

15.44 hrs.

RAILWAY BUDGET-GENERAL DIS-  
CUSSION—contd.

**Dr. Ranen Sen** (Calcutta East): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the railway is the most important transport in our country and the railway, compared to other departments, employs quite a large number of people. Therefore, the railway budget is considered to be a very important budget and generally, when the budget is delivered, all the newspapers flash the speech of the Railway Minister. What happened this time is that when our new Railway Minister, Shri S. K. Patil, made his speech, introducing the railway budget, most of the Indian newspapers called it a gloomy budget. It was a gloomy budget because of two things: first, it did not hold out any bright prospect for the railways. Secondly, on the other hand, it held out a threat, a menace, of further increase in fares and freights. So, all the newspapers had commented upon it and therefore I say that I cannot wholly support the Railway Minister in all the proposals he has made.

There is an indication of complacency, and one of our hon Members was saying that the railway budget also suffers from complacency in one respect. Instead of trying to find out what are the difficulties standing in the way of fall in traffic and freight earnings, the Railway Minister has tried to give a picture which is nothing but a reflection on our national economy. The coal production is a little down undoubtedly. But steel production is going up. What is the reason for these things not being transported by our railways? Why the businessmen or the tradesmen do not take recourse to the railways for transporting the high-rated commodities now-a-days? In the report given by the Railway Board, there is a mention that there is a thing called road transport and that there is competition with

road transport. It has been brought to the notice of the Railway Ministry last year also that there is this phenomenon of road transport, how it is competing with the railways and how it offers greater service to the businessmen and to the ordinary people. But, in spite of that, and though it was being talked about for the last two years, in the report and in all the papers that have been placed before us, there is no concrete suggestion as to how to improve the transportation system of the railways and how to stand any competition against the road transport. It is a very serious matter. The General Managers of the Zonal Railways, wherever we have gone and met them, have all admitted that this is a very serious matter, and unless the railway administration or the railway authorities do something about it, there may not be any appreciable rise in the freight earnings.

There is another aspect which is very patent in the railways. There is a large number of officers in all the railways, and the common man gets the impression that at least some of the officers if not most of them do not have enough work to do. I want to say that this aspect has also been discussed in this House for the last two or three years, this aspect of top-heavy administration. Instead of looking into these things, the railway authorities have a tendency to overlook such things as top-heavy administration. There is a large amount of wastage and pilferage in the railways. In connection with the session of the Indian National Congress, a station was built there. What was the cost in building that station, I do not know, but it would have been at least Rs. 1 lakh.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravarty** (Barackpore): It was Rs. 4 lakhs.

**Dr. Ranen Sen:** After this station was built, it was demolished. I do-

[Dr. Ranen Sen]

not say they should not build a station for a big function like the session of the Indian National Congress; let them build it. But a member of the Congress Working Committee stated in public that that station was meant for the public. When he was making the statement, the station was being demolished or it was almost completely demolished. This is one instance of wastage. It was reported in newspapers that in one year nearly Rs. 1 crores were pilfered from Delhi area alone and it was detected. So, it can be safely assumed that another Rs. 9 crores worth of pilferage has not been detected.

I admit that railways have some good aspects and there is something to their credit, but there is still room for improvement. The Minister suggested increasing passenger fares and freight rates in order to make both ends meet. The present tendency in the country is as soon as there is increase in taxation anywhere this is also a sort of taxation—immediately there is rise in prices. This is going on for the last many years in this country and the Government is aware of it. There is no taxation on kerosene by our Finance Minister and Mr. Patil also did not increase freight on kerosene. But still somehow or other the price rose in certain parts of India, including Calcutta. So, even when there is no increase in the rate, prices go up. So, if there is an actual addition in freight rate, the prices go up all the more immediately. Government has no mechanism to check the rise in prices. There is neither a fiscal policy nor any penal measure to check blackmarketeers and profiteers.

According to the figures available, the increase in passenger fares will yield Rs. 13.5 crores and that on freight will yield Rs. 6.7 crores. I made a calculation. For a man travelling from Calcutta to Delhi in third class, the increase in fare will be Rs. 2. During the last ten years, there has been a steady increase;

it cannot be denied. If every second or third year there is increase in passenger fare or freight rate, that adds to the sufferings of the millions. Not only the actual railway users are affected, but the common public who never go near the railways—there are lakhs like that—are also affected because of the rise in prices. This has been our unfortunate experience in the last ten years.

The total increase brings a revenue of Rs. 20.2 crores. Was it necessary? Not at all. The railways have always been over-capitalised. Nearly Rs. 3000 crores are invested in railways. Previously they used to pay 4 per cent, then 4.25 and then 4.5 per cent to the general revenues. Then it was decided that for the additional slab of capital invested in railways, the percentage would be 5.75. Already the railway is a very paying concern. We will be paying more than Rs 100 crores—Rs. 103 or Rs. 104 crores to the general revenue in 1965-66. Two or three years back it was Rs. 60 or 70 or 80 crores only. Suddenly there is a jump to Rs. 103 crores.

On the top of this, for the depreciation reserve fund, the appropriation would be Rs. 85 crores. Even after this the classing balance will be Rs. 71.90 crores. Besides this, the revenue reserve fund will have a closing balance of Rs. 63 crores in 1965-66. So, we can see how the whole finance of the railways is working. I have no objection if they pay Rs. 103 crores to the exchequer. Otherwise, the Finance Minister will come forward with another indirect taxation. But why this huge amount of Rs. 85 crores to the depreciation reserve fund? I know Mr. Patil will say that this was the decision of the Parliament in 1963. But may I say, in 1963 the railway budget was not as gloomy as it is today. So, this Parliament decided like that. Now we can rescind that decision, because there is financial difficulty for the railways. Let the Minister come forward and say that so much need not

be appropriated this year for the depreciation reserve fund; let us appropriate only Rs. 65 or 70 crores. Then these increases in fare and freight yielding Rs. 20 crores will not be there. We are gradually switching over to diesel and electric traction from steam traction. Steam locomotive has lesser longevity than diesel or electric locomotives. So, this huge amount of Rs. 85 crores is not needed for depreciation reserve fund.

16 hrs.

Therefore, my suggestion is this. Easily the Railway Minister, by exercising his imagination and a little sympathy for the common people, can reduce the sum to Rs. 65 crores or Rs. 70 crores. If at all any passenger fare has to be increased, let it be borne by the upper strata of people who travel in air-conditioned coaches or in first-class. Let them be taxed. Out of this Rs. 13 crores and odd that the Railways will be getting due to this fare increase, more than Rs. 10 crores will be paid by the third class passenger. It is known to everybody. Exempt them. We are talking so much about giving relief to the people. Let there be a beginning somewhere. Here is a place where you can make a beginning. Therefore, it is not at all difficult to cut out Rs. 10 crores from this Depreciation Reserve Fund. In case of any emergency there is the Renewal Reserve Fund with a balance of Rs. 63 crores at the end of 1965-66. In this Depreciation Reserve Fund also you will have Rs. 61 crores if you exempt the third-class passengers only. They are poor people. Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad was pleading for the third-class passengers. Everybody would feel for them and I hope our Ministers will also feel for them (Interruption).

I would like to say a few words in connection with the passenger amenities. It was decided by this Parliament that every year not less

than a sum of Rs. 3 crores would be spent on passenger amenities. It is our decision and it was probably the decision of our predecessors also. But this amount that is sanctioned is hardly spent. At the same time, I must say that compared to the period 15 years back, passenger amenities for third-class passengers have increased to a great extent. It is a fact. There is no denying that fact. But the point is, why is it that the allotted sum cannot be spent? What was the difficulty? Nowadays money can be spent like anything. I do not ask the Railway Minister to spend the money like anything. What I say is that it should be spent on passenger amenities. I have got some figures here. Till 1962-63 there was an unspent sum of Rs. 3.7 crores under this head and in 1964-65 a sum of Rs. 64 lakhs could not be spent on passenger amenities imagine what amenities could have been provided for the third-class passengers with this sum of Rs. 4 crores! When the Minister presented the Budget he was completely oblivious of these difficulties of the passengers and the difficulties experienced by the people. Therefore, he did not mention anything about this point that there is room for certain improvements in the already existing set-up. I would, therefore, suggest that passenger amenities or users amenities is a thing which should be seriously taken up by the railway authorities.

Then I come to the question of the construction of circular railways in Calcutta. It is known to everybody in this House that Calcutta has become a horrible city nowadays. We are from Calcutta, born and brought up in Calcutta. During the last 15 years life in Calcutta has become horrible. Leaving aside other things like high prices, failure of the municipality and others, transport difficulty there is probably the worst in India. We have been to Bombay, Madras, Bangalore and other cities. We have seen the crowds there. But

[Dr. Ranen Sen]

the Calcutta crowd cannot be compared to the crowd in any other city in India. Long before, there was a proposal that there would be a circular railway in Calcutta. That will relieve a part of the congestion in the city of Calcutta. Then the whole idea was dropped for reasons unknown to us. Again the idea was resuscitated by the present Chief Minister and the Finance Minister of West Bengal. The whole West Bengal Assembly unanimously passed a resolution praying for a circular railway in Calcutta. Then it was probably said by the Railway Board that for making survey and other things somebody will have to bear the cost. The question was as to who will bear the cost. The Calcutta metropolitan authorities have also made this proposal for a circular railway because underground railway is almost impossible in that city. The West Bengal Government said that they are prepared to bear all the cost that is necessary for the survey of this whole thing. It is said—I do not know how far it is true—that our Railway Minister has told the representatives of the West Bengal Government that the Railway Board is not prepared to spend Rs. 5 crores because there will be a recurring loss of Rs. 5 crores—I do not know whether it is Rs. 5 crores, Rs. 10 crores or even Rs. 2 crores. This is the story that is going round in Calcutta. Calcutta is a metropolitan city where all kinds of people from all parts of India come, work and live. They have been living there for generations. Calcutta city is expanding but the transport is not expanding. A circular railway in Calcutta, as I said, will only relieve a part of the congestion and not the whole of it. Therefore, a circular railway in Calcutta has become essential and I hope that the Railway Minister will pay his kind attention to this.

Another point is in regard to the railway link between Tripura and

India and West Bengal. Assam nowadays is developing very fast. It will develop faster.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh):** Tripura is part of India.

**Dr. Ranen Sen:** But it is completely isolated. There is no physical connection. Our Members from Tripura come here by plane. There is only one railway connecting Dharamnagar with certain parts of Assam. We have been to that part of the country and we know the topography. Also therefore, there should be proper construction of railways in Assam area. Now there is a metre gauge railway. I do not say that immediately, in the next year or so, the railway authorities will be able to do these things. But these things should be kept in mind. A metre gauge railway means 35 per cent less capacity to carry. Therefore, Assam should be linked up with the rest of India by a broad gauge system and Tripura should be linked up with Assam and the rest of India. As I said it is developing very fast and if the transport facilities are not improved there will be difficulty.

Sir, I had forgotten to mention one thing and that is about accidents. The Railway Minister has taken credit for lesser number of accidents this year. The figure has now come to 14. Some two years back the Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee have made certain recommendations. I hope those recommendations will be accepted by the Railway Ministry, because most of them are very good. Some of us have appeared before that Committee and given our suggestions. In order to avoid, minimise or lessen the number of accidents, the Railway Ministry should think of measures other than those recommended by that Committee also.

In conclusion I say that the Railway Ministry should give a second thought to the proposals which they

have placed before the House, in the light of our comments.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would request hon. Members to be brief.

**Shrimati Yashoda Reddy** (Kurnool): Mr. Chairman, Sir, let me at the very outset congratulate our Railway Minister, Shri S. K. Patil. We have had him in various capacities and this time he is the undisputed monarch of the vast railway empire. He will, I hope, be not only the undisputed but the most benevolent and most satisfying monarch of the empire. I call it an empire because it is the biggest public sector undertaking in India and one of the biggest railway concerns in the world. It employs nearly 1½ million people which, as the hon. Railway Minister has himself stated, is nearly one-fiftieth of the population of India.

There has been some criticism by some of our friends here about the very minute increase in fares. Let me at the very outset say that for once I categorically support the hon. Minister in all his demand for a slight rise in both passenger and freight rates. I say this even though I know that every additional cost, whether it is one paisa or half a paisa, is going to raise the cost of living and, thereby, the burden of the people. I know it. But, at the same time, we should know that nearly Rs. 3,000 crores of our money has been invested in our railways and the railways have to give some return to the government. The railways are paying to the government nearly Rs. 100 crores every year. This is the only public sector undertaking which can proudly say that year after year it has been paying dividends to the government, to the general fund, a regular return. The railways should be proud of it. I am sure that nobody, not even our opposition members, who are ardent admirers and canvassers of the public sector, would like to have a public sector project which is not solvent and which is not paying a dividend. The

other day I was reading a report in the newspapers about the failures of public sector undertakings. That report is in fact a great compliment to the Railway Minister and his Ministry. It says:

“The public sector undertakings, Central ones more than those under the State Governments, have failed to fulfil the expectations of the Plan-makers that they, excluding the Railways, would be able to mobilize resources of the order of Rs. 450 crores from their own working for the Third Plan.

Only the Railways are well on the road to fulfilling their targeted contribution of Rs. 100 crores excluding extra earnings from increased fares and freight, for the Plan.

Of the expected contribution of Rs. 450 crores from undertakings other than the Railways, Central enterprises are to produce Rs. 300 crores and State enterprises Rs. 150 crores.”

The railways can legitimately take pride that a public sector undertaking, and that too the biggest in the country, is maintaining this position. I hope it will continue to maintain this position.

16.15 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Coming to the increase in passenger and freight rates, having supported them, I would like to say that the increase certainly falls on third class passengers, even though the impact on a passenger may be less than 5 or 3 paise. That should not be forgotten by the Government while providing amenities to the travelling public. To those who criticise this rise may I point out that our rates are the lowest in the world, whether we take the countries in the east or the west. One of my Swatantra

[Shrimati Yashoda Reddy]

friends was saying that in the foreign countries, especially in the western countries, the passenger rates and freight rates are falling. They should remember that even after this increase our rates compare very favourably with the rates prevailing in those countries.

**Shri Priya Gupta (Katihar)** What about the national income of those countries? Whereas our National Income is the lowest.

**Shrimati Yashoda Reddy:** Day in and day out members here demand more passenger and goods trains and more amenities to the travelling public. At the same time, they do not want to pay any money for the provision of such facilities. Where will that money come from? So, even to that criticism there should be a limit. Particularly this year when in the general budget the Finance Minister has not imposed any extra levy, we should be willing to pay a little extra to the railways, especially when we ask for more and more facilities.

While I am on this subject I cannot help referring to over-crowding in trains, to which reference has been made by many members. It is no doubt true that the number of trains has been increased greatly of late. I do not deny it. All the same, over-crowding continues not only in trains but even in platforms. It is rather sickening to see most of the big platforms crowded with big packages or boxes which are yet to be kept inside sickening to see most of the big platforms. When we are in a great hurry to enter a train, because most of the trains stop at intermediate stations only for a minute or two we have not only to push and jostle people on the platform but also steer clear of the luggages lying scattered in the platforms. I hope the Railway Ministry will issue instructions to the station masters to see that the platforms are kept clean and free of luggage.

Though the number of trains has been increased, there has been no relief from over-crowding, particularly for the third-class passengers. In addition to that, there is blackmarket in tickets, on which so many letters to the editors have appeared in the newspapers. Though we, as Members of Parliament, may not be buying tickets for at least five years, we come across instances where our friends or relatives have to travel by train and they are not able to get the tickets when they go to the counter. But, invariably, at the last minute the ticket is available for a consideration, for the payment of Rs. 5 or 15. Of course, I do not want to reveal the names but this is a fact. I know that the Government or the Railway Ministry for that matter cannot control or stop it completely, because it depends upon the social conscience of the people. Yet, it can at least ensure that these malpractices do not increase. Control the official side of it. Last year, the then Deputy Minister of Railways, Shri S. V. Ramaswamy, brought a Bill to curb blackmarketing in railway tickets. I would like to know what the Government or the Railways have been able to achieve because of this Bill being passed.

About the slow movement and late coming of trains, the moment Shri Patil took over as Railway Minister he said that he would improve the timings of the trains and would make them faster. I am very glad of the sample which he has introduced, namely, the Taj Express, which goes at about the speed of 70 kilometres an hour. Maybe that it is only the first sample that he has given us. I wish him good luck. With a little more capital, money and clearing away of the foreign exchange difficulties, I hope, he will introduce more and more faster trains as well as electric trains.

I was reading in the papers that in Japan they are having trains

which run at superspeed of nearly 200 kilometres an hour almost competing with most aircrafts. Today we, in India, cannot expect or dream of such things, but I hope slowly and steadily Shri Patil will put the Railways on such a footing that in the near future at least we in India will be proud of having very fast and safe trains.

Shri Patil said in his speech that accidents are less. Of course, accidents are less this year. I remember what I myself once said about the Railways jocularly, that even if they did not contribute anything else they were contributing to the Indian nation a way of solving the population problem by killing people through accidents. That was the negative contribution and unwanted one. No doubt I said it jocularly and the Railway Minister had taken it very nicely. I am glad to say that they have stopped doing this negative service to the nation, I wish they will maintain it.

Then, I would like to make one suggestion for a little more levy on the platform ticket. When a person or family goes to some place, you see so many people—uncles, aunts, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters; so many people—going to see them off as if they are people who are not going to return afterwards. After all, Railways do not have enough money. People are prepared to pay 10 paise. Therefore, why do you not tax these people more? Mostly they are not poor people. All these people have nothing to do. They go to the railway station for *tamasha*. So, I say that you must charge more for the platform ticket. If you can control crowding on the platforms and also give greater concessions to the third class passengers by this method, I will be very happy.

Then, they have improved the trains in many ways, but what I am not able to understand is why at a starting point, like a junction station at Madras, Hyderabad or Delhi, there are so many defects to be found in

the trains. I think, you should try to see that at least at the starting point it is not there.

Now I would like our hon. Minister, through you, to convey our congratulations to our engineers and to the Railway people who have in a miraculous way restored the Pamban Bridge. I hope the House will give me a hand in giving my appreciation to these people. We know what havoc Nature had wrought. I am sorry to say that Railway Ministry had to suffer at the hands of students for a different reason and they are having to pay for all this. But Railway Ministry, their engineers and all their workers have rebuilt this bridge beyond the expectations of anybody, even of the greatest optimist. I was glad to hear yesterday on the radio that your first train has passed over it and I really congratulate you.

Secondly, though it is a minute thing, the way the Railway Minister gave a free lift to the deaf and the dumb people to see the Taj shown that our Minister is not only a man with a head but is certainly a man with a heart. These small things go a long way.

You have made one more contribution of which we are very proud. You have contributed Dr. Suri, one of our best scientists. You have also held the Indian Flag high by sending our Olympic hockey stars. We are proud of you and of the young men and women in the Railways. Let us have more of them. We heard about three years back of a Channel swimmer, a Railway lady. We appreciate that. Please convey our greatest appreciation to your people.

I congratulate the Railways for the new South Central Zone. For nearly ten years we had been asking for it. I certainly do not agree with people who say that it was brought about by political considerations. Shri S. K. Patil is the last person to do this and if it had been a political thing, he

[Shrimati Yashoda Reddy]

would have very diplomatically avoided it. He must have had in mind the operational and administrative efficiency of the Railways when he brought in this new zone.

I hear that some people are not satisfied with the zonal area. These are minor matters about which if he can satisfy everybody in consultation with your officers, do something, it will be all right.

Then, regarding the road-cum-railway bridge on Godavari about which you have mentioned, the Government of India is rather funny. They start a thing and do not look into it from the economic point of view. Here is a bridge which you are building at the cost of about Rs. 2 crores or Rs. 3 crores. I believe, by adding another Rs. 1 crore or Rs. 2 crores, you can have not only a railway bridge but a rail-cum-road bridge. I understand, the State Government is prepared to pay Rs. 1 crore and at the most Government will have to pay only Rs. 1 crore more. After all, the Centre or the State, all of you, work for the welfare of the country. The Centre is not exclusive; one is not working for a different nation. So, I only appeal that the Railway Ministry, the Transport Ministry, and the Finance Ministry should sit together and also consult the State Governments. Besides the contribution of the State Government, whatever extra money the Government of India gives can be taken through toll charges or whatever it is.

Then, I would like to support one suggestion by the Swatantra Member about the Rayalaseema area. About 30 years back there was a survey about the Nandyal-Cuddapah-Rayachoti-Pakala line which connects three districts which have no access to Hyderabad. This may kindly be taken note of action taken.

About the ladies' compartment when I appealed last time to Shri Jagjivan Ram that ladies' compartments may be put in the middle of the train and not in the beginning or the end of the train, he had given instructions to that effect. But now I see that they put them at the end, far off, and sometimes ladies or children are not able to get anything because the vendors do not go there.

Then, the third class two-tier or three-tier sleeping coach for ladies does not have a separate compartment, in third class.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee** (Kanpur): There are.

**Shrimati Yashoda Reddy**: I speak subject to correction.

**Shri Priya Gupta**: Lady Conductor TTE be also provided.

**Shrimati Yashoda Reddy**: I do not want to ask for unnecessary things. We are confident of men in India and of the Railway officers. But we would like at least sleeping accommodation in train should be separate, I believe that you have reserved only some berths. Instead of that you can reserve a small compartment, but it should be separate.

About the concessions for students, only in Delhi you have given the forms to institutions. I have got reports that unless they go to the Divisional Superintendent's Office, they do not get the forms in other places. So, I suggest that not only at the headquarters but at every educational institution please keep the forms, some sort of a book or pass, with the stamp of the institution or the principal to show that one is a genuine student. The concession should be available not only when he is going to school or coming back but also when he makes any travel for studies; sometimes he would like to see the country also and, after



all, you must give some special concessions to the students and make them easily available.

Lastly, I would like to say that Shri Patil in whom we have great confidence is a man of action. He knows to get things done not only diplomatically but also successfully. Of his two lieutenants, Dr. Ram Subhag Singh follows Shri Patil. It is a good combination. Shri Sham Nath is the youngest of the three ministers. I hope, the three of them together, like the three musketeers, will be able to do good work. I thank you very much.

**Shri A. P. Sharma (Buxar):** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, although I have to make a few suggestions regarding the working of the Railways apart from dealing with the labour problems on the Indian Railways, I would now be contented, with a little time at my disposal, to deal mostly with the labour problems.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Railway Minister for presenting another surplus Budget this year also. No doubt, in this House, there has been a little criticism about the increase in fares of the Railways, particularly the passenger fares. But looking at the performance of the Railways in the year 1964, we can very well be contented with the Railway Administration. The Railway Ministry has made a tremendous improvement in developing its transport capacity, particularly in principal sectors like coal, Iron and other raw materials that are transported to the Steel Plants. They have retained the same rates for the foodgrains this year although, at the same time, they have made certain reductions in the freight of cotton piece goods. There are some of the praiseworthy steps that the Railway administration has taken in this direction.

Now, at the same time, I would like to draw their attention towards losses incurred by the Railways in the year 1964. If you look at the figure

which is Rs. 11.58 crores and odd during 1964, it is definitely more than that of the previous year. This is definitely not an encouraging feature and, I hope, the Railway Ministry will look into this matter and will not only try to eliminate these losses but also fix up the responsibility on the people responsible for these losses and see that they are recovered from them.

I have also to say something regarding the speeding-up of the running of the trains. As I said earlier, I would not like to go into greater details. I would simply say something about two trains, particularly 11 UP and 12 Down, Delhi-Howrah Express and Calcutta-Madras Mail. I have also spoken about this in the Railway Consultative Committee meeting. I suggest that unnecessary stoppages for these two trains, between Kanpur and Allahabad, should be eliminated. After all, we pay for the Mail/Express trains and we should not be made to travel by slow trains. If it is necessary, a slow train or a passenger train may be introduced on this section. Similarly, I would like to make a suggestion about Calcutta-Madras Mail. I do not know whether you have travelled by that train between Bezwada and Waltair. This is worse than a passenger train or a goods train, the speed perhaps being less than 20 miles an hour, on an average. Therefore, I would request the Railway Minister to see that similar provision should be made there, namely, that the unnecessary stoppages at smaller stations by these trains should be eliminated and, if necessary, local passenger trains should be run to facilitate the travelling of the local people.

I would like to make one more suggestion about the amenities to be provided for the long distance passengers between Calcutta and Delhi, Delhi and Bombay, Delhi and Madras and the like. I would suggest that the Railway administration should examine the possibility of providing radio sets in the trains in order to break the monotony of long distance passengers. Also,

[Shri A. P. Sharma]

wireless telephone system should be provided as an urgent means of communication. These are some of the suggestions I have in mind regarding providing greater facilities and making the journey more comfortable for the long distance passengers.

I will now come to the report of the Das Commission according to which dearness allowance has been paid to the Railway workers. According to the report of the Das Commission, the lowest paid employees on the Railways have been compensated only to the extent of 90 per cent as against the demand of the labour organisations for being compensated to the extent of hundred per cent. Moreover, these Railway employees have been paid dearness allowance only upto 145 points whereas the latest rise in prices accepted by the Government is 163 points. Therefore, it is not justified that the Railway Ministry, being such a big employer, should pay to their employees dearness allowance only upto 145 points.

Again, the Das Commission has also recommended that the employees drawing salaries between Rs. 600 and Rs. 1290 per month, should be paid dearness allowance. They have made a definite recommendation regarding this giving their reasons for it, that whatever little cushion these categories of employees had at the time of the Second Pay Commission recommendations has either completely disappeared or has shrunk to almost negligible limit. Therefore, to say that it was not within the competence or terms of reference of this Commission and that is why the employees will not be paid dearness allowance is not correct and, I hope, the Railway Ministry, while presenting a surplus Budget, will definitely look into this aspect and see that their employees are kept contented.

There is one thing more regarding the formula of the calculation of the dearness allowance. I would like to

say that the formula recommended by the Second Pay Commission has absolutely become obsolete and outmoded. The Second Pay Commission sat during the year 1957 and at that time they recommended 10 points rise for 12 months. But today that position does not hold good. Therefore, this formula also should be revised. This is the unanimous demand of all the labour organisations and particularly I am speaking on behalf of the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen. If the Railways want that their employees should be satisfied and that they should put their head and heart in their work, then it is absolutely necessary that they should be paid dearness allowance according to the latest cost of living index.

I would also like to say a word about subsidised grainshops to be provided for the Railway employees. There is a decision of the Tripartite Labour Conference that whenever there are 300 workers employed by a particular industry, the employer should provide a fair price shop. I can say in this House that the Railway administration has not opened a single fair price shop. They have opened certain cooperative societies. They talk about helping the cooperative societies. I want to say that running of the cooperative societies may provide a long-term relief to the Railway workers but that will not solve the immediate problem. Therefore, we are of the opinion, so far as the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen is concerned, that any amount of dearness allowance paid to the Railway workers or other industrial workers or the Central Government employees as a whole, will not solve their problem unless and until the foodgrains and other essential commodities are provided at subsidised rates through the departmentally run grains shops by the Railway administration. The Railway administration may talk about not running these shops because they feel that they have, in the past, incurred some losses. But just a little while ago I talked about

the total losses that the Railway administration has incurred in the running of the whole administration. Are they going to give up the running of the administration because they have sustained losses? My submission is that, instead of talking about losses, efforts should be made to minimise and eliminate the losses. This should not be the reason on account of which the Railway will not open the grains shops. If they want the Railway employees to be contented who man the Railways—the Railway Ministry deserves appreciation for their performance in 1964—and it is the Railwaymen who are responsible for that, they must come out and provide necessary things for their employees.

Sir, I have very carefully read the speech of the hon. Minister, Mr. S. K. Patil. He is a dynamic person and he has also got a stout colleague like Dr. Ram Subhag Singh to support him, who is known for his mercy for the have-nots. I am very sorry to say that I was very unhappy to read his reply in Rajya Sabha, in which he has completely ruled out a wage board for the railway workers. I may say something why there should be a wage board for the railway employees. The first and second pay commissions have failed to solve the problems of the railway workers in regard to the various unsatisfactory conditions. Moreover, instead of solving their problems, they have created some discrepancies and anomalies. There is no common ground between civil service and the railway transportation industry. The conditions of work on the Indian Railways are totally different as compared to other services. Railways are spread over the whole country and the work is round the clock. Therefore, a separate wage board is a solution for solving the problems of the railway employees and I hope that at the time of reply to the Lok Sabha our Hon. Minister will take into account the feeling of the railwaymen because this is a unanimous demand of the railway workers that there should be a separate wage board for them.

Our hon. Minister has expressed his happiness about labour relations between the Railway Administration and the railway labour in 1964. No doubt, I agree with him. But I want to say in this House that the credit for this should not go to the Railway Administration. You will be surprised and the House will be surprised as to how the railwaymen in this country—whether they belong to this federation or the other federation—have been consistently provoked by the railway administration in matters of settling their disputes at the highest level, at the Board's level. The Railway Ministry, as a Government, claim that they have the right to have the final say in matters of labour problems and disputes. We have repeatedly been protesting against this. We have got a permanent negotiating machinery. This machinery works at three levels—at the Divisional level, at the General Manager's level and at the Railway Board's level. According to the provisions of this machinery itself, any matter which is not settled at the Board's level and if that matter is important then it should be referred to a tribunal set up for the particular purpose. In the past we had one such tribunal presided by Justice Shankar Saran. At that time the Railway Ministry never raised the question as to who will decide whether the subject is of sufficient importance to be referred to the tribunal or not. Take the case of casual labourers. They are the lowest paid workers in the Central Government. The fate of the casual labour is worse. The Railway Ministry has about 4 lakh workers who are employed at the rate of Rs. 1/25; Rs. 1/50; Rs. 1/75- Rs. 2/- and Rs. 2/25 per day. Besides that, there are no other service conditions for them. The old system of hire and fire still continues on the ground that the work is of casual nature. On the question of fixation of wages of these workers who are the lowest class of workers, the Railway Ministry does not want to face arbitration. I want to tell the Railway Minister and his Ministry that if the Railway Ministry being a Government refuses to refer such

[Shri A. P. Sharma]

problems to arbitration, there will be no justification for this Government to ask the private employers to face a tribunal or arbitration. It will be very much ridiculous.

I would like to make another suggestion for the consideration of the Railway Minister. In his speech he said that the Railway Ministry has constructed about 47,760 houses for the railway workers in the last three years—1963-64; 1964-65 and 1965-66. There are more than 12 lakhs of railway workers in this country and if the railways continue to construct houses at this rate, it will take another 50 years to provide housing accommodation to all the railway employees. And you can just imagine to what extent the number of railway employees will increase during the next fifty years in view of the expansion of the Indian railways. Therefore, my humble suggestion is that the Railway Ministry should acquire land for constructing houses. They should develop those plots of lands at various places and give small pieces of land to the railway workers and also loans to be deducted in suitable instalments from the pay of the employees. In this way, every railway employee will be in a position to own a house by the time he retires.

I would like to say a word about the discontent prevailing amongst the railway officers. Whenever we talk about railway officers in the trade unions, we have our mouths shut and we are told that we could talk only about class III and class IV employees. But here on the floor of the House, I want to tell that the personnel management on the Indian Railways is a very wonderful department. All over the world, personnel management has great importance but here in the railways, anybody can become a personnel officer, and there is no proper cadre of personnel management in the railways. Such an important subject should not be dealt with in such a casual manner and I would request the Railway Minister to kindly create

a personnel management cadre on the Indian railways.

I would like to say a word now about the pattern of promotion for the officers of the railways. There are various departments in the railways, but I would like to talk particularly about the civil engineering and traffic and transportation departments. In these two departments, the pattern of promotion is such that if the Railway Administration themselves try to find that out, they will come to know that right up to the rank of the head of the department, what to talk of the deputies, everybody is dissatisfied, and, therefore, my suggestion is that there should be a uniform pattern of promotion for these officers.

Now, I would refer to the recruitment of temporary classless officers on the Indian Railways. You know that the railways are expanding in this country and, therefore, they have to recruit enough number of engineers and traffic officials. On the one side we say that there is dearth of engineers, but on the Indian railways, these officers are kept in a temporary capacity for a number of years. I should say that sometimes these officers remain temporary for a period of eight to ten years. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs on the railways. You would be surprised to know that although we have not been able to create a classless society in this country, the Railway Administration has been able to create a classless cadre of officers on the Indian Railways. They are called classless officers because they are neither in class I nor in class II, nor are they in any administrative or senior scale posts. They have not been allotted to any regular class or scale and they are kept temporary for a number of years. I would, therefore, request Shri S. K. Patil and Dr. Ram Subhag Singh that they should look into the plight of these temporary officers who are mostly responsible for all the huge constructions that are being carried on. If they would look into the cases of these engineers, they will find

enough justification to remove the difficulty of these officers.

I thank you for the few minutes' extra time that you have given me, but my hon. friend Shri Sonavane who is sitting here just now is reminding me about the new zones. At the time when the Railway Minister announced the formation of the new zone, I asked a question in this House as to what was going to happen about the difficulties of the staff, and the hon. Minister had said that the facilities for the staff would far outweigh the difficulties. My hon. friend Shri Sonavane is reminding me that the people there in Sholapur are very much agitated on account of the partition of the division. The creation of the new zone has only been announced, and I do not know how much time it will take to come into existence, but I hope that at the time of the actual creation of the new zone, the hon. Minister will look into all these difficulties.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** We shall resume this debate after the questions on the calling-attention-notice which we shall take up now.

16.48 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER  
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE  
—Contd.

INTRUSION OF PAKISTANI PERSONNEL  
INTO KUTCH—Contd.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (देवास) : मैं एक व्यवस्था का प्रश्न उठाना चाहता हूँ। इसी वक्तव्य को राज्य सभा में पढ़ दिया गया था और यहाँ पर इस को टेबल पर रख दिया गया था। जब एक सदन के भन्दर पड़ा जाता है तो दूसरे सदन के भन्दर क्यों टेबल पर रखा जाता है? यह कह कर इस को सदन पटल पर रखा गया है कि यह काफी लम्बा है। कल स्वास्थ्य मंत्री की

घोर से इस से भी एक लम्बा वक्तव्य यहाँ पढ़ा गया था। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि आखिर क्यों इस को इतना लम्बा कह कर टाल दिया गया, पढ़ा क्यों नहीं गया।

मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि इस प्रश्न के सम्बन्ध में पाकिस्तान सरकार से जो पत्र व्यवहार हुआ है उस को यहाँ मेज पर रखा जाये जिस में कि सदन को भी पूरी जानकारी मिले। अब मैं प्रश्न पूछता हूँ। चूँकि गुजरात सरकार इस सीमा की रक्षा करने में विफल रही है तो क्या इस को केन्द्रीय सरकार सेंट्रल पुलिस को सुपुर्द करने वाली है। जिन इलाकों में सड़कें बनाई गई हैं वह कितनी लम्बी हैं और कितने समय में वह बनाई गई हैं। क्या यह बात सही है कि इस क्षेत्र में तेल पाया गया है, और इसी कारण से पाकिस्तान सरकार इस क्षेत्र पर नजर लगाये बैठी है।

**The Minister of External Affairs (Shri Swaran Singh):** Sir, about the placing of the statement on the Table of the House I am entirely in the hands of the House, and if the House wanted me to read it, it would have given me pleasure. (Interruptions)

श्री हुकमचन्द कछवाय : मैं ने कहा था।

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Order, order. You can come to the criticism.

**Shri Swaran Singh:** About the other things that the hon. Member has asked, one thing is whether any road has been built and if so, what is the length. I want to clarify that there is no road at all. What has happened is this. Vehicles when they passed over certain tracts, left those impressions and that is the track. In the 1st paragraph I have said that. The Pakistani patrols and our patrols were patrolling this area. In the north of the track they prevented the patrolling of our patrols. This is the type of thing which was described in the first paragraph