

[Shri Shahnawaz Khan]

are making preliminary enquiries. From the nature of the evidence collected so far, it is suspected to be a case of tampering with the track. The Government Inspector of Railways would be holding his statutory enquiry into this accident.

The Government have issued necessary instructions to the Railway administrations that all possible steps should be taken to provide the maximum relief and succour to those who have suffered in this unfortunate accident.

The Hon. Minister of Railways is flying to the site of the accident today.

12.35 hrs.

APPROPRIATION (NO. 2) BILL,
1961

The Minister of Finance (Shri Morarji Desai):* Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1961-62, be taken into consideration."

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1961-62, be taken into consideration."

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have to raise this discussion under the shadow of a tragedy which has occurred. Yesterday when I gave notice that I would be raising certain points concerning the Ministry of Transport and Communications, under which is the Railway Inspection Department, little did I know that as I rise to speak,

I would hear from the hon. Minister that a tragic accident has taken place.

Sir, on this Department of Railway Inspection to a great extent depends the safety of passengers who use the railways. Nearly four million passengers are on the wheels every day. On the efficiency and on the frequency of the inspections that are carried out by the Railway Inspection staff depends the safety of these people.

Sir, it is often said in this House that the rate of accidents has come down. I have some figures here. The number of accidents in 1958-59 was 7,797; in 1959-60 it was 7,719. This shows the figures are the same. We have just now heard the unfortunate account of a derailment. In 1958-59, 177 there were derailments; the number killed in 1959-60 was 206.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask the hon. Member, how all these are relevant under this Bill?

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Whenever an accident occurs, under section 83 of the Railways Act, the Government Inspector of Railways is to carry out an enquiry and inspection.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I would like to know from him whether it is a normal duty. Whenever an accident occurs, the authority is given to the Minister for Transport to appoint an inspector to make an enquiry into the accident. Is it his normal duty to carry out inspection of railway lines?

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: I am coming to that.

I have mentioned in my note also, that inspection was carried out over a route mileage of 15,000 miles, as against the total route mileage of 35,000 miles. The Senior Inspector of Railways has to regularly carry out inspection. If the track is not all

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.

right derailment takes place. Here the track has been tampered with: it may perhaps be a case of sabotage; that is a different matter altogether. The number of derailment of passenger trains in 1958-59 was 177. The number of passengers killed as a result of derailments was 312 in 1958-59 and 393 in 1959-60. I do not want to go into other statistics where railway employees have been killed. Now, Sir, unless and until proper inspections are carried out and recommendations made by the Railway Inspectors are implemented I am afraid there will not be any safety for the travelling public. I would like to know why out of 35,000 railway miles only 15,000 miles have been inspected. How is it that it is not possible? If the staff is not there, it has got to be augmented. Because, even according to the statistics there are about 20,000 miles of route mileage where immediately the track has to be renewed; in the First Plan and in the Second Plan we have been told that so many thousands of miles of track have to be re-laid and repaired.

Then I come to another matter. I would suggest that whenever a safety device is removed or suspended, the specific permission of the Chief Government Inspector of Railways should be taken. For instance, recently we had a good discussion on the blanking off of the alarm chain. In any factory or mine where safety measures are not there or for certain operations certain things have to be undertaken, the specific permission of the Chief Inspector of Mines or the Chief Adviser of Factories, as the case may be, is taken. Here also I would suggest that even in the case of the blanking off of the alarm chain the Railways should not do it independently, because this is a safety device. Therefore, whenever you remove it, the specific permission of the Chief Government Inspector of Railways should be obtained before removing or suspending such a thing.

Then I come to the other question about the Lucknow Inspection Circle.

Where is this Circle located? In Calcutta. And we are told the reason for this, namely, that accommodation is not available in Lucknow, whereas plenty of accommodation is available in overcrowded Calcutta. I do not know what efforts are being made by the hon. Minister to put up a building or to rent a building and transfer this to Lucknow. Otherwise the inspector cannot attend to certain inspections quickly; he has to come from Calcutta to the northern-most part, that is Ferozepur if an accident takes place.

I would also suggest to the hon. Minister that the annual report of the Chief Government Inspector of Railways should be laid on the Table of the House, so that this House may have an opportunity to discuss the same.

Then I come to the question of the reorganisation of the Circles. I do not know what was the rationale behind the formation of the Circles. For example, one Circle, namely the Bombay Inspection Circle, has under its jurisdiction 10,000 miles of route mileage, whereas the Southern Inspection Circle has got only 7,000 miles of route mileage. How has this been done? Is it on the basis of the density of the traffic obtaining or on the basis of mileage? Even 7,000 miles for a Circle, I feel, are too much. This should be reduced and, if necessary, more Circles may be formed.

Then I come to the Construction Circle at Calcutta. For the construction of two new railway lines that is just taking place on the South-Eastern Railway and from Bailadilla to Kottavalasa—because of the steel plants these two railway lines are coming—a Special General Manager's Division was created, and the headquarters of the General Manager in charge of that construction has been located at Waltair. But I do not understand why the headquarters of the circle which is to look after the construction of these railway lines should be located at Calcutta. It

[Shri T. B. Vittal Rao]
 could as well be located at Waltair
 Where the General Manager (Construction) has his headquarters.

Then I would come to another point. Whenever a new railway line is thrown open to traffic, the specific permission of the Chief Government Inspector of Railways has to be obtained. But there is a large time-lag between the construction of the railway line and the giving of the permission. Sometimes, even for one mile of railway line, an additional loop line has to be opened either for passenger or goods traffic, and it takes ten to eleven months for the Government Inspector to go and inspect it and then give sanction so that it could be opened. So I would ask the hon. Minister to see that the time-lag is reduced.

And one welcome feature I have noticed in the last annual report—and that is the only welcome feature—namely that the Government Inspectors of Railways have been given an enhanced pay. Because, in the previous years this Department has not been able to attract suitable and talented engineers for this profession. They were all going away to the Railways, because in the Railways any such officer could become a Member of the Railway Board which carries a monthly salary of Rs. 4,000, whereas on the Inspection side utmost that one could go up to is the post of Chief Government Inspector of Railways which carries very much lower emoluments as compared to those of a Member of the Railway Board. Therefore this was not attractive. I hope and trust that with the revised pay talented engineers would be drawn to these posts of Government Inspectors of Railways.

Shri Nathwani (Sorath) rose—

Mr. Speaker: Does he want to speak on this?

Shri Nathwani: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: If he wants to reply to this, he can do so. Otherwise, the practice is that hon. Members always give notice of the points that they will raise. We had a full debate on all the Demands for Grants for nearly a month. All those Demands have come in and they have been voted. Therefore, the convention and practically the rule that has been adopted all along is that the points which any Member wants to raise have to be given notice of, so that the hon. Minister may know and is not taken by surprise. As a matter of fact, Shri T. B. Vittal Rao gave me this notice, I think, yesterday and it was passed on to the hon. Minister.

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan): Yes, Sir, I have had notice of it.

Mr. Speaker: Very well, the hon. Minister.

Dr. P. Subbarayan: Well, Sir, I admit that the headquarters of the Lucknow Inspection Circle is at Calcutta at present. The hon. gentleman made it plain that Calcutta being a crowded city and Lucknow not being so crowded, it should be at Lucknow. As it happens, we are dependent on the Railways for the quarters; and these quarters were easily available in Calcutta and not in Lucknow. And, after all, an Inspector can go down to Lucknow very quickly if any accident happens. As far as we are concerned, we always take notice and the inspection is done when there is no loss of life; but when there is loss of life, the Railways themselves appoint a committee to find out the reasons for the accident that might have happened. The accidents have not increased, as Shri Vittal Rao has himself pointed out. I think they have been a little less than in the year before. Besides, we will see whether we cannot shift the headquarters of the Inspection Circle from Calcutta to Lucknow, because I do see that Lucknow would be a proper place for the headquarters of this Circle than Calcutta.

The hon. Member also pointed out that there are 7,000 miles in the hands of one Inspector and 10,000 miles in the hands of another. That is true. 7,000 miles are in the hands of one Inspector on the Southern Railway, because it is much easier for him to deal with one General Manager than with several. The Central and Western Railways happen to have more mileage, no doubt. This is under the Inspector who is at Bombay, because that is more conveniently situated and he can inspect this part more conveniently than a man from the southern parts. That is the reason why one Inspector has more mileage than the other.

As it is, we do make enquiries as soon as any accident happens and the railway authorities report to us; because, it is the right of the Inspector to inspect any line that he wants to.

Another point that Shri Vittal Rao raised was the question that only 15,000 miles of railways were inspected during the time. As a matter of fact, he would have seen from the Report that the other mileage has been examined by the General Managers themselves, because, some part of the work is done by them. If the report of the General Managers is not satisfactory, then the Inspector of Railways himself goes down and inspects that. As a matter of fact, very strict supervision is kept on the Railways.

The other complaint that Shri Vittal Rao made was that sometimes it takes ten to eleven months before sanction is given for the running of trains on railway lines that have been constructed and completed. I shall make an enquiry into it and see why this is the case because we have given instructions that as soon as possible, when the railways report the construction and the completion of a line, they should go and inspect and give their permission to run the trains as soon as that could be done with safety to the passengers.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1961-62 be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That clauses 1 to 3, the Schedule, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title stand part of the Bill".

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 1 to 3, the Schedule, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

Shri Morarji Desai: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed".

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

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12.51 hrs.

FINANCE BILL, 1961—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resume further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Morarji Desai on the 19th April, 1961, namely:—

"That the Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government for the financial year 1961-62, be taken into consideration."

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi may continue his speech.

Shri Khadilkar (Ahmednagar): May I seek some clarification, before he begins? Yesterday, the hon. Finance