

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

the hon. Minister made a mistake which somehow, by some kind of omission, was not even corrected when the uncorrected reports were printed. We are all happy that the proceedings are printed pretty promptly. If speeches of the Ministers which are rather important documents which can be referred to later only with reference to a particular volume in question, contain errors, it is rather a bad thing. Sir, I would like you to direct that at least the Ministers, however busy they might be, should correct their speeches, or get them corrected by their Secretaries.

Shri Morarji Desai: The Ministers do correct them and they must correct them. But if the Ministers sometimes make a lapse, then my hon. friends get a chance to go at them. They should be happy. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: To err is human. All hon. Members also can do so. What I would like to urge upon all hon. Members in this case is, wherever there are mistakes made it is good to point them out if they are serious mistakes. When once those mistakes are pointed out and the hon. Member responsible for those mistakes says, "I have committed a mistake", then that is the end of it. There is no meaning in going on pursuing this matter as if this is a kind of inquisition. It is unnecessary. I am allowing a fair chance of mistakes to be corrected. If the hon. Minister had already corrected it, there would have been no chance for Shri Nayar to raise this here.

12.42 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR EXCESS GRANTS (RAILWAYS), 1957-58—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further discussion and voting on the Demands for Excess Grants in respect of the Budget (Railways) for 1957-58.

Out of one hour, 45 minutes have already been taken. Only 15 minutes are left. Shri Ram Krishan Gupta may continue his speech. He is not present here. Shri C. K. Bhattacharya. After him I will call Shri Warior.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya (West Dinajpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad that you have kindly given me an opportunity to speak on Demands for Excess Grants (Railways) for 1957-58. While speaking on the Railway Budget for 1957-58 I had occasion to draw the attention of the House as well as of the hon. Minister to a long-standing grievance of my constituency, that is, West Dinajpur. I am sorry to say uptillnow nothing has been done to remove that grievance though in the meantime I have repeatedly requested the hon. Minister to be kind to my constituency and get that grievance removed. Even now there is a way open to the hon. Minister to get that grievance removed and I request him to take steps in the matter as soon as possible. The district West Dinajpur, as the name indicates, suffers from the result of the partition of Bengal. Along with the partition of the State, the district itself was partitioned. The railway line through this district went to the share of Pakistan. So, this district has been left without any railway communication and without any easy conveyance to Calcutta or to other parts of the State uptill now. The people have been agitating for long to have some railway communication for giving them to an easy access to the city of Calcutta as well as to other parts of the State. But uptillnow that has not been done.

Sir, in order to prove the difficulties experienced by the people of this district, I may cite my own example. Parliament gives me a Railway pass but for the purpose of going to my own constituency that Railway pass is absolutely useless. It is easier for me to come to Delhi from Calcutta than to go to the headquarters of my own constituency. It takes 26 hours

for the journey from Calcutta to Delhi. From Calcutta to the headquarters of my own constituency it almost takes that amount of time. If I start at 9-00 a.m. I will be reaching there at about mid-day the next day. That is the difficulty which the people there have been experiencing and I myself have been facing that difficulty. I find it difficult to keep my contacts with my own constituency and it is for this purpose that from the very first day I came to Parliament I have been harping upon this thing and I have been running after the hon. Minister to have that difficulty removed.

Sir, it was suggested that I could take advantage of the air service. The difficulty is, the air service would cost money from my own pocket for which Parliament will not make any reimbursement to me. Had I been sufficiently in affluent circumstances, I would have certainly done that. But God has not placed me under such affluent circumstances to that I could continually take advantage of the air service to keep in touch with my constituency. And I have got to plead with the House and the hon. Minister for providing some railway communication so that I could easily and quickly go to the headquarters of my constituency.

Sir, the necessity for the line has long been felt and I may state here that at least the people there have been favoured with the assurance by two Railway Ministers in succession that their grievances will be removed. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Railway Minister went there and gave an assurance to the people that this difficulty will be removed. Then, Shri Jagjivan Ram, the hon. the Railway Minister who is present here today went there and from his own lips the people got the assurance that this difficulty will be removed. After all these assurances from the hon. Ministers, is it not rather a matter of regret that this difficulty has not yet been removed and the people are suffering even now?

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur): They might be only lip promises.

Sbri C. K. Bhattacharya: Lip promises are given at the time of the elections, but not after that when one becomes a Minister.

Sir, this matter has been before the Railway Board for a long time, since 1949. The surveys have been twice, one in 1950 and the other in 1955. I may state that the results of the surveys have proved favourable. The report is that the construction of this line would be profitable and would be productive for the Railways, not like other lines which are in many cases completely unproductive.

In the last Budget, the hon. Minister raised a ray of hope. In the Explanatory Memorandum it was stated that "Tildanga-Farakka-Khajuriaghat-Malda project was primarily meant to open up the West Dinajpur district of West Bengal." It was stated that this line was meant primarily to open up my constituency. When that is stated, certainly the people are entitled to think that they are going to be relieved of the difficulty which has been causing them so much distress uptillnow. But in the alignment that has been made, everything has been done excepting opening up my district. The alignment which was originally made during the previous survey ran through my district itself. But the new alignment that has been made is just by passing the district. When it is stated that an alignment is meant primarily for opening up a particular district, I may naturally expect that the line will be connected with the headquarters of the district at least. But the alignment that has now been made does not connect the line either with the present headquarters of the district which is Balurghat or the perspective headquarters of the district which is Raiganj. That is the grievance which I want to place before you and which I want to get removed. People find that the line that has been taken up after long agitation is being constructed in a way which will not remove

[Shri C. K. Bhattacharya]

their grievance. The cup is being dashed to pieces just when it is within easy reach of their lips, and that is the tragedy, which myself and my constituents find ourselves in.

Finding ourselves in this predicament, Members of Parliament belonging to that area of West Dinajpur and other parts of West Bengal, as also Darjeeling and Assam, submitted a memorandum to the hon. Railway Minister that the line should go along the original alignment, or at least, when it is being constructed by the side of this district, an arm should be drawn to connect the two important centres of West Dinajpur District, Balurghat and Raiganj, which were in the original survey. I am not making any new suggestion.

Mr. Speaker: On what Demand is he speaking?

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: On railways

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): He is speaking about his own constituency.

Mr. Speaker: So far as Excess Grants are concerned,.....

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: Under Demand No. 15 you find construction of new lines, and I am vitally connected with that.

Mr. Speaker: Does he complain against any excess of expenditure as has been noted here, that it ought not to have been incurred? If it is a question of generally saying that some more lines have to be built, it is out of order.

Shri D. C. Sharma: His contention is that more expenditure should be incurred.

Mr. Speaker: No, no. It is wrong. That is not the scope of Excess Grants. I am sorry, he must resume his seat. We are not going on with a general discussion on railways. It is open to any hon. Member to say that

this has been spent unnecessarily, it ought not to have been spent. Beyond that there is absolutely no room for a general discussion.

Shri Warior (Trichur): This excess is demanded when there are very important maintenance and other subjects coming in. Can we not go into them also?

Mr. Speaker: No.

Shri Warior: Even the Indo-Pakistan rail relations?

Mr. Speaker: That cannot be the subject here. Of course, everything relates to the railways, but you cannot raise all that on Excess Grants.

Shri Warior: It is a very important thing.

Mr. Speaker: Is there no relevancy? When a marriage is taking place, can something else also go on?

Shri Warior: The whole railways are in danger.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Deputy Minister.

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): Will I get 15 minutes?

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: Within the limited time at my disposal, it will not be possible for me to answer all the points that have been raised, but I shall meet some of them which are important.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao raised some points. His first point was about coal. He said it was inferior in grade, and that there was no proper checking. I may say that it is supplied by the Coal Controller who functions under the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply. The coal is inspected by them, and it is their responsibility.

The fact that inferior coal is there may be admitted. We are trying to improve the quality of the coal supplied to the railways.

He also suggested that washeries might be set up. That again is not within the purview of this Ministry. The washeries have to be set up by the Ministry of Steel, Mines and Fuel. It is for them to set them up and supply us improved coal.

He also raised the point about uniforms. No doubt, a report was submitted some time back with regard to uniforms, but the recommendations would involve an additional cost of Rs. 31 lakhs or so. In view of financial stringency, we reviewed the position and found that we could not go the whole hog and accept all the recommendations. I may point out that it is not as if it is a measure of staff welfare. We are providing dress as an administrative necessity. If that is taken into consideration, what we have done is quite adequate. As and when our finances improve, we will certainly look into it and do the needful.

The hon. Member then raised questions about the damage caused by goods lost, theft etc. Other hon. Members also raised the same point. There has been a definite decline in the incidence of theft, and the position in regard to other crimes has also improved as compared to the pre-reorganisation period. The following are some figures:

	1954	1959
Yard thefts	1,615	947
Goods thefts	802	655
Running train thefts	3,216	1,437

We are taking very effective steps to see that thefts in the yards, goods sheds and running trains are brought under control. We are extensively using the E.P. locking of wagons, picketing of strategic points, escorting of important goods trains; surprise raids are being organised jointly by

the G.R.P. and the Railway Protection Force on hide-outs of known criminals and receivers of stolen property. As regards damage by moisture, we are taking precaution to see that open wagons are covered with tarpaulins, and even where there are goods sheds we see to it that they are properly housed, so that this does not occur.

Then there is the question of goods lost or damaged. Here also there has been a steady decline in the number of new claims registered on the Indian Railways from 1957-58. I shall give a few figures. In 1955-56 the number of new claims received and those reopened were as many as 4,52,811. In 1959-60 they came down to 3,69,201. The net amount paid in 1957-58 was Rs. 3,27,00,000, and I am happy to submit that in 1958-59 this came down slightly; we are trying to hold this in check and bring down further the net amount paid.

13 hrs.

Considering the increase in the price level of commodities, the amount that is paid is not really as much as it looks. If we take, for instance, 100 as the amount paid by the railways in 1950-51, making due allowance for the volume of traffic and the prevailing price levels, the indices of the claims payments for the successive years 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1958-59 work out to 78.6, 70.4 and 68.8 respectively. As a result of various measures adopted, a very substantial progress has been achieved. As against a total of 73,162 claims outstanding on the railways on 31st March, 1956, those outstanding at the close of the year 1959 were only 42,508. The average time taken for the disposal of these claims has also come down from 71 days in 1952-53 to 52 days in 1957-58-59. We are taking all possible steps to see that claims do not mount up. The work of the Claims Prevention Organisation is also commendable. They are very effective in holding them in check.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao has raised the question about the provident fund.

[Shri S. V. Ramaswamy]

Other hon. Members, Shri Assar and Shri Aurobindo Ghosal also spoke about the same. Sometimes, delay does happen. There are certain legal formalities. The address of the person is not known or he is not vacating the quarters, and so on and so forth. There are so many such difficulties. All these take some time. Even so, we have issued a directive that six months ahead of the retirement, all the papers must be got ready, and if a person is to be retired in six months, then he should not be transferred within that period, because if a person is transferred then it becomes difficult to settle his account. That is why we have issued these two directives. The accounts, as far as possible, are got ready, and we have also issued instructions that they should be settled within ten days of the date of retirement.

In case of normal retirement, the Administrations have been asked to maintain an index register of employees retiring six months hence both in the executive and in the accounts offices. In the case of retirements other than normal, every month, a list of such cases which arose during the previous month should be made out, and a similar index register maintained for such cases. We also organise clearance months where we emphasise that the outstanding provident fund settlements must be cleared. All these steps have produced good results.

Shri Naushir Bharucha (East Khandesh): They are very good on paper.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: If figures are not believed, I am sorry; I cannot help it. But the figures are here. The result of the very persistent drive has been very satisfactory. While there were 16,136 cases pending on 31st July, 1957 only 7,291 cases were pending on 30th November, 1959. Substantial progress has been achieved in liquidating the older cases. There were as many as 4,587 cases over one year old on 31st July, 1957, and this

number has gone down to 1,773 on 30th November, 1959. I am sure these facts are very encouraging, and the progress will be maintained, so that there is no room for grouse at all.

As regards the Central Railway, particularly, Shri T. B. Vittal Rao made mention of the fact that accounts slips were pending for over two years. I submit that he is misinformed. In all the accounting units of that railway, the posting of provident fund ledgers is absolutely current, excepting about two months' arrears in the Bombay Division.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: May I point out that my brother who was a railway officer passed away in November. I wrote to the Department concerned to let me know only the figure of the provident fund. Six months have passed, and I have not received any reply yet.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: Mayb, it is one of those cases which have been pending because of certain difficulties. The legal requirements have got to be fulfilled, and if there is delay in furnishing the necessary information, certainly there will be delay. This may be one of those cases which were delayed.

13.05 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

Shri Aurobindo Ghosal made mention of certain retrenchments in the South-Eastern Railway. I may tell the House that no one has been retrenched. In 1956, the South-Eastern Railway appointed locally a number of draughtsmen and estimators in ex-cadre posts on the clear understanding and condition that they would not be absorbed in the regular cadre unless they were duly selected by the Railway Service Commission. There was a clear condition laid upon their appointment. Some have been selected by the Railway Service Com-

mission, and some are continuing in the ex-cadre posts; and others who became surplus have been absorbed in the Calcutta electrification project. So, the charge that they have been retrenched is not correct. The condition was there; if they pass, of course, they would be absorbed; but if they do not pass, and they have to abide by that condition, there is no option but to get them retrenched.

Shri Aurobindo Ghosal also mentioned about the theft of coal. I was somewhat surprised to hear that he seems to have been watching the sale of railway coal to others without complaining so far and informing the authorities either in the South-Eastern Railway or in the Railway Board. To make a statement like that in the House for the first time, no doubt, is interesting, but it takes us by surprise. As an hon. Member representing the people, I wish he had brought this to the notice of the railway authorities then and there instead of sitting in his house and watching through the window this open sale, as he alleges, of railway coal to private parties.

Even in the matter of theft of coal, we are taking very stringent measures. Shri Assar mentioned that the theft was as much as to the tune of Rs. 2 crores. I submit that the figure is very wrong. In 1957-58 there was only a loss of about 50,000 tons totalling about Rs. 12 lakhs. But it fell down to about 30,000 odd tons valued at about Rs. 8 lakhs. I think the control is effective. We have posted security men, the R.P.F. has been alerted, lighting has been improved, and the storing spots are being checked and so on.

We are taking very effective steps to see that railway coal is not stolen and sold in the manner in which hon. Members have alleged.

With regard to the maintenance of first-class coaches, Shri Assar and Shri Naushir Bharucha both mentioned that they were not being main-

tained. As the House is aware, the Second Five Year Plan laid emphasis on third class coaches. We are really short of the first class coaches, and even some old coaches have had to be reconditioned and kept running. There may be deficiencies here and there, but I might tell the House that the deficiencies in the first class coaches are due not so much to the lack of maintenance on the part of the railways as the thefts, pilferages and the damages that are being done to the fittings by the thieves and pilferers. It is very unfortunate that the first class coaches draw the attention of these fellows who remove these fittings and sell them to the receivers of stolen property and thus inconvenience the first class passengers in the use of the coaches. We are trying our utmost to improve the condition of the first class coaches. As a matter of fact, we have got a programme for the manufacture of first class coaches of the I.C.F. type during the Third Plan period, and we shall get some more coaches of this type, and we shall improve the first class service.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Am I to understand that even a wash basin could be stolen? It is such a big thing, and even that is stolen? I found in one carriage that the wash basin also had been stolen.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: It is not impossible. There are only three screws to unscrew; and they can bodily remove it. Supposing it is in a station yard, they can remove the three screws with a screw-driver and take it away at night. What is it that can be done to prevent such a thing? We are trying to protect our property in the station yards as much as possible but sometimes, thefts and pilferers are cleverer than we.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: May I make a suggestion to the hon. Minister in this connection? In certain railways, I have found on the mirrors that are put in the compartment that it has been written crosswise 'Stolen from the railways'. While travelling in such a compartment, I tried to

[Shri C. K. Bhattacharya]

make out what the meaning of that could be, and I could easily find out later that it was that if anybody took it away from the compartment and brought it to the neighbouring towns, at once, the people would know that it is stolen property. All the materials that would be put in the railway compartment should have that inscription namely 'Stolen from the railways'.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That might put other passengers into confusion such as was experienced by the hon. Member. In the first instance it might be difficult to understand what it means.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: Shri Naushir Bharucha was saying something about the payment of overtime at Bhusaval. There is no big workshop as such. There is only a small engineering shop maintained by assistant engineers. Now, they are governed by the statutory regulations regarding hours of work, and no case of non-payment of overtime has occurred.

I called for the facts and find that nothing is due so far as this workshop is concerned. My hon. friend is perhaps thinking of some other workshop. If he would give us more particulars, we shall enquire.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: My information is that these people were made to put in overtime work on promise of payment. Afterwards, somebody discovered some legal flaw and said that they were not entitled to overtime payment. When they have put in overtime work, morally they are entitled to payment for it.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: If the hon. Member would give us the full particulars, we shall enquire into it and find out.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: If the rules do not permit it, does the hon. Member desire that the man who made the promise to pay should do so from his own pocket?

Shri Naushir Bharucha: I do not know how they pay. Somebody has blundered. The Railway Administration must bear the burden for that.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: The hon. Member will kindly write to us sending the particulars. We shall look into it.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: Certainly I shall send the particulars.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: As regards new lines, the Speaker has already overruled any discussion about them.

Three other hon. Members spoke about something on which the hon. Minister has already spoken, namely, about the Pakistan-India link. All the views expressed by them will be taken into consideration by Government.

I have nothing more to add except to thank hon. Members for their valuable criticism.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Does any hon. Member want any cut motion to be put to vote separately?

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: I beg to leave of the House to withdraw my cut motions.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I take it that all the cut motions are sought to be withdrawn with the leave of the House.

Have the hon. Members the leave of the House to withdraw their cut motions?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

All the cut motions were, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the respective excess sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the order paper be granted to the

President to make good the amounts spent during the year ended the 31st day of March 1958, in respect of the following demands entered in the second column thereof:—

Demands Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16 and 17.”

The motion was adopted.

[The motions for Demands for Excess Grants which were adopted by the Lok Sabha are reproduced below—Ed.]

DEMAND No. 4—REVENUE—ORDINARY WORKING EXPENSES—ADMINISTRATION

“That a sum of Rs. 44,66,228 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Revenue—Ordinary Working Expenses—Administration’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 5—REVENUE—ORDINARY WORKING EXPENSES—REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

“That a sum of Rs. 3,67,54,149 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Revenue—Ordinary Working Expenses—Repairs and Maintenance’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 7—REVENUE—ORDINARY WORKING EXPENSES—OPERATION (FUEL)

“That a sum of Rs. 56,04,858 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Revenue—ordinary Working Expenses—Operation (Fuel)’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 8—REVENUE—ORDINARY WORKING EXPENSES—OPERATION OTHER THAN STAFF AND FUEL

“That a sum of Rs. 1,43,29,288 be granted to the President to make

good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Revenue—Ordinary working Expenses—Operation other than Staff and Fuel’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 9—REVENUE—ORDINARY WORKING EXPENSES—MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

“That a sum of Rs. 15,88,214 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Revenue—Ordinary Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 12—REVENUE—DIVIDEND PAYABLE TO GENERAL REVENUES

“That a sum of Rs. 15,74,370 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Revenue—Dividend payable to General Revenues’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 15—CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINES—CAPITAL AND DEPRECIATION RESERVE FUND

“That a sum of Rs. 15,55,279 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Construction of New Lines—Capital and Depreciation Reserve Fund’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

DEMAND No. 16—OPEN LINE WORKS—ADDITIONS

“That a sum of Rs. 5,09,15,374 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of ‘Open Line Works—Additions’ for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960.”

**DEMAND No. 17—OPEN LINE WORKS—
REPLACEMENTS**

"That a sum of Rs. 5,66,95,048 be granted to the President to make good an excess on the grant in respect of 'Open Line Works—Replacements' for the year ended the 31st day of March, 1960."

13.12 hrs.

**REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE
(AMENDMENT) BILL**

The Deputy Minister of Law (Shri Hajarnavis): I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1950, be taken into consideration".

I hope that this Bill except for two items is mostly non-controversial. As for the two items about which some concern has been expressed in the House, I hope to convince the House that we have been guided by no consideration other than that of our loyalty and obedience to the Constitution which we have sworn to uphold. I will briefly go over the first few items and then deal in some detail with the provision which substitutes the words 'Zilla Parishads' for 'District Boards' in U.P. Then, as I said, I will go over step by step the process of reasoning by which we have arrived at the result which forms the basis of this amending Bill.

By clause 2 of the amending Bill, we propose to insert a new sub-section (2) to section 12 of the Representation of the People Act. I might remind hon. Members that under section 12 of the Representation of the People Act, power has been given to the President, after consulting the Election Commission, by order to alter or amend any order made under section 11. We find that section 11 refers to the constitution of various constituencies. The question which often arises is: having altered the

constituencies, what shall we do with the right of representation of members who have already been elected on the basis of the old constituencies? Such a power is always taken whenever there is an alteration of the constituencies between two elections.

So far as the Legislative Council is concerned, it is well-known that it is a body which never dissolves. One-third of the membership is renewed after a fixed period. Therefore, what we seek to do by this amendment is to take power under the proposed sub-section (2) to see that wherever an alteration is made in the constituencies themselves, then the existing members may be allocated the altered constituencies.

Then under clause 3, clause (d) of sub-section (2) of the principal Act is being deleted. Clause (d) says:

"In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

...the constitution and appointment of revising authorities to dispose of claims and objections".

It has been the experience of the Election Commission that the provision of dual authorities, one for registration and the other for revision, results in a cumbrous procedure. There are two parallel authorities, one merely concerning itself with writing down the names and the other taking upon itself to decide judicially whenever an objection is raised as regards the right to vote. This results, as the Election Commission has experienced, in delay and a multiplicity of authorities. Basing ourselves upon the precedents in U.K. and profiting by the experience we have had for such a long time, the Election Commission would like that the law should provide that the power to revise, in case a claim or