interruption*):

श्री शिव नारायण (बासो) मैं माननीय
मंत्री जो से एक सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. He will kindly resume his seat. Hon. Members know that if one hon. Member is speaking and there is an interruption, only if he yields the interruption can be made. If he does not, I have no power. I cannot order him to sit down and listen to it.

Shri Daji: He is serving atrocious food during the lunch time. How can we digest it? We cannot digest it.

Mr. Speaker: He must have patience. Probably, he might come out with something better.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: For dinner.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: The House is probably aware that there has been some sort of lobbying, some sort of people going round and trying to canvass in favour of the private contractors.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad (Bhagalpur): Sir, I rise on a point of order. Can the hon. Deputy Minister cast an aspersion on us Members that we have been canvassed by private contractors and have therefore spoken in that way? He should rather take it back.

Mr. Speaker: I have understood the point of order; but there is none, I suppose. The difficulty is that he has not yet said that hon. Members have been going round.... (*Interruption*).

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: He has spoken of the hon. Members of this House.

Mr. Speaker: He has not used that word. He has said that there has been certain amount of lobbying. Lobbying is so general a term that it is not confined only to the Parliament Lobby. (*Interruption*). Order, order. I have been listening to him carefully. He has not said that hon. Members have been going round.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): But we do not have many other lobbies. (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I had in mind certain articles that had been appearing in the press, what people had been writing in the papers and all that. I meant that, I am only trying to explain our difficulties. (*Interruption*).

13 hrs.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order, now.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: The House is aware that we have allowed everybody including persons travelling in the third class to go into the dining cars and restaurant cars and have their meals. They come there in large numbers. (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: There is so much talking on all sides.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla (Mahasamund): I will take one minute.

Mr. Speaker: He does not yield. How can I allow him? If hon. Members do not attend, how can they relish the food that is presented in the thali? They ought to be just attentive. They must listen.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: Yesterday, one hon. Member said that he had asked for tea and it had not been served. Tea, if it is asked in trays, is served in trays. If somebody wants to have one cup served to him, there is the tea stall. One has to go to the tea stall and get tea from the tea stall. Tea from the stall is not served in trays.

The talks held by him with the King of Nepal.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): I went to Kathmandu on the 2nd of this month on an invitation from the Nepai Government and returned here yesterday after a stay of four days in Nepal.

In spite of all this, we have had complaints. We have analysed them. The average comes to 1 complaint for 12,000 meals that are served. Even one complaint, we take it, is bad enough. It is our constant endeavour to go on improving departmental catering. I would like to reiterate that we have no intention to give up departmental catering. We will bring it to the standard and see that people are satisfied. (*Interruption*).

I should like to express my deep sense of thankfulness to His Majesty the King of Nepal and His Majesty's Government for their kind invitation. I shall long cherish this visit as it was most pleasant and rewarding. I am also deeply grateful for the heart-warming reception and generous hospitality extended to me, and to those accompanying me, by the Government and people of Nepal.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: There is a catering school at Andheri. We are sending our people for getting training in cookery and service in this Andheri school so that we can give better service.

During my visit I had the benefit of meeting and having long and informal talks with His Majesty on several subjects of mutual interest. I also had several discussions with the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Hon'ble Dr. Giri. There were separate talks with the Hon'ble Home Minister of Nepal, Shri Vishwanath Thapa and I had the opportunity of meeting other Ministers of His Majesty's Government as well. While there was no specific agenda for these talks we discussed a variety of subjects. I should like to say that all these talks were very helpful and productive.

13.02 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE.

TALKS WITH THE KING OF NEPAL

Mr. Speaker: Shri Kamath may put his Calling Attention notice.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): My name is there.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. Shri Banerjee.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): That is what I thought.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

During my talks with His Majesty and His Majesty's Ministers, I apprised them of the situation prevailing in our region as it concerns India, and also of our assessment of the general world situation. I shared with them our anxieties resulting from this situation and conveyed to them our Government's desire for peace and friendship with all. I am inclined to think that our position is well understood by the Nepalese Government and it is recognised by all responsible people in Nepal, as indeed in India, that we have a stake in each other's well-being, prosperity and