

[Dr. S. Chandrasekhar]

Shri Satyanarayan Sinha. It was in view of these considerations that a decision was taken to entrust the enquiry to the C.B.I. As already stated above, the C.B.I. have reported that the allegations of corruption as far as financial matters are concerned against Dr. Agarwala could not be substantiated.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA (Uttar Pradesh) I want a clarification on the statement. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a large number of complaints have been received by the Ministry about the harassment of his junior officers by this gentleman and, if so, what action is being taken by him in this matter.

DR. S. CHANDRASEKHAR: Some complaints have been received by me from the junior officers about the matter referred to by the hon. Member, and we are enquiring into them.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa): This statement arose out of my question. May I know whether some of the lady employees who are serving under Dr. Agarwala have complained of misbehaviour by Dr. Agarwala towards them?

DR. S. CHANDRASEKHAR: It is not misbehaviour, but a current case is going on about the difficulty regarding Dr. Agarwala's orders of transfer or asking a young lady to go and work elsewhere and her inability to do so, and the matter is being examined. So, I cannot say anything now categorically.

THE PREVENTION OF FOOD ADULTERATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1970

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING AND WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI B. S. MURTHY): Sir, I move for leave...

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, again on a point of order. Can a Minister sitting in the House depute somebody else to introduce a Bill in his name?

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh): Shri K. K. Shah should do it.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING AND WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI K. K. SHAH): Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: I introduce the Bill.

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS), 1970-71—GENERAL DISCUSSION

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, for the Railway Budget as presented by the Railway Minister, although he may be new to the Ministry, yet the responsibility is his. The budget has created disappointment in the country because of the fact that the budget should have some socialist outlook as is being propagated in this country after July 1969, which it has not. For everything the ruling party says that it should be governed by socialism. People thought that this budget would have certain aspects of socialism because the present Government is in very intimate collaboration with the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union the suburban railway traffic is carried very cheaply. If the citizens of the Soviet Union pay 5 paise, they are carried in the suburban area to an extent of about 20 kms. Here in this unfortunate country everybody says that poverty should be eradicated. It shows that the country is very poor. Here the suburban traffic minimum rate is not less than Rs. 2.45. Where is 5 paise and where is Rs. 2.45 for a season ticket a month here? I do not know what collaboration the ruling party has got with the Soviet Union.

SHRI B. K. KAUL (Rajasthan): It is not collaboration but it is collusion.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: This is the first disappointment the countrymen have experienced in the Railway Budget. While submitting the budget there was also a reference for an increase in the passenger fares and freight rates. However, something should have prevailed upon them or the agitation amongst the ruling party and also the Members of the Opposition should have forced them and the Railway Minister immediately got it withdrawn, though not to the fullest extent. However, in withdrawing the increase on freights and fares I want to warn the Railway Minister that it should not be at the cost of 1.4 million workers in the Railways. Although the Indian Railways serve the country at 2.28 paise a km. when compared to the advanced countries where it is 15.12 paise a km., yet the per capital income in the country is very low and that is why the politicians do demand that there should be no increase in the freight rates. However, there is a point which I want to make to the Minister that with this rate he can cope with it. But when the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission are announced, I think the Railways will have to come before the House for a Supplementary Grant. Without cooperation and contentment amongst the 1.4 million workers, the Railways cannot bring to the exchequer not less than Rs. 1022 crores as it is anticipated. It is only with the good will of the workers that the Railway Ministry has to produce that huge amount.

Another point is, the Government says that the Railways are running into a huge loss. It is on account of the working of the Railways or the defective financial accounting of the Government of India and especially the Railway Ministry? I may point out here that when we took it over in 1947, the capital-at-charge was about Rs. 800 crores. The Railways paid about Rs. 26 crores as interest

on that capital. I am not blaming anybody because we have adopted a system of planning; in the last three plans and the two earlier years also, the total involvement in the Railways is overcapitalised to an extent of more than Rs. 3000 crores, and the dividend charged is Rs. 108 crores, and next year it is anticipated that it would be Rs. 167 crores. Apart from paying this dividend of Rs. 167 crores, the Railways are meeting their own expenditure in the Plan also. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, Rs. 980 crores have to be found by the Railways themselves out of Rs. 1,525 crores as it is planned. This amount plus the payment to the Central Excise and Sales Tax to a tune of Rs. 40 crores and meeting the enhanced rate of coal and fuel oil and steel, all these have to be met by the Railways plus the payment of Rs. 167 crores as dividend. Anywhere in the world, is there a railway which apart from meeting its own amounts in the Plan pays like this? Can the Railway Ministry quote any railway in the world which is paying a huge dividend like this? As long as the Railway is considered to be a public utility service, the general exchequer cannot expect a huge amount at the rate of 6 per cent. I may also quote here that the Central Government acts as the banker for the railway finance. The Central Government holds the revenue of the Railways in the shape of provident fund, pension, Depreciation Reserve Fund, the Revenue Reserve Fund and the Development Fund, to an extent of Rs. 600 crores. Is it not right I ask Mr. Deputy Chairman, when they demand 6 per cent dividend on the capital-at-charge in the Railways? What harm is there if the Government which acts as the banker pays a return, an interest, at 6 per cent. on the surpluses the Central Government holds with it? It pays only 4.4 per cent on the Rs. 600 crores it holds. Here you can find-how can the Railways expect to run in profit when such huge amounts have to be met by them out of their own resources?

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Another point is that there are unremunerative railways in this country about which both Houses of Parliament have discussed and appointed a Committee of its own, and that Committee also has recommended that the unremunerative railways should be abolished. But the political pressure is such that they have to run them. They say that in course of time those unremunerative branch lines may fetch revenue and they may be self-sufficient. But yet on those unremunerative railways in this country Rs. 42 crores are charged as capital and every year Rs. 7 crores of loss of revenue is there. And even on that a dividend is expected. What is this Government doing? Are we, Members of Parliament, simply to hear what the Government say? Does it stand to reason that unremunerative railways on the insistence of the political parties and the State Governments are to be run? The State Government has to bear it or the general exchequer has to bear it and not the Railway.

SHRI B. K. KAUL: The Railway is a *Kamadhenu*.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: The Railway was a *Kamadhenu*. Today it is not. The *Kamadhenu* is not to be found. That is why Shri Nandaji finds it very difficult. What I say about the dividend is that the dividend must have certain relations to revenue and the Railway is a public utility service. Abnormal rates would always reduce the relativity of the utility of the Railways to the nation and the picture before the community is dark. Therefore, the dividend should be a minimum, should not be over and above the profit declared by the Railways. Mr. Deputy Chairman, the profit here when compared to the capital-at-charge last year worked out to 4.6 per cent. When it works out to 4.6 per cent, how can the Central Government expect 6 per cent dividend? The Government of India must consider all these aspects.

Another grave committal on the part of the Government is, somewhere in November, 1968 there was

a Resolution moved by the Railway Ministry, by Mr. Poonacha, and a Committee called the Conventions Committee was appointed by both the Houses. The Committee has not finalised its business, and no Report is handed over. That Committee will submit its Report. Its views on how the dividend should be charged, what should be the plan for the Railways—it is not yet known. But the Minister has submitted the Budget not caring for the Report of the Conventions Committee, and the Plan is also finalised. Where does Parliament stand? Does it not amount to a breach of privilege?

AN HON. MEMBER: Of course.

SHRI T.V. ANANDAN: I leave it to you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and to the Members of Parliament to think this point very seriously. Everything is taken for granted. Is it the way that the Government has to run? I do not know why the party in power has lost all sense of proportion in retaliating the decisions of Parliament and creating a stir in the country.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, how will the Railways run in profit when there is multiplicity of gauges which means a number of shipment points, narrow gauge, metre gauge and broad gauge? Narrow and metre gauges and the broad gauge have been evenly divided in this country. There are 29,000 kilometers of broad gauge and 25,000 kilometres of metre gauge and about 4,000 kilometres of narrow gauge. Somewhere in 1952 those who had the interest of the country in their heart of hearts decided that the Railways should run not only on profit but should serve the country well. They decided that as a long-term policy all gauges should be converted and brought into broad gauge. What effect has been given to that policy decision of the Government by the Railway Ministry is unknown. In the Fourth Five Year Plan they have set apart Rs. 60 crores to convert about 750 kilometres. Where is 25,000 kilometres and what is this 750 kilometres at a cost of Rs. 60

crores? When will this 25,000 kilometres be converted and this *Kamadhenu* of the Railways will yield a profit and give more benefit to the nation? I do not know what the Railway Ministry is doing. I know also it is not a possibility immediately, but the Plan should be so laid, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that at least 3,000 to 4,000 kilometres may be converted in the Plan period of five years by allotting more funds for it. It is not the Central exchequer that can go into the field. The Railways find their own resources. That is why the planners, the Ministry should have waited for the report of the Convention Committee. In a haste they have decided this thing. Therefore, conversion is a necessity to improve the earnings of the Railways.

There is also another pertinent point, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Our country has got wide borders. Very easily the invaders can enter our borders as we saw in 1962 and in 1965 also where the heroic part played by our railwaymen cannot be forgotten. Yet I suggest that the vulnerable points of the country should immediately be converted if the country is to be saved from aggressors. We do not know who would be our enemy tomorrow. Therefore, Sir, there is no harm if the country spends more money. I know how difficult it was during 1962 to carry goods and equipment from broad gauge to the metre gauge in 120 trains a day by the overworked railwaymen then. Although the civil servants ran away from the spot the railwaymen stood to their post. I know there was a General Manager also who stood to the post in the North-Frontier Railway in those days. Therefore, to give good, efficient defence to our country immediate attention should be diverted to the Northern border as also to Kutch. Mr. Nanda should take an immediate note of it and see to it that conversion into broad gauge is given effect to in these border areas.

Coming now to the question of railwaymen and their difficulties.

The railwaymen have been denied any pay increase. The last increase they had was somewhere in 1957 as a result of the second Pay Commission. Today in 1970, 13 years have elapsed. There is no Commission and no revision. The lowest paid in the country in the public sector is the railwayman. The Railway Ministry might observe that the railwaymen enjoy some fringe benefits and yet they are the lowest paid people. The politicians should realise that the railwaymen have never resorted to agitational attitude, that they never dislocated the railway service as others in this country have done, although they have been goaded by certain political parties. They stuck to their post and they still stick to their post. They think that railway service is a national service, and to them the Railway Ministry have denied any pay increase. You might recollect, Sir, that two Ministers have assured the railwaymen that their pay increase would be considered. I also know that about Rs. 8 crores have been allotted for upgradation of these men, but it has not been fulfilled. Nandaji in his Budget Speech said that one increment for those who have stagnated for over two years would be granted. It is not a proportionate increase to the sincere and steadfast workers who fetched Rs. 1,000 crores to the exchequer of the country.

Many a problem are there yet not solved. There are so many pinpricks in the performance of the railwaymen in their duty. More than five lakh railwaymen are treated as unskilled labourers on the minimum scale of Rs 70-85. They cannot be compared anywhere with the other railways of the world. It is only here, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that a huge number of railway workers—out of 13.4 lakhs of railwaymen about 5.83 lakhs—are treated as unskilled labourers. How can you expect from an unskilled labourer the return of a skilled labourer? A revision of classification of these workers is necessary. The Railway Minister

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may say that this matter is before the Pay Commission. I regret that everybody failed in his duty in solving this problem. This should be immediately solved.

Another point, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Because of the progressive attention given by the country towards education we find that all over the country educated youngmen are coming to the Railway services. They are stagnated in matters of promotion because they are not encouraged. The reservation for promotion for these rank and file is very low. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Railway Minister should make it a point to resort to direct recruitment to the minimum extent. The maximum benefit should be given to those who are in service. That means the reservation of 25 per cent, should at least be increased to 50 per cent, so that those who are stagnated may feel that there is a promotional chance for them if they enter the railway service. Therefore, I say that the reservation should now be increased and direct recruitment should be reduced to the minimum. I do not say that direct recruitment should be entirely done away with. It should be there to some extent, but not to the extent and level that it is now operating.

Coming to improved service, I would like to state that because the present stations and their platforms have not been extended, full utilisation of the diesel locomotives is not seen to-day. A diesel locomotive can haul not less than 24 passenger coaches, but to-day it hauls a maximum of about 17 coaches. This difficulty is due to the fact that the platforms have not been extended. Advance planning should have been made because the tractive effort of a diesel engine is two-and-a-half times that of a steam engine. A steam engine can haul 1,000 tonnes, but a diesel engine can haul 2,500 tonnes. To-day it is not fully utilised. The cost of a diesel engine is not less than Rs. 12 lakhs whereas the steam engine costs only Rs. 5 lakhs. Therefore, the Minister should see that on the trunk

route all the stations and their platforms are extended to accommodate at least 20 to 24 bogies, to eliminate overcrowding in the third class. It is the poor third class passengers who suffer, not those who go in first class and air-conditioned coaches.

Another point I want to insist upon is that more number of diesel cars should be made use of in the non-suburban areas. I know there are passenger trains which run empty, but we cannot avoid running such trains. In such cases, diesel cars should be introduced instead of the steam locomotive with six to seven passenger coaches. It is economically, more advantageous, and therefore, I suggest that more diesel cars should be introduced in the railway system.

Coming now to accidents, the Railways have now brought down the number of accidents in the efficient manner in which the railwaymen have functioned. But one glaring instance I came across in the books furnished by the Railway Ministry is about the accidents at level-crossings. The accidents at the level-crossings are on the increase. When you compare the figures of 1965 with the figures of 1969, you find that the number of accidents has increased. Parliament insisted in the year before last, why not have all the level-crossings manned? It was said that the State Governments came in the way because the understanding is that the expenditure should be shared half and half by the State concerned and the Centre. I very clearly pointed out to the Railway Minister, "When you pay about Rs. 16.2 crores to all the States in the country from the revenue of the Railways, why don't you reduce that amount and provide manned level-crossings?" Why do you expect the States to answer your correspondence and so on? When you give them this amount of Rs. 16.25 crores, take away a portion of it and provide a man for every level-crossing, and see that the expenditure that you incur on placing the man there is recovered

from the money that you give to the States. Why don't you do that and thereby avoid loss of life, if you consider human life to be precious? If the Railway Ministry does not consider human life to be precious, you can take that position, and that position will do what it can, and it will.

Sir, I cannot conclude without referring to the Southern Railway. They always say that the Southern Railway is running in a loss. Why? metre-gauge, broad-gauge and narrow-gauge are functioning there. Out of the 120 transshipment points in the entire Indian Railway, not less than 24 are by necessity existing in the Southern Railway. Transshipment point means delay, additional men, additional payment of compensation, demurrage, etc., for the Southern Railway. Therefore, immediate attention should be paid for the conversion of narrow-gauge and metre-gauge into broad-gauge, if the Railway Minister wants the Southern Railway to run profitably.

Another point that I would like to make is, in this country all the major cities have been electrified except the city of Madras. It is only in the southern part of Madras, to about 100 miles it has been electrified. On the northern and western side, nothing has taken shape so far although the Third Five-Year Plan had sanctioned many crores of rupees for electrification from Madras to Vijayawada. This project has not yet seen the light of day and I do not know when it will be implemented. Electrification is very necessary for the Southern Railway if it wants to improve its income. The trains also need to be speeded up. There are trains on the branch-lines which run very slow. Naturally people will prefer to go by road transport rather than sit in the train for 2 to 2½ hours more. Take the case of the branch-line from Tirunelveli to Tiruchendur, the abode of the famous god *Muruga*. I saw in the papers also that not less than 10 lakh pilgrims use this train.

To cover a distance of about 27 kilometres, the train takes about 3.25 hours. On a reference to the General Manager, I have been told that the running time has now been curtailed by 25 minutes. To cover a distance of 27 kilometres. Is it necessary in an advanced country which wants to introduce socialism, to take 2½ hours? I know the Railway Minister is a socialist himself and he will immediately attend to this if he is given the freedom. But we do not know whether he enjoys that freedom.

Another thing that I would like to refer in regard to the Southern Railway is about the immediate laying of lines connecting Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari and Trivandrum. It is there for the last five years, but no finalisation has yet been made. Because it is in the interior South, nobody takes any interest; the pressure in the North is there, and so the South is neglected.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Now they will do it because the D.M.K. are their friends.

SHRI T.V. ANANDAN: Yes, I think the D.M.K. will prevail upon them. If its request is not conceded, their sitting in this House will be at stake. Therefore, Sir, that route should immediately be opened.

Then, although the Railways, as per the statistics shown, are running efficiently—in the matter of tractive effort, wagon utilisation, locomotive utilisation, etc—I find in the audit report that this year, uncollected station revenue runs to the tune of Rs. 31 crores. Last year it was Rs. 25 crores. The audit report clearly says that it is now Rs. 31 crores. Why should this amount of Rs. 31 crores earned by the railways be with some private bodies? Why should it not be collected? Why should not efficient action be taken to collect this amount of Rs. 31 crores? The Railway Ministry should make a note of this point and give no room for the audit to pass a remark on the efficient functioning of the railways.

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My next point is the railwaymen are now denied the free travel which they once had while attending the duty. In the past they were enjoying free travel on their residential card pass. Why not that be reintroduced now? At the time when the railways were introduced in this country, residential card passes were granted to the railwaymen to come and attend their duty. Then, some decision was taken by the Railway Board that after 1953 this concession should not be extended. I should say this is unfair because when you recruit railwaymen, you do not say that the recruitment is taking place in Delhi and so the Delhiwallahs alone should apply. No. But if you say so, it is all right. When you do not say so, a man from Faridabad also may come here for duty. And you do not provide him with quarters here. Unless you provide him with quarters or allot him one residential card pass which had been a privilege of the railwaymen, how do you expect them to work? They are being denied this privilege in many places. The Railway Ministry should take note of this point seriously and see that that privilege which they had been enjoying, is continued . . .

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY: They are for abolishing all privileges.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: Therefore, the railways should either build quarters for the railwaymen or allow them to enjoy the residential card pass facility . . .

SHRI ANANT PRASAD SHARMA (Bihar): This privilege is part of their service conditions.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: Another point that I want to place before the Railway Minister is that in classified cities if a railwayman is not provided with a railway quarter, he is entitled to house rent allowance. The house rent allowance thus being paid runs into crores of rupees. I know. If you build and provide him with a quarter, not only will the railwayman be

happy and comfortable, but you also get rent from him at the rate of 10 per cent of his salary or the assessed rent, whichever is less. You earn a revenue to the railway Ministry if you provide quarters to the railwaymen. I know in the Fourth Five Year Plan you have allotted Rs. 45 crores for building quarters for railwaymen whose number is near about 14 lakhs, and I think you have been able to build only 4.4 lakh quarters after 120 years of existence of the railways. Instead of paying house rent allowance to the railwaymen, if you build quarters for them, you will earn revenue. Therefore, please make it a point that instead of Rs. 45 crores, the allotment should be increased to Rs. 100 crores and a lakh of quarters should be built and provided to at least 75 per cent of the railwaymen.

Then, Sir, dieselisation and electrification is imposed in this country because the country is advancing. Technology is very quickly revolutionising the world and we cannot lag behind other countries. We accept that dieselisation and electrification is necessary, but at the same time it should not be introduced at the cost of the employment potential of the country. It will increase unemployment. I know the Railway Ministry has to an extent safeguarded the interests of those who are in service by not retrenching them and by offering them alternative employment. So, the Railway Ministry should be very careful in introducing this system. While introducing dieselisation and electrification you should be very careful to see that the orders issued by the Railway Ministry are implemented by the zonal railways. The zonal railways do not at all care for your orders. They resort to direct recruitment whereas the Railway Board says that those who are on the steam-engine side should be trained for six months before bringing this scheme into force. The zonal railways do not follow the orders, I know. On the Southern Railway they went in for direct recruitment against

the interests of the workers. The Ministry should take a special note of this.

Before I conclude, Sir, I want to say one more thing about the 14 lakh railway employees. Propaganda is now being carried on in this country for a socialistic pattern of society, that the educated unemployed would be provided with jobs in about 18 or 20 months. Here I have a suggestion to make to the Railway Minister if he is pleased to consider it. It is not a new suggestion. This happened during the days of the British in this country. When they found that the railways were overstaffed, they introduced a scheme of voluntary retirement. Why not I suggest to the Railway Minister to consider a similar scheme now? By this scheme those railwaymen who have put in 25 years of service could retire voluntarily. They should get on retirement a month's gratuity for every year of their service and also an increased quantum of pension—instead of 3/8, bring it to 3/6. If you do this, you will find that not less than two or three lakhs of railwaymen will take advantage of this scheme of voluntary retirement . . .

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh): Are you prepared to move it on behalf of the Railwaymen's Federation?

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: Certainly, provided the pensionary benefit is brought to 3/6, and a month's gratuity for every year of service put in is given. If you do that, I am prepared to propagate amongst the railwaymen and negotiate with them. It is a voluntary retirement. This was practised in those days, in 1931 and 1932 and many railwaymen took advantage of that scheme. So also, if the Prime Minister is interested in solving the problem of unemployment, this suggestion should be agreed to. This should apply not only to the Railway Ministry, but to the entire Government service. Central and State, including the quasi-Government service, and at least a million Government servants will

take advantage of this scheme, and the 1.4 million educated unemployed will find jobs in about six months. And the country will flourish and you can bring about the socialistic pattern of society which you are wanting. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sharma, you can speak after lunch. The House stands adjourned till 2 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at fifty-nine minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at two of the clock, MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the chair.

PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE

REPORT (FEBRUARY, 1970) OF THE COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY ON THE COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH—PART I.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES (PROF. V.K.R.V. RAO): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Report (February, 1970) of the Committee of Enquiry on the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research—Part I.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, on a point of order. Can a paper laid on the Table once be laid again? The Chairman made a statement in this House that he has laid it on the Table of the House. At that time I raised it that it was to be placed at 2 O'clock, but it was being placed at 12.10 P.M. Then the Chairman said that it had not been placed but the Minister said that it had been placed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think the Chairman had said in the morning that it was not laid on the Table.

(Interruption)

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN (Andhra Pradesh): Your objection was upheld but the Chairman decided that it had not been placed. That is all.