

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

the so-called killings in the encounters, I think a national commission is needed for going into these things and we should see how we can stop such things. Tomorrow the matter should be discussed at length. I do hope, Sir, that you will direct the Government to come prepared so as to give us the required information. Tonight they should get into touch with the State Governments and in the light of whatever facts we have brought to their notice they should give us the necessary information. I should like to have the information as to what has happened to the case of that literary critic, Shri Saroj Kumar Dutta of West Bengal, because I have said that now all papers have published it and now it is revealed that from 9, Basant Roy Road, South Calcutta, from the house of a professor he was taken and then next day shot in the maidan. This is reported in the papers. I know another person, the Statesman correspondent or some such person, was taken and shot. Even the names of the persons who had killed them are known. It is well known that one Debi Roy was behind some of these killings by the Calcutta Police. Everybody knows it. Why did these things happen? I should like to know whether the Government have made any inquiries. Let them come and tell us. The thing should not be treated as a partisan matter, as an opposition matter. The whole thing is illegal, inhuman and brutal, a blot on our civilisation and I think that we should have a national approach in this matter and solve it and deal with the culprits and bring them to book and give them exemplary punishment.

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 1977-78—General Discussion.

SHRI V. B. RAJU (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the Minister for Railway has come

before this House again after the earlier presentation in March for the appropriation of funds to the Railways.

In doing so, he has given an indication of what the Railway Ministry is going to do in the current year. The Railway Minister is a very knowledgeable person and he seems to be entertaining the Gandhian socialist ideals and he means it sincerely as I know him very well. One thing which I put it in a very cryptic way, is that he would have been truly a Gandhian if he had also allowed his predecessor to share some of the credit which he is claiming now. I think that the performance of the railways which we have, which this country has witnessed in 1976-77 or even in 1975-76—those two years—has placed the railway administration in a commanding position. Whatever may be the shortcomings in the performance of the railway administration or in the functioning of the railway administration, one thing is very significant that the largest public undertaking in this country is setting the pattern of not only commercial working but the fulfilment of social obligations. The prime consideration before any public undertaking should be not only administering its commercial efficiency but also serving the social organisation in its advancement towards a change.

With these introductory remarks I will straight go to the subject matter to say that the railways are the life-line of the nation's transport system. The network of railways is spread over the whole country. They serve the unification of the country also. It is physically binding the country into a homogenous core and the railways everyday come into contact with millions of people. I think this is the only administration which comes in contact with the millions of people who are very busy and who always respect time and mobility. The railway administration is so happily placed that it is always kept alert by the quick moving or mobile popula-

tion. Therefore, the management of this system, this big network, is a very difficult job and the system is very complex. Sir, the railways have been on the red in the last one decade. In fact, the watershed year was the year 1965-66. After 1965-66 the railways have demonstrated their incapacity to stand on their own legs. Excepting for two years, i.e. possibly 1971-72 and 1972-73 it has shown a very nominal surplus. All the years excepting the last years, the railways have shown a very very bad financial performance, given a very bad financial account, I would request the Railway Ministry and the Railway Minister to just review the whole position. In fact, it would have been very helpful to us if we had been given a review of the last decade, why this had been so, why only—to put the record correctly—in 1971-72 the Railways showed a surplus of Rs. 17.84 crores and in 1972-73 only Rs. 2.92 crores.

But otherwise from the year 1966-67 till 1975-76, the deficit that it has been showing has made the Railways dependent on the general revenues. The Railways are indebted to the extent of 470 crores or more to the general exchequer. Why has this happened? What was the reason? I would also try to bring to the notice of the Railway Minister that in the year 1975-76, the performance was so good that it had shown a deficit of 61 crores.

AN HON'BLE MEMBER: Deficit or surplus?

SHRI V. B. RAJU: I am sorry, in 1975-76 it had shown a deficit of 61.11 crores. Now why was it so? It is mentioned in one of the Review Papers that the payment of dearness allowance to the staff has been responsible for this deficit in spite of its good performance. The Railways had started showing the best of their performance from the year 1975-76. So the staff has been made the scapegoat there. I would not mind if it is called jugglery of figures or manipu-

lation of figures or finding a scapegoat. That apart, what had gone wrong with the Railways? Sir, I would put it this way. I am not an expert, but I happened to be the President of Railwaymen's Association of the Nizam State Railways in 1949. So I have some knowledge of things. But things have changed very much. The fateful year, Sir, was 1974 when the deficit was shown as Rs. 115 crores and had spilled over to the year 1974-75. Our minds are fresh with what had happened in May 1974 and what was proposed to take place in the 'great' Railways strike. I am not actually making criticism of that strike or the motives behind that strike. But I would like to put it squarely that it is the relevance of the human element in the Railways that actually mars or makes it. It is not merely modernisation, it is not merely providing more finances; it is the human factor that makes a lot of difference in the functioning of the Railways.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE):

Sir, if I may just interrupt. Since the Railway Budget is coming up for discussion in the other House I may be permitted to go to that House and Mr. George Fernandes is here to take cognisance of the debate.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: Sir, on a point of order. Both the Houses are on the same footing. It is a question of the prestige of this House. Mr. George Fernandes can go to the other House. He is also a senior Minister. Let us keep the prestige of this House at an equal level. We do not even try to say the Lower House and the Upper House; we call it the other House and they also call this the other House. Why should there be any distinction?

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND (Punjab): Especially he should not go when a Member is speaking.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: I do not want to cause any inconvenience to the Minister. But I am only drawing attention to this basic point. He should not have embarrassed the Chair also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I accept the suggestion of the hon. Member.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI LAL K. ADVANI): Unless some other Member raises this point in the other House.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: Thank you very much. It is for the House, not for me. We have already started the debate with you. If we had not started, we would not have minded it.

Anyhow, what I was trying to highlight as a point here was that the human factor is very important and the factor of industrial relations must be given the highest priority in the management of the Railways because the Railways employ nearly 1.7 million persons, including casual labour. This is one of the biggest enterprises employing such a huge number. I am sure, with his experience, the present Railway Minister would try to deal with the workers organisations in a very reasonable way. If I could advise him, firstly he must look at the multiplicity of the organisations in the railways, function-wise or category-wise. Once we dealt with, on the floor of this House, the problems of some drivers threatening to go on strike and some foremen threatening to go on strike. The multiplicity of these organisations should be tackled correctly so that they might be reduced to the minimum-most number.

After having said that, let me come to the other point, that is, the framing of the Railway Budget. The framing of the Budget has been very easy for the Minister and there was no difficulty. In fact he could make a populist approach also. This populist approach is reflected in the reduction of

the cost of the platform ticket from fifty paise to thirty paise. Is this reduction done on technical grounds, or has it any economic motivation behind it or has it any social aspect behind it? While reducing the cost of the platform ticket, the Minister must have kept in his mind the problem of crowding on the platforms. Even now, to stand on the railway platform is not a pleasant job. In fact, he said that people would be pleased to receive their sweethearts at the platform and so on. But my experience is that after making an overnight journey of 12 hours, even in the first class, I lose five pounds in weight, maybe because of sleeplessness or the dust, for that matter. The Indian Railways are so placed geographically that there is a lot of dust in the trains. Naturally I do not want my wife to see my pale face on the railway platform. She will not be happy also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: She won't support you, I am sure.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: The previous Railway Minister is also here and I am sure he would also like to participate in the debate. What was the need to raise the cost of the platform ticket to fifty paise and how did the administration change its mind now? Ministers may change and Governments may change. But Government is a continuing institution. Did not the administration know that the minimum railway fare was thirty paise? If they did not know, they must be punished for this ignorance. How do these things change overnight? Or, the Railway Minister may have required the administration to advise him in such a way that a small favour could be shown to the railway travelling public so that he could make some populist approach and gain some reputation. But these are not the things that are going to make the work more efficient and these are not the things to do to please people. We should not treat our people so slightly. I would have been very happy if some reduction in the freight rates is made

particularly in a situation where we are under a terrific inflationary pressure. If there has been some reduction in the freight rates of some commodities which go into the consumption of the common people, I would have appreciated it. In fact, Shri Kamalapati Tripathi took all the bad odour when he revised the freight rates and fares last time. He incurred the greatest displeasure of the common man in this country and he bore all the brunt.

But the present Minister is in a fortunate position. I expect him—and in his reply he will certainly do it—to thank the earlier Minister, his predecessor, Shri Kamalapati Tripathi, for having handed over to him a system in its near-perfection and economically viable—an easy ground for the new Minister to survey and build up. In this vast country of sixty crores of people, about changes in the administration, its functioning and in matters of taxation we should be careful. The commencement of a financial year must not bring such big changes which upset normal functioning. People do not come to know about them immediately and it becomes difficult by the time they are conveyed to them. I have not very much to say about the finances excepting that for Rs. 440 crores, which the Minister expects to be the indebtedness by March 31, 1978, he must have a plan, which should clear off in the next five years because we expect from the largest enterprise not only a surplus for its own expansion but also to contribute to the general Exchequer for economic development. Sir, the performance of the Railways is an indicator of the state of economy in the country and also of the state of social peace. If more persons travel by the Railways—and if the Railways make convenient for them to travel and make them move about—it shows there is a buoyancy in the socio-economic life. If the Railways move more goods for the industry or for general consumption, then again it shows the buoyancy of the economy.

Not only is the performance of the Railways an indicator, but also the Railways by themselves are a very great contributory factor for the socio-economic advancement. Therefore, one Minister is not enough. I am very sorry that whereas earlier three Ministers were handling the charge with great difficulty, now the whole burden is on the tiny shoulders of one Minister. I do not know how he is able to cope up with this.

AN HON'BLE MEMBER: Why do you feel sorry about it, when he is handling it?

SHRI V. B. RAJU: That can be done even without you and me. The Government can be run by the Administration. There is no difficulty in that. It is very easy to run a Government by the Administration. But it is very difficult to bring about improvement and changes. We have carried on for 30 years. Sometimes, when with our hind sight we look back, we find that our pace of progress has been very slow. Therefore, I would like to mention to the honourable Minister and the Prime Minister that the importance of the Railways is not being realised and that we still have got that old regulatory mentality. We give so much importance to the Home Ministry. We still have the policeman's mind because we have not yet become development-oriented, economic-oriented. But I would place the Railway Ministry to be the most important. Even by practice, it has a separate financial allocation, Appropriation. In 1924 they did it for the first time and we are keeping it up. Sir, I would advance my suggestion this way. Let the Railway Ministry confine itself to operations of the Railways. Let the production activity go under the pattern of the normal public sector undertaking. Why should they bite more than what they could chew? We want today an operational efficiency. And, at the same time, the Railways must function commercially and not demonstrate their effi-

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ciency because of certain concessions they get either from the Government or from the industry. If the Minister means business—and I rely on his word that he wants to improve the operational efficiency—let him look into the question of the reorganisation of the structure *vis-a-vis* the functions. Whether all the activities should be under one command or whether they should be separated, that has to be looked into. The organisational pattern also contributes to efficiency. If the managements of the locomotive units at Chittaranjan or activities at Varanasi or Perambur, Madras could easily manage them, why should the Railway Board interest itself. Why should it be interested in export promotion? Sir, in this country—we will have an opportunity of discussing it at the time of the General Budget—we have developed an attitude that by exporting from the country we are doing a very great thing. We should examine whether this export promotion is contributory to the inflationary pressure here. You empty the domestic market of goods. You get foreign exchange by export convert into rupee and hand over the rupee to the local market. I think the misery of this excess money pumped into the market is also because of the accumulation of the foreign exchange. There is a limited purpose, a definite purpose in actually accumulating foreign exchange. It is not only for keeping it. It is no by export convert it into rupee and use groating over that you have accumulated Rs. 4,000 crores. No. You must use it and use it in such a way that it helps in the advancement of the economy.

Why are the Railways interested in export promotion? Why should they divert their attention? It is not necessary. These things should be left to the Commerce Ministry. Basically the Railways should realise that they have the two objectives: "to move people and to move goods, to move people in a comfortable way and guaranteeing their safety. Let them concen-

trate their attention on these. Therefore, let the functions be examined. Other activities should be transferred to the agencies which are capable of doing it. In fact they have the expertise in the manufacturing line.

Sir, I would request the Minister not to fall a victim to the temptation of out doing everything that the Congress Governments have done. It seems to me, the pronouncements of the Ministers and even the members of the ruling party that everything that the Congress had done during the last 30 years, particularly during the last two years, was anti-people and so everything should be undone. Possibly the motivation of the present Government is to survive on anti-Congressism, not on performance of something substantial. I know they have come from an emotionally surcharged atmosphere. In fact, I know the vote that was given was not for the Janata Party; it was given against the Congress. That we are aware of. But that is over now. Let them forget about it.

Secondly, Sir, let the ruling party function as a ruling party and not as a party in opposition. From their speeches and from their ways of tackling the problems it still appears as though they are the opposition. It takes some time I know. But there should be an effort to feel the responsibility as a ruling party and do positive things.

Sir, the good performance of the Railways or the trend the Railways have taken for better performance which was built up by Shri Kamla-pati Tripathi be furthered. Let it not be tampered with in hasty manner. I assure the Minister in this House our co-operation. Though the position we occupy is temporary, we are prepared to co-operate with the ruling party in actually furthering the cause of the people. So, the high level of efficiency attained in the past 15 months has of course to be maintained and the health of the Railways preserved. Now, once you spoil that health, you cannot again get a grip over the system.

Even in making tall claims of employing dismissed persons you are making a fuss of it. Sir, every case is to be examined on its own merits and an employee should be reinstated if injustice has been done to him. I think the same officers have actually punished them and removed them. It is not that the Minister gave orders for all these thousands of people to be removed. No. The same Railway Board was there. I am also appealing to the administration. The moment the Minister changes, the party changes, the attitude of administration changes. There must be courage of conviction with the administration. If they have done wrong they should admit. We politicians are prepared to admit our mistakes and are prepared to pay the price. They should not try to absolve of their responsibility. Whether the Congress Party is in power or any other party is in power, the administration must be independent, anonymous and assertive and be on the right path. Then only democracy survives; otherwise no. Therefore, let not a big fuss be made about re-employing persons. We are not against human considerations. In order to preserve discipline in the Railways and to see that violence has no premium this has been done. Without regard to the values, the values for which you stood and propounded, you withdraw the dynamite case and the cases against Mr. Badal.

Where is the equality between a common man and a Minister? Why did you do it? The House has not been apprised of it. The time will come. This reinstatement of employees, it is said, will cost about Rs. 1.32 crores. It does not matter. It is a human aspect. We are sympathetic to them, to their families. But management of a State is not management of a "dharamshala". In the management of a State, where necessary, you have to use State power. The State is the corrector of imbalances, the corrector of unsocial activities. The State comes into the picture in the protection of the common man. That is why we want the State to perform its true functions. There-

fore, let not discipline in the Railway administration be marred. After a long time, after about a decade, we were able to secure a certain measure of discipline in the Railway administration. Let us see what is being done now. The hon. Minister himself agreed yesterday that there is some slackening and there is not that level of punctuality. It is not only a question of punctuality. It is a question of safety also to which I refer. I do not say that any particular railway official was responsible for the ghastly accident where the bridge had given way. But in a period of about two or three weeks, there have been a good number of accidents of derailment. Well, accidents come accidentally. They do not give notice to Mr. Dandvate that they are coming. They come accidentally but for this purpose, we need a sense of imagination and anticipation. I do not know the percentage, but a high percentage of our bridges or a good number of bridges are 70 to 100 years old. The problem of the Indian Railways is not the mountain terrain. The problem of the Indian Railways is the rivers. And rivers mean bridges. Now it is that the safety factor must be very high. It is in these matters that imagination and initiative are required. You do know when there is going to be monsoon, when there are going to be heavy rains. You should not merely take it that the bridge is already there and then set tight taking the name of God or Providence. That is not good. That does not satisfy anybody. The Indian Railways have a record of maintaining a high level of safety. I congratulate them on this. But as I said in the beginning, the human factor is very important in the Railways in respect of safety. People expect a comfortable travel and a safe travel. The Minister has been talking of new railway lines. It is all right; it is very good. We make promises. Every Minister makes promises. Possibly the Members of the House apply pressure and the Minister says "All right, we are surveying that line". In fact, take the railway line in my own State, from Bibinagar to Nadikude.

— [Shri V. B. Raju]

For how many years has it been there? The Prime Minister laid the foundation-stone. I do not know whether it will be completed by 1980 or even 2000. We spread our net. We put our little finger into everything. There are 25 projects which are now under construction and every year we give a pittance here and a pittance there. Even commercially and economically, it is not right. The gestation period should not be too long. Therefore, the first and foremost thing to which I give importance in the matter of railways in this country is the safety of the bridges. You know this monsoon weather in India makes a lot of difference. Many countries are not victims of monsoons or cloudbursts. So the Minister should not try to argue with the House that it was only one accident or that only a few people died. It is not a question of the number of people who died or the number of accidents that took place. It demonstrates the sense of seriousness and gravity that we actually associate with certain happenings. We should find out why a certain accident took place and see that it does not happen again. Nine bogies of the Grand Trunk Express derailed recently. I do not know why it happened. I do not think the Minister made any statement about it on the floor of the House. In fact, we need not ask for a statement. Whenever any accident occurs causing injuries to human beings on a scale like that, the Minister should voluntarily report to the House. We should not be dependent on newspaper information. That will not do.

Now let me come to the performance of 1976-77 and how the railway administration makes its estimates. In 1976-77 the budgeted surplus was Rs. 8.98 crores and the revised estimates came to Rs. 25.67 crores. And now the estimated surplus has come to Rs. 65 crores. How do the figures vary like this? Are they called estimates? They are not estimates; they are speculations as in

election results. Something should be done in the railway administration to see that things are not projected in this fashion. What is the grand thing that has happened that the revised estimates of Rs. 35 crores have jumped to Rs. 65 crores? There must be a proper method of estimating. It only means that the people in the administration are not aware of what is actually happening, how the trends are developing. Changes do not take place overnight. There must be some reasoning. The Minister has fortunately told us that the current year will be giving us about Rs. 32 to Rs. 33 crores. I congratulate the railway administration. . . (*Time bell rings*).

In the end, Sir, I would like to plead with the railway administration about the problems that the railways face, particularly the multiplicity of gauges and the various types of traction. When the Minister is talking in terms of decentralisation and relieving the Ministry particularly of the obligation of execution—keeping only general policy matters—I would say that an integrated transport policy as such has got to be evolved. During the 30 years after we became independent, though there have been many suggestions, we have not brought about an integrated transport policy. The whole burden is being taken by the railways. Road transport has come in a very important way to cut across in the progress of the railways. We might gloat that we have put in so many lakhs of trucks on the road, so many miles of road has been laid, and so on. But from the national point of view every tonne of diesel oil that is consumed on road transport is bringing to the country a national loss. With the same quantum of oil the railways can carry four or five times the goods carried by road transport. Now the question is whether we should allow road transport to expand in this unplanned way? Have the railways and the road transport sat together and discussed the question? What is the share of the road trans-

port and in what spheres? Then, we have horribly neglected inland water transport. We have no integrated coastal shipping. We do not know what the air-cargo liftings are. If the Minister finds any reasoning in what I said, let him take the initiative for coordinating the activities of these various Ministries or constitute an expert committee if one has not already been appointed—many commissions and committees are being set up everyday. So let him appoint a committee to go into the rail transport, road transport, inland water transport, air transport, etc. There is the fuel policy. An expert committee submitted its report. I do not know what decisions the Government has taken on that report. Fuel is very important. I would like the Minister to take this House into confidence and tell us whether he will venture to go in for electric locomotion or he will expand dieselisation as is being done all over the world. Scientists and technocrats and entrepreneurs have all come to this view now. Petroleum is not meant to be burnt away.

You can bring out more than ten thousand varieties of petroleum products. You can bring even food out of it. Simply because diesel is more economical than steam locomotion, can you go in for all out diesel traction? Where is the oil in the country? This is a policy matter. I am not objecting to dieselisation if it is necessary for economic transport or freight movement in this country. The point is that steam locomotion has to be there for a long time in this country. You have actually stopped production of steam locomotives. I do not agree with you. You are only allowing the existing steam locomotives to spend their lives and then wither away. We have the fuel for the steam locomotives. We have plenty of steam coal. Should not our transport system be developed and be based on fuel available within the country? Therefore, I would suggest that the Railway Minister must sit with the Minister for

Energy and see that power generation is organised at pit-heads. I can write an essay on this. Our railways only consume 2 per cent of the electrical energy in this country. Even oil they consume only 10 per cent. But the road transport is consuming about 80 per cent and it is wasting all our fuel. I am sure the Railway Minister will take initiative in developing an integrated transport system in our country and see to it that it is based on the fuel available in this country. Let the Minister also re-examine the decision taken on steam locomotion. He should also take up with the Energy Minister the question of generation of power at the pit-heads. This is very important. Let him do this instead of going in for new lines. Expansion is quite another thing. If you go in for new lines, a stage may come when your maintenance budget may be higher than the development budget at a particular point of time. And without maintenance you cannot have efficiency. Without maintenance you cannot keep the wheel going. (*Time bell rings*). Therefore, the immediate tasks are the bridges have to be reconstructed, doubling of the track is very necessary in the interest of efficiency. The metre gauge and narrow gauge present problems. The route line in this category is about 49 per cent. But they do not move even 25 per cent of the goods. This is actually a problem. These are matters which I wanted to bring to the notice of the Railway Minister with a constructive approach to the whole problem. I am not making these suggestions in a critical spirit. I hope the Railway Minister, when he comes next year before this House, will certainly show to us that he has done something much more than what Kamalapati ji has done.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA (Bihar): Sir, I must congratulate our worthy Railway Minister in presenting a budget where there has been no increase either in fair or freight. For years together we have been see-

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ing budgets with some percentage of increase either in fare or freight. This is the first time when there has been no increase in either.

I am thankful to him for reducing the cost of platform ticket by 20 paise. If I mistake not, it began with 10 paise and then it was first increased to 20 paise; then 25 paise and then 50 paise. I do not know why my friend was upset by the reduction in the price of platform tickets. With 50 paise for a platform ticket can a poor man visit the platform? Or, can children or students afford to have a look at our railways or the new type of rolling stock we have? This by itself is an education for them.

But I must mention—I mentioned it here about two years ago—that there are malpractices in the case of platform tickets. I have seen such things in the New Delhi Railway Station. When the people come out from the platform, the Ticket Collector collects the platform tickets, but sells them outside, and I have seen this myself. I would request the honourable Railway Minister to take note of this and, if possible, to stop it.

Sir, I must congratulate the honourable Railway Minister for taking back all the staff retrenched during the period of the emergency. But I would also request him to do one thing. If any officers are found guilty of negligence or if they have ill-treated the railway staff, firm action should be taken against them. For any excesses committed by the officers or the officials during the emergency period, during the Congress regime, such officers or officials should be brought to book.

Sir, it is a good thing that the receipts from the railway freight and fares have increased and the honourable Minister has also mentioned that

they would be increasing the net receipt by about 32 crores of rupees which, I think, is a very welcome sign. The working expenses have also not increased even though we have taken back the retrenched staff. Sir, the Railways' indebtedness to the General Revenues has also gone down from Rs. 477.18 crores to about Rs. 440 crores. This is also a welcome sign. The Plan outlays have also been reduced from Rs. 501 crores to Rs. 480 crores and this is a welcome sign. The new railway lines, 25 under construction and three more planned, are a welcome feature. Although it is true that many railway lines which have been started about ten years ago have not been completed so far, it must be said that the construction work takes time. Moreover, there are some officials who do not care for these things or the Ministers themselves may also not be interested in the construction of such lines. But I would request the honourable Minister to see that whatever construction work has been started is taken up earnestly and seriously and the work is completed and I hope that the public would be given a chance of travelling on the new railway lines. This will also certainly add to the economy of the region concerned.

Sir, the proposed introduction of double-decker coaches and provision of more amenities to the Second Class passengers is a very welcome sign. The introduction of De luxe trains with air-conditioned coaches in which people can travel without paying extra money, more than the First Class fare, which we used to pay earlier, is also a very good amenity which is being provided to the Second Class passengers. He has also mentioned that more and more such trains will be started and more and more faster trains and air-conditioned trains will be started. This is also a very welcome development. The Minister has also made a state-

ment that coaches would be increased from 18 to 20 in a train. I welcome that also because there would be no overcrowding in the Second Class compartments and I hope my friend, Mr. Raju, will not be losing his weight by travelling by these trains or going to the platforms in the future.

The honourable Railway Minister has mentioned the other day that those who have been taken back have shown better results now after coming back to their jobs and good employer-employee relationship is very essential for better and quicker results. So I hope that these things will be followed by our railway officers.

Sir, the most important point which I have come to know is the simplification of the settlement of claims. Small customers or consigners or consignees were faced with a lot of inconvenience in getting their claims settled, and it is very heartening to know that the Minister has mentioned that it will not take more than six weeks to get the claims settled. This is a very welcome sign for all the small traders and petty shopkeepers or big traders in this country, and they will not be deprived of the legitimate claims which sometimes drag on for two or three years at a time.

Sir, the participation of labour in management is a must. It is a new technique in management. This is a welcome sign, and we heartily congratulate the Railway Minister for this move.

Ad hoc appointments have to be made. But I request that as soon as you find people good at their jobs, *ad hoc* appointments should be made permanent.

Employees' demands sometimes are very tall. But I hope the hon. Minister will take into consideration the human side of it and will see that all the legitimate demands of the employees, as far as possible, are met by the Government. If the present trend.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can continue after lunch.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA: I will take one or two minutes more and finish.

The present trend of having more profits out of the railways continues. I congratulate the Railway Minister for presenting a budget where there is no increase in freight costs. If there is any increase in this, then black marketeering also thrives and the road traffic also increases. When there is no increase in freight charges, I am sure there will not be any increase in road transport charges also. This will certainly benefit our Indian society.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned to meet at 2 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at four minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at four minutes past two of the clock, Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr Dhabe.

SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the speech of the Railway Minister is most disappointing. He had promised in the last speech that he would say something more and give some

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indication of what he wants to do about the labour problems.

Sir, the strike of 1974 was the strike for certain demands—parity of wages with public sector undertakings, need-based minimum wage, right of the Railway workers to get bonus, and others. So, on this, Sir, in para 25, he conveniently avoided the question and said: "It will require overall policy review and decision by the Government." Neither there is any assurance that these demands will be met by a certain time—three months or six months or within a year—nor is there any mention about the most important demand of parity of wages and the need-based minimum wage.

Sir, in this connection, I received a letter in reply to a question raised by me from the hon. Minister, Shri Madhu Dandavate, dated 9th June, 1977, wherein he has stated and I quote:

"This question has already been considered by the Third Pay Commission. After taking all factors into account, they were of the view that any comparison with the level of wages outside Government could not be confined only to the organised private or public sectors as the minimum wage in a large number of States was lower than that in the Central Government. Keeping in view the various factors like the lower per capita income of the country, the acute unemployment situation, the state of finances of the Central Government and the likely repercussions of a higher minimum wage on the finances of the State Governments, they recommended the minimum remuneration for the whole-time Central Government employees at the start of his career at Rs. 185 P.M. This recommendation was considered by

the Government who revised this minimum award to Rs. 196 P.M." Sir, it is a well-known fact that when negotiations took place, after the Pay Commission report, this was revised to Rs. 196 P.M. How does it stand with the demand for a parity with public sector undertakings where the wages are in the range of Rs. 425 or Rs. 430 in the steel industry or coal industry or other public undertakings? Sir, on this demand, the letter is very clear and the Government is not in a mood to consider it and it was only raised for purposes of the strike at that time. Sir, about the need-based minimum wage, there is no mention by the hon. Minister in his speech. The need-based minimum wage has got a definite concept and that concept has been well explained by the National Commission on Labour in its Report at page 237, para 16.28. Sir, I quote:

"16.28. The 15th Indian Labour Conference considered the question of minimum wage and adopted a resolution the relevant portions of which are reproduced below:

"2. With regard to the minimum wage fixation, it was agreed that the minimum wage was 'need-based' and should ensure the minimum human needs of the industrial worker, irrespective of any other consideration."

Then, Sir, what the minimum needs are have also been mentioned and I need not quote everything. They say that the minimum needs of food requirements, clothing requirements, housing, fuel, lighting and other miscellaneous items should be taken into consideration. Sir, the need-based minimum wage is the demand of all the working class and unless the need-based minimum wage is fixed or decided, no further progress is going to be made either in workers' parti-

cipation or in regard to more production in the country. And I expected that a stalwart like Shri Madhu Dandavate who was in the movement would make an announcement in this respect in his speech but it is conspicuous by the absence of any observation on the need-based minimum wage. Sir, I consider that it is high time the need-based minimum wage is fixed, and a beginning should have been made in the Railways itself because it is the largest public sector undertaking having the largest employment. Sir, in our country there are three departments like other undertakings in the public sector which are considered as industrial departments of the Government—the P&T, the Defence and the Railways which constitute 84 per cent of employees working in Government industrial undertakings.

Therefore, Sir, it is high time that this question about the need-based minimum wage is decided. Then, the same thing about the bonus. We have heard much about the payment of bonus and that bonus is a deferred wage. A mere declaration in the manifesto is not going to decide the question. Here is the test. Should the bonus be paid to the railway workers or not. Under the provisions of the Payment of Bonus Act, the employees of public sector undertakings are entitled to bonus if there are competitive private undertakings having an income of 20 per cent. Why is the discrimination being made even now? Why cannot the railway worker be given bonus as a deferred wage when the minimum wages are as low as Rs. 196? When the wages are so low, I think they are entitled to bonus and the Payment of Bonus Act should be suitably amended or, at least, the Railway Minister in his reply should tell us what he is going to do about the payment of bonus to railway employees.

Sir, the most important thing of his speech is contained in paragraph 18. I thought he is going to give better

employment and more employment opportunities. But there also he is most confusing and disappointing. Here it says that in order to create better employment opportunities and staff satisfaction due to improved avenues of promotion he has decided that no extension of service will be granted to any railway employee beyond the age of superannuation. In this connection, I would like to point out here, Sir, that recently a circular has been issued by the Ministry of Finance to all the Departments to the effect that they must start a reduction of 10 per cent of their employees. The result will be that no vacancies will be filled in. How does he say in paragraph 18 that posts falling vacant consequent upon promotions and retirements will be filled in? Posts will not be filled in, new posts will not be created and no overtime will be paid. All these directions have been condemned by all the Central Government employees organisations. Sir, the General Secretary of the National Federation of Indian Railways, which is one of the biggest federations, has criticised the Government decision on staff reduction. It has appeared in the 'Indian Worker' of the 13th June, 1977. Moreover, the trade unions are not being consulted. On the one hand, he says in paragraph 18 that better employment opportunities will be created and, on the other hand, the Government has stated that they will reduce the staff, retrench the staff. Sir, is it not a fact that a circular has been issued to all the zonal railways to prepare schemes on the lines of the circular of the Finance Ministry asking them to enforce retrenchment, not to fill in the existing posts and not to create any new posts? If that is so, I fail to understand how the Government and the Railway Minister say in paragraph 18 that they are going to create better employment opportunities and staff satisfaction in his respect.

Sir, I consider this a very retrograde step, which the Government is taking.

[Shri S. W. Dhabe]

When we are thinking of having more employment opportunities, when the need is to give more employment to the people, there is a suggestion and a definite mood of the Government which is to axe the working class. This is very reprehensible. Since 1952 there is a permanent negotiating machinery created by an agreement between the workers and the management in the Railways. There is also a Joint Consultative Machinery set up for negotiations with Central Government employees. These bodies have got specific powers and one of the powers is that any question regarding pay scales, emoluments, etc. should be considered at the national level with the representatives of the National Federations. I find that decisions are taken without consulting trade unions or their representatives and without putting up the matters before permanent or joint consultative machinery. Is this the democracy which they want to usher in in our country? Is it not dictatorship or *tanashahi* if they take *ex parte* decisions behind the back of the employees? Sir, the most important question is if they do not agree on important matters. They have to refer them to *ad hoc* tribunals. And tribunal is the final authority between the Government and the employees. The sacred agreement has been violated by the Railway Ministry in this respect. I must say with sorrow about what he has stated in paragraph 4 that he has reinstated all the employees who were victimised during the May, 1974 strike. In his statement yesterday the Railway Minister said that out of 16,000 and odd, 16,000 employees had already been reinstated by the previous Government. 627 were not reinstated for certain charges or some criminal cases against them. Now, what is the decision of the Government? The ordinary meaning of reinstatement is that workers are entitled to full wages from the date of their removal from service,

but here they are paid half the wages and full allowances. It is said that suspension wages are paid to those who had taken part in the 1974 strike. Is it not a fact that the suspension wages are paid only when the employees are found guilty of some charge? Is it a sort of penalty which has been levied by the Railway Minister on those persons who took part in the strike, by paying them suspension wages, half the wages? When the question of principle is involved, I think, they should have been paid full wages without any blemish. I have got complaints. I hope the Minister sitting here would convey it to the hon. Railway Minister that there are persons who were convicted but acquitted in appeal and they are also paid suspension wages. If a person is acquitted of a charge, the normal course is that he is entitled to full wages. Therefore, I will like the Minister to consider all the aspects and modify this decision of paying suspension wages to the employees for taking part in the strike of 1974.

In this connection, I will further like to say that the whole Speech speaks of amenities to the passengers and other things but it has not taken into consideration the welfare of the total working force which is about 14 lakhs. They are faced with many problems. One of the problems which they are facing is about the casual labour. Some of these people speak from their housetops that they want to follow the Gandhian method. What is the Gandhian method? The Gandhian method is to improve the lot of *daridranarain*, of the lowest of the low, and here not a word has been said in the Speech as to what they want to do about the casual labour. I will like to refer to the Indian Railways Year Book 1975-76. At page 104, under the heading 'Railway Staff', it is said: 'With a work force of 14.6 lakhs regular employees and 2.8 lakhs casual labour, the Railways are the largest employers by far in the land and one of the biggest employers in

the world'. And what are the ideal standards that this biggest employer is putting before the working class of the country? Is it proper to encourage such a large number as casual labour and what are the wages being paid to them? They are paid wages below the subsistence level. That is also clearly stated on page 108.

On page 108, it is stated that they would be paid wages as casual labour. On page 112 of the Report, in Para 9.1, it is stated that the casual labour are generally being paid at current local daily rates. The local daily rate is half of the wages of the railway employees. They get about Rs. 3 to Rs. 4. These persons are employed for a long time but they are neither paid provident fund, nor gratuity or other terminal benefits. Such a large chunk of labour is employed on a very low salary. It is the unanimous demand of all the Federations of railway employees that even if you cannot keep them on permanent jobs, at least you should pay them the same rates which are paid to the lowest category of the railway employees. I hope the Railway Minister will consider this aspect.

Even in the matter of employment, the position of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes is very poor. On page 106, it is clear that the quota is not filled. The number is very small in Class I and Class II. But the worst part of the employment structure is that out of 14 lakh employees, the women employees total only 21,490. I think, Sir, this is one service where women can be employed usefully in large numbers. I hope the hon. Minister will revise the labour policy to ensure more employment of women in the railways.

In the last paragraph, Sir, the Railway Minister has made an appeal that the working class and organised labour will support the Railways in making the Railway service-oriented and productive. Sir, it is a well-known pri-

ncipal of collective bargaining that the working class should be assured of the fruits of productivity. Mere giving of sermons to working class is not going to help any scheme of productivity. There must be economic incentives for the same. The only economic incentive which is universally accepted is that there must be a sharing of gains in productivity. There may be some difficulty in giving bonus under the Payment of Bonus Act. When performance bonus is being paid to workers in other sectors like the coal and other mining industries, I don't understand what is the difficulty in the Railways. Why should not they pay bonus to the railway employees if they really want productivity and efficiency to go up? I appeal to the Railway Minister to call a conference of the Railway Federations and prepare a scheme for the payment of performance bonus to the workers.

Lastly, I would like to say that it is a very dismal Budget speech. There is no mention of the rising spiral of prices. Railway is one administration which is the biggest employer and should certainly provide a public distribution system for giving essential commodities at the fair-price shops. With the rising prices and erosion of the value of the wages, how does the Minister expect that the workers will have the enthusiasm to work more? I suggest, Sir, that the Railway Minister should consider the establishment of a public distribution system. At least, where there are 300 or more railway employees, there should be a distribution agency or a fair-price shop so that the workers can get all their essential articles at fixed prices. With these words, Sir, I suggest that the Railway Minister should re-consider the labour policy so that efficiency in the Railways will go up and it will become more profitable. Thank you.

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND (Punjab): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, at first look, it seems a good Budget but a deeper look makes one feel that

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it is merely populist and only plays to the gallery. No new motivation or outlook is visible. There has been no increase in fares and freight. But so it was last year. People were expecting relief in fares for the second class travellers, at least for those who travel over short distances. The prices of other commodities are shooting up and the common man is undergoing great suffering. In spite of that, we have only one relief. That relief is in relation to the platform tickets. Now, Sir, I want to remind this House that the platform ticket was increased to 50 paise on the plea that there is so much over-crowding on the platforms. I want to know whether that over-crowding has gone. Secondly, I want to know whether the poorer sections of the people receive their guests at the platform or at the exits of the railways. So, this is some sop to some middle class people only.

Then, Sir, about one matter the hon. Minister has been very prompt, that is, his promise to restore all those who were victims of the 1974 strike action. He has been prompt and he fulfilled the promise made then. But when I had repeatedly taken up the question of those categories of unions and loco and running staff, people who had gone into action a few months earlier in 1973 and 1974, the hon. Minister was just trying to bypass his responsibility by saying, "You cannot start with 1947". Now, Sir, 1973 end and 1974 is not 1947 and these are the people who had very genuine grievances and the Government conceded those grievances when it accepted the Miabhoy Report and said that for the loco and running staff the Miabhoy Report would be implemented by the end of December, 1976. Now it is already five and a half months and I would like to learn from the hon. Minister whether the loco and running staff have been given relief.

Because of the fact that their grievances were found to be genuine, a settlement was arrived at, it is their due that no punitive action from that period should be fixed and it is in the spirit of that decision that the hon. Minister should announce and implement it.

Then, Sir, another thing I want to point out is that a certain punctuality was achieved during the emergency in the running of trains, but that was at the cost of putting more burden on the running staff. It was the running staff that was taking all the burden and there were more chasers appointed than the people who were actually running the locomotives. Their places of rest and stay were in a horrible condition. I myself visited the place in Kanpur and it was much below standard. Now, Sir, the point is that without using the upper categories of staff and without giving additional hands to the people, you cannot avoid late running of the trains and you cannot avoid accidents. I hope the hon. Minister will take note of the fact that of late the rate of accidents is going up and trains are also not running on time as they used to.

Then there are certain promises made regarding the long-distance trains that will be introduced now being made janata trains only. Now, Sir, in the same speech the hon. Minister says that there is not much scope for introducing new long-distance trains and then he talks of making them janata trains. I have two observations to make. Number one: He should have been specific as to how many long distance trains are going to be introduced during the year under discussion for which he has presented his Budget. Then if he examines the proposition strictly from the cost accounting point of view, from the point of view of commercial possibilities, he would find that absolutely denying all travel to upper class passengers in

these long-distance trains will not be a very good thing. It looks all right on the face of it but when you go deeper into, what will you find? It means that people who are old and sick, people who need stretching space while travelling long distance, are being pushed to the aircraft. And the Indian Airlines also do not have enough capacity to take over all that burden. So to me it only looks to be a populist sop which will create problems rather than solve them. Then there is no concrete idea as to how many trains will be introduced.

Then, Sir, we have been told that because of overcrowding the hon. Minister is thinking of introducing double-decker trains and he says that an experiment is going on. We heard of the double-decker trains before the Janata Government came in, but I want to know the definite date by which this amenity will be available and the extent to which overcrowding would be reduced.

Then, Sir, the hon. Minister has talked of labour participation in management. When he spoke during the debate on the interim budget last time, I intervened to tell him that the previous Government, especially the Deputy Minister of Railways, were not even acknowledging communications from the M.Ps. and I happened to be at the head of an unrecognised union. The hon. Minister was good enough to tell me that he would not encourage representations from M.Ps. but he would encourage representation from the trade unions, even though unrecognised. This was a very healthy thing, a wholesome departure because that would provide for genuine grievances of the workers being met. But now in the speech I only find reference to recognised federations, those two federations at the level of the Centre also where corporate enterprise groupism is suggested and at the zonal level also.

I would like to know what will happen to the unrecognized unions when some of the unrecognized unions have influence in local places and some of their leaders are held in greater respect than the leaders of the recognized unions who—I would not go into the details—somehow have not earned a very good reputation. Now, Sir, unrecognized unions have to find a place in the scheme of things if the Minister is serious about entertaining complaints from the workers' unions, which is a healthy step but is entirely lacking. I have to be enlightened as to how to go about this business of making representations on behalf of the workers about their genuine grievances by the unions which have not unfortunately been recognized.

Then, Sir, I will come to the next point. There seems to be no balanced outlook. It is rather a lopsided Budget that is presented to us. One thing I would like to ask is: Has there been any attempt to go into the question of intensive utilization of rolling-stock taking into consideration cost accounting? This is something which the Railway have never done so far and I was expecting that an experienced trade unionist with a very good past record of service to the working classes would look into it and he would appoint somebody to go into the question of maximum utilization of the rolling-stock and see what way the cost accounting will move with this.

Then, Sir, there has been a reduction of about Rs. 21 crores in the Plan outlay and that reduction is accompanied by a very paltry sum for electrification. I know that electrification requires intensive capital investment. With dieselisation going on and diesel prices going up and oil prices being very uncertain, it has been treated in a summary fashion and the paltry sum of Rs 19 crores is just a sop. It means that there is no perspective at all before the Minister about electrification.

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Then, Sir, the other point is that while there is talk of re-modelling of trains—it is very good that all the trains will have one broad gauge—and while the passengers' amenities are talked about, there is nothing about the workers' amenities. What about their housing conditions? What about the horrible insanitary conditions of the colonies in which they live? I would like the honourable Minister to go to the Kashmiri Gate loco-staff colony and see what a terrible hole it is. I also mentioned last year about my visit to Bhatinda, Ambala and Jullundur and said that one prominent feature of the railway colonies at all these places was the open drainage which was horribly stinking. And then the housing conditions. As a measure to improve the housing conditions in Bhatinda, it was promised that the houses of the upper class officers which were old would be partitioned and given to the employees. Later on, the plea of the emergency, all that was put a stop to. Now, there is such acute housing shortage for the local workers that it is really horrible to look at their conditions. But there is nothing at all in the Budget proposals about the workers' amenities in regard to housing and other matters. And look even at the places of work. I had visited the yards where the train examination takes place. There is neither water nor shelter there; there is not even proper light there so that the trains coming there for examination at right time can be properly examined—and that leaves a potential for accidents. I would like the honourable Minister to look into this side of the thing also.

Then, Sir, all our trains, except air-conditioned trains, are dust-gathering trains. There is train which was introduced in the Punjab last year, called the *Shane Punjab*. You know what 'Shane Punjab' means. But it is the same train which comes in the morning from Amritsar, goes back to Amritsar every night flying and then comes as the *Flying Mail*. Whenever

I get into from Jullundur, I find the whole train is full of dust. I think that by properly looking after the windows and the latches and by adjusting them properly, putting some gadgets, it is possible to avoid all this.

Then, Sir, in respect of the *Shane Punjab*, I had earlier also suggested that instead of sending it back flying, it could easily be arranged that the *Kalka-Amritsar Mail*, which is sent up to Pathankot, could for half of the night stay there and could make the journey to Ludhiana and go back. There being no hurry, a very properly cleaned *Flying Mail* could run because *Kalka-Amritsar Mail* ultimately returns at night, at about 12.45.

Then, Sir, a word about fare anomalies. Earlier, a previous Minister of Railways, once increased the ACC fares very much. Then it was found that very few people went by the air-conditioned class. Then there was a drastic reduction. Now the anomaly is there that you travel by ACC chair car second class from Jullundur to Delhi. You spend Rs. 39. You are properly conditioned whether the weather is hot or cold and you come out as fresh as you entered. And you travel by first class, you pay Rs. 71 and you come out in a very dirty condition. Now this is very unfair because in the *Flying Mail* there is no sitting or sleeping berth. In first class it has no chair-car. I had suggested that the anomaly should be removed, but nothing has been done.

Now, Sir, some new lines have been mentioned, about 25 of them. The credit cannot go to the present Minister alone because they were initiated earlier. They may be completed during his regime or later on. I do not know how long it will take. But in Punjab no new line has been laid down for the past one decade and more though Punjab has a very high potential for railway services. There was a survey conducted. There is a long standing demand that Chandigarh should be put on the main line

by constructing a line between Ludhiana to Chandigarh and Chandigarh to Jagadhari. The Punjab Government had also promised to bear part of the expenses. There is no mention here of this line. Then, Sir, last year a survey was conducted in the heart land of wheat about a year ago about laying a line from Kotkapura through Zira to closer to the Majha region. But there Makhu which will take Malwa region is no mention. Then last year we were told that the Rajdhani Express, instead of terminating in Delhi, will go to Chandigarh. I don't know what happened to it later on. There was an announcement that there will be a day-time fast train to Bhatinda and back and we found nothing in this budget which will meet the real difficulties of Punjab.

Apart from this, I want to ask whether there is any improvement in the pilferage situation. My colleague, Shri Yashpal Kapoor, is there. I think he will enlighten the way the things happen in the New Delhi Station where trucks laden with rotten fruits are brought. These rotten fruits are exchanged with the fruits brought by railway wagons. Good fruit removed and a lot of *golemal* goes on. This could not be removed earlier. It should be removed now. Is there no corruption at the reservation counters? They are the cess pool of corruption. Then, Sir, take the law and order situation. There are thefts and violence. I received only this morning a letter from Ludhiana. It is from the All-India Station Master's Association. Briefly the letter says that on the 29th of May, Shri Sita Ram, Assistant Sub-Inspector, G.R.P., Ludhiana, was occupying a first-class compartment along with his friends. The poor Guard wanted them to vacate it. He was beaten by the ASI, Sita Ram. He is still beyond the reach of the law. Two of his companions were arrested. They were taken to hospital and were in intoxication. Opium was recovered from them. So, this is the state of affairs in the law and order situation in the railways. As regards security, under

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the Janata Government crime is going up. This the honourable Minister should look into. I have another point to make. Shri Dandavate was also talking about policy review in the context of the over-all financial resources. It seems to me that Shri Dandavate has a more suave fashion and a more round about way. As the Prime Minister told the Central employees the other day, they are not prepared to consider any demands of the working class, and if they go on this way it will not take long for the working class to get disillusioned.

Then Sir, there is the case of closing down of Bihar Martin Light Railway and absorption of the staff. The staff have already seen the honourable Minister. In fact, they wanted to sit in *dharna* outside his house. He has promised to look into their demands. I hope that he will find possible at least to absorb them if not to do something more.

Sir, next I want to come to the Railway Board. Now there is an announcement by the Railway Minister that the Administrative Reforms Commission report of 1970 will after all be implemented now. I will ask who was holding it up from being implemented. It was the Railway Board itself. And, unfortunately, I am very seriously saying this that the previous Ministers had been the mouth-pieces of the Railway Board. My honourable friend Shri Qureshi was good enough to tell me that he was allowing MPs' representations to the Railway Board and whatever replies the Board was giving he was passing on. The Minister was acting as a post-office. What I want to say is that it is not enough to implement 1970's recommendation. What is called for is the abolition of the Railway Board. The Railway Board is a Ministry within a Ministry. It is confined to the bureaucrats of the railways who reach the level of the membership of the Railway Board and at a fairly advanced age. And the Railways are a public service organisation also, apart from being a commercial organisation. And the Railway Board Mem-

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bers have no outlook of public service at all. I think that the Railway Ministry also should not choose its executive cadre only from the Railways. Like any other Ministry, there should be inter-Ministry transfers and public-men should also be associated. Staff with experience from other departments of the Government should be taken there because the record of the Railway Board is a very bad record and the Railways were in the red for more than a decade till the Emergency came and the negative feature began to go.

Now, I want to point out another thing. Repeatedly it has been pointed out to the Railway Board that it should prune its budget, that it should reduce its staff. But it did not even accept the recommendation that instead of having Additional Members, it should have Advisory Members. What is the strength of its staff? I happened to serve on the Railway Convention Committee. It has 379 technical staff and 1,297 non-technical staff. When a technical body is having a 1 : 4 ratio between technical staff and non-technical staff, one can understand the outlook of the Railway Board and how it takes up things.

The production units under the Railway Board and the Managers of the production units complain that because of the interference of the Railway Board and because of the centralisation of power in the Railway Board—now the centralisation is going in relation to the General Managers of the Zonal Railways—they were inhibited from giving of their best to the nation. Though so much has been invested, the production units are captive units and they produce only that much which they are ordered to produce. For example, the Chittaranjan workshop will only produce what the Railway Board asks them to produce. There can be fuller utilisation of the capacity. For instance, the Middle-east countries have got petro-dollars and they want to open new lines. So the extra capacity could be used for

export to them. Then there was an organisation set up, called the Projects and Equipment Corporation, to duplicate the work of export promotion and this Corporation also has been sitting on the heads of the production units and not co-ordinating or co-operating with their Managers. So you can examine the Railway Board from any point of view. I did not expect Mr. Dandavate to just tinker with the problem and implement this seven-year-old thing. What I was expecting was that he would take a radical decision. The overwhelming opinion in both Houses of Parliament over the last so many years has been that the Railway Board must go. In the Railway Convention Committee—I am not making a secret of it—there was near-unanimity that this body has to be disbanded and there is no other way out if the Railways have to work properly. Now we are going back to that old recommendation. Perhaps it is because Mr. Morarji Desai was heading the Administrative Reforms Commission and the Commission had ultimately held that the Railway Board should be restructured.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE (Nominated). May I ask one question—Mr. Anand, we have always been hearing that the Railway Board must go, but nobody has so far said, during my experience of 20 years in this House, what is the alternative for it. Could you give an alternative?

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND: My alternative is like this. At the policy-making level, the staff in the Ministry must not be recruited from the Railways alone. It should be treated as any other Ministry. After all, it is only an accident that the Railway Board, the Railway Budget etc., have come to us from the British.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: The Railway Board is the Ministry of Railways.

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND: That is the whole objection. The Railway Board is interchangeable

with the Ministry of Railways. And the Ministers of Railways have always been the mouthpieces of the bureaucrats. At the policy-making level, it should not be confined only to those who have come from below on promotion in the Railway Board. From all possible competent sources, the policy-making people must be integrated, including some from the Railways. And the executive set-up should be only for execution, not inter-changeable....

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: But policy-making is done by the Minister.

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND: On paper only. That is why I mentioned Shafi Qureshi. (*Time-bell rings*) Sir, I want to refer to a small point which my colleague has passed on to me. The South-eastern Railways gave this year a surplus of about Rs. 70 crores, but little has been done proportionately in turn for Orissa. Orissa is backward and if really this much surplus is there from that Zonal Railway, something should be done for the poor area because the hon. Minister is on record that for the development of backward areas and backward regions, he would do more. I hope he will look into this.

I think I should close here. Thank you very much.

SHRI YASHPAL KAPUR (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, before I deal with the speech of the honourable Railway Minister while presenting the Budget, I would like to give you and the Members of the House a little background of Mr. Madhu Dandavate's thinking a few years ago. On June 7 this year while addressing the Eastern Railwaymen's Union at Moghulsarai he said, the Railway Budget which will be presented on June 11 in Parliament will be "unique in the history of the railways". Sir, the Budget and the speech presented to the House are a mockery of the word "unique". Can anybody honestly say that in this Budget there is any unique feature except playing to the galleries, making long promises but short of action? The cost of the platform ticket is pro-

posed to be brought down by 20 paise and the reason given was that the minimum rail ticket costs 30 paise and therefore it should be equal to that. I think this argument does not go with it. If one purchases a rail ticket worth 30 paise, one can travel a few kilometres. But if one purchases a platform ticket of 30 paise, one can just walk a few steps from outside the railway station on to the platform. What is the percentage of profit that they make on the platform ticket. The printing material used for the ticket plus the expenditure on the sales service would cost a maximum of 5 paise per platform ticket whereas they are charging 30 paise. It means after deducting the printing and sales service cost, there is 600 per cent profit. I would recommend only a 100 per cent profit and request the Railway Minister—if he is really sincere in allowing more people to go to railway stations to see off their relations and see the trains as happen in rural areas where many people want to watch the trains—to bring down the cost of the platform ticket to 10 paise only.

Then, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the debate on the Railway Budget in March, 1974. The honourable Minister, as Member of the then Lok Sabha, touched on certain points with which he has now dealt in the present Budget as Railway Minister. He said at that time, "But I want to criticise the Railway Board as an institution, its structure, its method of functioning and the wasteful expenditure in which the Railway Board is indulging. Today the Railway Board has become almost a Government within Government. If you ask me I would say that the Railway Board has really become a Government. And what about the Ministry? It has merely become the footboard of the Railway Board." Sir, in his speech he said the recommendations of the ARC has been accepted. This was said by successive Ministers. Nobody denies that. But now he has not given any specific indication in what way the Railway Board is

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going to be reorganised. And it seems for the past three months he is only travelling on the footboard as Railway Minister and has not yet occupied the compartment. That is why I think he has failed to make any concrete proposals in the Budget now.

Then he said in March, 1974:

"The expense must fall more on the affluent sections."

I won't go beyond this that the poor sections must be benefited. But the proposal that he has made by not mentioning anything about increase or reduction in the railway fare will help the affluent sections more than others. He has thus tried to please all the sections of the society, more so the affluent classes.

Then there is no mention in his speech about the Railway Protection Force whom the Railway Minister, as a Member of Parliament in 1974, called the Railway Pilferage Force. Now he has not thought it proper to make any suggestion or bring anything before this House to indicate in what way he is going to reform the Railway Pilferage Force to a real Railway Protection Force.

Then about railways in the backward areas. Shri Dandavate had said that he represented a constituency from the West Kongan. He was very vehement in demanding the expeditious construction of the railway line there. In the explanatory memorandum for this year's budget, I find that for the Wani-Chanaka railway link the expenditure on which up to 1976-77 Rs. 135.52 lakhs, the Minister has been very kind to the people of his area and has made a provision of only Rs. 10 lakhs for carrying on this work during this year. So I do not know in what way he is sympathetic to the backward areas in the country.

Now about bonus. On this issue Shri Dandavate seems to have changed his stand which he had proclaimed

from various patforms. In 1974 he said:

"I will say only one thing about bonus. If our concept of bonus is very clear in our minds, if we accept it as a deferred wage and not some sort of wage which is *ex gratia*, so long as there is gap between the present wage and the living wage, that has to be partially filled up. Wherever such gap exists in the railways, it has to be partially at least filled up."

But now the overall fiscal policy, availability of resources and all other things are being brought in.

The next point that I would like to take from his previous speech is about the decasualisation of the casual labour. In 1974 Shri Dandavate was very worried and very anxious about these people numbering, I think, about three to four lakhs in the railways. But I do not know why he did not have the courage to announce it as a matter of policy in his budget speech that all the casual labour will stand decasualised from the day they become regular employees of the railways. I think this is another failure on his part to put anything constructive before us. Now, Sir, there is another matter on which the Government could have made a policy announcement. I say this because, speaking in 1974 in the Lok Sabha on the Railway Budget, the present Railway Minister said something like this on the question of compensation and I would like to quote him again. He said:

"I will say only one thing about compensation. Today, we are putting a premium on death by a particular mode. If a person travelling by air dies, it is a heavenly death because his family members would get a compensation of one lakh rupees. But, if the same person dies in a railway accident, his family members would get only fifty thousand rupees."

These are his words. Here again, Sir, I would like to ask him one question.

What prevented the Minister from making an announcement bringing the compensation on at par with the compensation paid by the airlines?

Now, Sir, I come to the present Budget and the Budget proposals. The claim that has been made by the Minister that he has presented a surplus Budget is, I think, only based on the jugglery that our accountants or the bureaucrats are capable of making from year to year. Sir, it has been proved by the figures given to us that the surplus last year amounted to Rs. 65 crores, practically double that of what the Railway Minister put before us in the beginning of the year. That was criticised by Mr. Raju asking as to why should an estimate of only Rs. 35 crores when it was prepared actually was as high as Rs. 65 crores. But that is the fact. This year, Sir, it is claimed that the net surplus will be Rs. 32.50 crores. Now, if you look at the record of the indebtedness to the General Revenues, Sir, you will find that last year it remained at the same level while this year you will find it to be about Rs. 466 crores and the indebtedness to the General Revenues will go up by about Rs. 15 crores according to the Budget proposals made by the Minister for 1977-78. Now, if you take this into account, you will see that the surplus is far less than what is claimed.

Then, Sir, there is another thing which I would like to bring to your notice. It is about how the surplus Budget has been managed. I would request you to have a look at the continuing works, that is, the 25 lines on which the work is on for the last two or three years and also the three new lines which have been sanctioned. You will notice that these were accepted in principle last year itself and it is not a new acceptance by the Railway Board and these three lines are not something new which are now being given to the country. Sir, I have marked many things in these books and I would like to read them

out. But, in order to save time, I would like to read out only one or two items. Now, take the case of the Sabarmati-Gandhinagar BG line. The expenditure in 1976-77 was of the order of Rs. 308 lakhs. Now, this line was expected to be completed by 26th January, 1977. The provision made for the year 1977-78—it is on page 22 of the Explanatory Memorandum—is only Rs. 2 lakhs! 26th January, 1977 has already passed and the balance of Rs. 23.61 lakhs has been left for the coming years during which the work is expected to be completed and if they spend at the rate of two lakhs a year, it will take for them at least 12 years to spend this amount of about Rs. 24 lakhs to complete the work. Why not spend Rs. 25 lakhs this year itself and complete the work so that this link is completed and the people start getting the benefit and the economy also gets developed?

3 P.M.

For the electrification of Panskura-Haldia Section, up till now Rs. 396.69 have been spent. For this year there is provision for Rs. 3 lakhs, leaving a balance of Rs. 8.91 lakhs. The same is the position with regard to housing for railway officers or railway employees. In these Budget proposals, Sir, you find there is very little that is going to be spent to provide new accommodation to the railway staff or the officers or for improving the condition of the quarters in which a very large number of railway employees are living. My friend Mr. Anand told about Kishanganj and other places. But there are many other places away from Delhi. In Lucknow there is a very important organisation, RDSO. I have visited them a number of times and I have seen the rotten condition in which the lower category staff are still living. Their quarters have tin asbestos sheets. Sir, you can well imagine the condition of their families during the summer or winter. But nothing has been done about it.

Talking of Janata trains, excuse me, Sir, this is only slogan-raising. There are already Janata trains running in this country. As one of the

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hon. Members has already pointed out, the Railway Minister in his speech has said the tracks are already saturated and there will be no possibility of adding new long-distance trains. But he suddenly remembers his loyalty to Gandhian and socialist principles and says: We will have "classless" fast Janata trains, a number of them, in the next year. What is the number? There is no mention of that. Janata trains are being run already. I do not know whether Mr. Dandavate has travelled in one of the Janata trains. Already there is only one class in the Janata trains. But you just want to change the label by calling the Janata trains as 'classless Janata trains'. Well, you please yourself.

Well, I was telling you about the quarters, Sir.... (Time bell rings).

I am sorry. I have to make a few more important points. I am very closely connected with the Railways. I hope you will give me a little more time.

In Tughlakabad, for 48 units, the anticipated expenditure is Rs. 26 lakhs. The allocation for this year is Rs. 5 lakhs. Are you going to complete these quarters in five years?

Sir, I will not go into the details. All these works are already there. There is no mention of any new works. If everything is worked out and justice done to the works already undertaken, that itself would reduce this Budget to a deficit budget and not a surplus budget as is claimed by the hon. Minister.

Now, Sir, the Railway Minister as I said, is still on the foot-board of the trains. But those trains whether goods train or passenger trains, are running very fast. I am sorry to state, Sir, that the Railway Minister did not have a word of thanks or congratulations or appreciation to the lakhs of railway workers who put in hard work during the last few years for the Railways to come out of the

red. He did not show even lip sympathy of them.

Sir, the speech made by the Railway Minister smacks of politics only. He is taking the credit for the reduction in railway platform tickets. He has repeated at least half-a-dozen times on the AIR, the T.V. and the newspapers that all those employees who had been dismissed or removed during the 1974 strike have been reinstated. What was their number? I think the total number of employees who had been effected was about 64,000. Out of these 64,000 employees, 60,000 had already been taken back. Court cases were pending against 2,000 had themselves gone to the Courts. There were another 2,000 remaining. By the time this figure was given, i.e. on the 28th of February, the number of employees remaining out of service due to that strike was a little more than 600. What a big achievement? I think it comes to 1 per cent if we take them as 647. Actually, their number is 627. If those who are in power today want to help those who involved themselves in destroying the national property by going on strike and affecting the Indian economy by about 800 crores of rupees and whose leaders Mr. Madhu Dandavate and Mr. George Fernandes had given a warning to the Government that if their demands were not accepted, there would be a strike, then it is O.K. Sir, strike is the right of the labour. Could not Mr. Madhu Dandavate, in his budget proposals, agree to meet all those demands which were called genuine demands by him and Mr. George Fernandes at that time had justified the strike? Why did he not accept all those demands just by one order after coming into power? What has happened to those demands? That is why I say that it smacks more of politics rather than being any constructive contribution to the running of the railways. You are giving amnesty to all those who took part in the 1974 strike. Well, it

is a human problem. I have nothing to say against that. What about those who went on strike, agitated, held demonstrations or gheraoed from 1968 to 1972? Why should they suffer? Be merciful to them also. Bring them back. Whatever punishment has been given to them should be removed and they should be let off and restored back to the services.

I have mentioned about the restructuring of the Railway Board. They say that the A.R.C. recommendations have been accepted. It is as far as I know, I am subject to correction, the A.R.C. recommended that the Railway Board should be turned into a statutory corporation. Why don't you accept that proposal? Say it openly instead of being vague. Convert the Railways into a corporation. You won't have to pay any interest on Rs. 470 crores or something like that which has been invested by the Government. You will get that money as capital. The corporation will be able to function in a more efficient manner with the Railway Minister guiding it on behalf of the Government. At present we are having the hotch-potch of powers which the Railway Board enjoys. Now the Railway Minister proposes to decentralise, to give more powers to the General Managers, the Divisional Superintendents and others. It would be better if a corporation comes into being.

Sir, the same vagueness is there in the proposals to amend the Indian Railways Act. It says that certain discussions have taken place with some people, with the Law Ministry and others and a second draft will be presented to the Parliament by the end of the year. At least, some inkling should have been given to us, to this hon. House, as to what was proposed in the second Draft. It may not be discussed now. We might have considered the amendments to the Railway Act when it came up, and the hon. Members would have made some useful contribution to amend the old Act.

Sir, there is the same thing in regard to the extension of service matter. Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, you have also been a Minister. And it is said day in and day out that there will be no extension but, of course, there will be an exception when nobody is available. So, that leaves the discretion either with the Minister or the Railway Board or whoever it is. The same words have been repeated in the speech of the Railway Minister. He has not said that there will be a blanket ban on granting extensions but he said that there could be exceptions. Now, who has that discretion and what for? And why not a blanket ban?

Then, Sir, participation of labour in management. The Minister has talked of what has already been done in the Railway Board. But has he cared to examine or to find out how the CEG is functioning at the Railway Board level, except that they have been given an office, a table and a chair, a telephone a sofa set? But what is happening in that room? Have any policy matters been discussed with the CEG? Have any decisions been taken by them? Since the last three months, the Minister is holding the reins of the Railways. Have any meetings with the CEG taken place? Have any decisions, specially policy decisions, been taken with their advice? If nothing has happened till now, then why and what for it should be extended to the zonal and divisional levels? As far as the joint councils at the plant level are concerned, they are already there. But have they been allowed to function effectively? What has been their contribution? Sir, I have been connected with some units of the public sector undertakings where the participation of workers in management was taken up very seriously, and that has contributed a lot to the successful functioning of the units like the BHEL and others. But in the Railways, it has been a dismal experience. These joint councils are there just in name without any effective participation of the workers.

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Sir, I would not say about the demands of the employees as I have already dealt with them. But the Minister could have announced about meeting those of the demands for which he and his hon. friends fought most valiantly for the sake of workers. But as there is no mention of it in his speech it raises doubts whether they have any real sympathy for the workers or it was just a political gimmick.

Sir, the Railway Minister has talked of discipline and very good industrial relations in the railways. While that should be the endeavour of every person whether he is a Minister or a Member of Parliament or a citizen, what in reality is the fact under the very nose of the Railway Minister in Delhi itself? Sir, at the Delhi Junction, the railway book-stall which had been there, I think, for the last 30 or 40 years was forcibly closed. There was a dharna. But the hawkers are selling the books on the platform. Now, the question is who is supplying books to the hawkers, who is collecting profits from the hawkers and where are the profits going? I may inform you, Sir, and the House that this dharna, this indiscipline, has been organised by those for whom our hon. Railway Minister and his other friends fought, the people of the A.I.R.F. and every day from the Delhi Junction Rs. 600 are collected. Who is getting these Rs. 600? Have we started any other private business on behalf of a particular railway federation and why is it being allowed in the capital, at the Delhi Junction? I demand, Sir, that there should be a probe and an inquiry into this matter. This is a very serious thing and is taking place under the very nose of the Minister and the Government here.

Sir, it is true that they have been able to come to power after a very long wait and struggle and it will

take them a little time to adjust to the new role that they have to play. The railways are one of the biggest and most important undertakings. The employees number about 14 lakhs, or 18 lakhs including the casual labour, which is just like one big family.

In the end, I would appeal to the Minister that the railways should be treated as one big family and no step-motherly treatment should be meted out to any section of railway men. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI KHYOMO LOTH (Nagaland): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I welcome the Budget presented by our Railway Minister and congratulate him for it. I do not have to make any long speech nor do I want to dwell on many matters in detail.

[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Loknath Misra) in the Chair.]

I would just like to point out once again, through this House, the difficulties and problems, that the North-Eastern region is facing even today. Sir, you might be aware that we have only one railway line passing through Assam for the whole of the North-Eastern region and that too is only a metre-gauge line. The broad-gauge line is only up to new Bongaigaon. On account of the narrow metre-gauge line the people in the North-Eastern region are facing a lot of difficulties in the transportation of goods from this side of the country to the other side. For many years we have depended and for many years more we will have to depend upon the goods brought from outside our region for the development of our area. We did have to depend and we are still depending for our essential commodities for those things which are brought into our region from outside. In the carriage of all these things our businessmen are facing a lot of difficulties. Even the railway line that we are having is a very old one. I do not

like to go back and talk about the British regime. But the communication lines that we are having now are mainly developed during the British regime, including the railway line that we are having. We have not seen much improvement on this line. I have travelled many times as a student and I have not seen till today any change or improvement that has been carried on so far as this line is concerned. We do have more railways now, taking more passengers, but there has not been much improvement. Excepting a few kilometres touching the State of Nagaland, the States of Arunachal, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram are completely out of the railway map of the country. There have been suggestions, proposals and demands from these regions that the railway lines should be extended as far as possible. With regard to Meghalaya and Mizoram, if I am not mistaken, surveys have also been done again and again but we have not seen anything coming up. Every time we sit in the Committee, put our suggestions and we are always assured and given a bright picture about the railway lines being constructed and extended to these regions, but till today nothing has been done. Railway line is the lifeline of this great and vast country. The only mode of our communication with other parts of this great country is through railways. Recently we have been connected with airways but then, how many can afford to travel by air? And because of the long distances, we cannot also be expected to travel by road. Therefore, the only mode of communication left with us is through railways. Now we talk of integration, integration of people, the emotional integration, but how do you integrate without proper communications? You have to communicate with one another. You have to move from one place to another. But there is no scope for many people to visit the North-Eastern region. Even I, as a Member of Parliament, am unable to see different parts of this region. There are many who are completely out of touch because of

poor communications. Therefore, when we talk of integration, we must give more emphasis and importance to this type of communications. For many years you have neglected the North-Eastern region. When you talk of political insurgencies and other things you may think of different ways but so far as the railways are concerned, we are poorly connected with one another. So, I would once again like to remind the Minister that whatever we have not been able to do in the past we should be able to do in these few years. The broad gauge which is upto New Bongaigaon is also to be extended as far as possible and as much feasible as possible. We depend only on this line and this line has to be developed. During the Second World War the Britishers extended this line up to a certain part of Nagaland, from inside Dimapur, about 10-12 kilometres, and there has been a survey or proposal, if I am not mistaken, a few years back, to extend this line up to Ghaspani and inside, but nothing has been done. Now with the coming up of the new sugar mills and paper factory in Tuli I do not know if this line can be extended to this part. This will be beneficial to our people. Then, Manipur is away, about 200 kilometres, if I am not mistaken, from the main line, i.e. Dimapur. All their goods have to be transported by road to Imphal. Now there is a big project going on—Loktak project. All the heavy equipment is to be transported by road. This is proving to be very expensive for them. If these railway lines are extended from Dimapur towards Kohima, as far as possible, I think this will not only serve the Nagaland State but would also serve the State of Manipur which is also very important from the point of view of defence of our country. We have to take into consideration all these things. I think we have long enough neglected this region. I would like to impress upon our Railway Minister that it is high time we do something about this region. Thank you.

SHRI NABIN CHANDRA BURAGOHAIN (Assam): Sir, various proposals have been put forward by the hon. Railway Minister and these are not free from criticism. There are proposals which attract soft criticism like the improvement in the amenities to second class passengers and improvement of coaches needed for the second class passengers. But there are certain other proposals which attract serious criticism, e.g. lowering the charges of platform tickets. I wonder whether the hon. Railway Minister has studied what will be the consequences if this proposal is accepted and whether any assessment has been made that due to the lowering of the charges of the platform tickets, whether our present areas of platforms can accommodate so many visitors. The Railway Minister has said that if this proposal is executed, the people could go to the railway platform to welcome their friends. But I am afraid, his desire will not be fulfilled. As a result of the lowering of the charges of platform tickets, the platforms will be more crowded and people will have to face many difficulties, instead of having any benefits. Their purpose of receiving their friends on the platform will be foiled.

The other proposal is about restructuring of the Railway Board. But what is the consensus of the people in the country? It is not restructuring of the Railway Board that they want but re-structuring of the Railway administration. It has to be decided whether the Railway Board should go or should remain. If the Government decides that it should remain as it is, then there is no question of cutting down the numerical strength of the Railway Board. It should be maintained or retained with its full present strength. The present strength of the Railway Board is 30. Now there is a proposal that the Government should reduce the strength of the Board to eight. I do not see any reason for doing this. The Government may decide to retain it or abolish it. I think the consensus of the people in the

country is in favour of abolition of the Railway Board.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA): You may continue tomorrow.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 176

Proclamations issued by the Vice-President Acting as President under Article 356 of the Constitution, on the 20th April, 1977 in relation to Nine 30th April, 1977 in relation to Nine States

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA): We shall now take up the discussion under rule 176. Now, under rule 177, the discussion will be for two and a half hours. I would request the hon. Members to confine themselves to fifteen minutes. The initiator alone would be getting twenty minutes.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): No, no. Thirty minutes always. Rule is rule. Before that, I have a submission to make.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA): Regarding this?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yes, on this. Sir, as you know, you admitted my motion under rule 170, which is called, "No-Day-Yet-named Motion." That motion is subject to vote. Yesterday I was given to understand that some kind of confrontation should be avoided between the two Houses or between some parties in the House, whatever it may be. Now, Sir, I am ready to agree that the discussion need not take place today. We are anxious that my original motion should come. You have brought it under rule 176, what is called, short duration discussion. That is to say, we talk and disperse. We do not register our opinion in a proper way by vote. Yet it is very important to have our opinion recorded on a matter of this kind. Now here are certain proclamations. The point is, what Parliament has to say. They may be revoked. They are in force.