

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

Sir, on the basis of the statement, whatever it is, a brief discussion should take place. How is it, Sir, that the Lower House takes always the initiative in matters relating to the States whereas the Rajya Sabha trails behind?

SHRI M. N. KAUL: Where is your notice?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Where is the notice? Notice can be written in half a second.

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI : I may just correct you. Notice has already

been given.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yes, you are right.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY :

Yesterday we were given to understand that it would be taken up today at 4 o' clock.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : It can be at any time. We will have a brief discussion.

SHRI M. N. KAUL: A promise was made.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No promise, a commitment was made. They are capable of committing breach of promise.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, we shall have it during the day some time...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA :where you are in the Chair. Only let us know...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): As soon as we finish the debate on the Railway Budget, at 4.30 or 5.00. At 5 o' clock, if not earlier.

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS), 1969-70 —GENERAL DISCUSSION—contd.

SHRI G. A. APPAN (Madras) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I have gone through the Railway Budget speech, the Audit Report for 1969, the review of performance of the India Government

Railways, 1969 and the other materials placed before us during the year. The contents of para 14 of the speech on the Railway Budget show that the Railways have been eating away the Development Fund and encroaching upon the Development Reserve Fund also. They have also been unable to pay their portion scheduled to the Government. The Audit Report is also disconcertingly deplorable. There is demonstration of inactivity, indecision in administration in respect of avoidable payment of higher rates of charges and huge amounts for purchases of unnecessary items, colossal waste of public funds, failure to recover the security deposits from staff, unsound project reports, loss of cash income from various sources recoverable by the Railways. Under all these counts, though it is a glossy picture of a saving of Rs. 2 crores, it is demonstrative of nothing short of '*suppressio veri and suggestio falsi*'. There are others to speak about the various factual figures. I am here to support only certain things and to give some suggestions regarding the administration, regarding the various injustices, exploitation and aggression meted out to the poor Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes in the services of the Railways.

Let me implore this august House to impress upon the Government and the Minister concerned about the various injustices, cruelty, etc. inflicted on the Scheduled Castes of the Railway Ministry and the Railway Board and urge upon the Minister to constitute a three or four-Member Scheduled Caste Parliamentary Committee to select people from these communities for service in this Department in posts of all ranks and reserve 20 per cent of the present strength for them. They should redress their grievances up-to-date throughout India and recommend to the Government the action to be taken against incredulous and malicious acts of the vested interests that have played havoc on thousands and thousands of not only the Harijans and the Scheduled Tribes but also a number of Backward Classes because they had no Godfathers or people in the top to support their legitimate and reasonable cases. Action should also be taken against the officials concerned who have committed the various irregularities contained in the Audit Reports of Central Government including those now presented for the year 1969. Special mention will also have to be made of para 62 of the Audit Report for 1969 where it is stated that disciplinary action of the Board

has been pending since 1957—for twelve years. A similar case happened in Madras where one of the Accounts Officers was involved. He is fully qualified, he has completed his period of probation. Unfortunately the people at the helm of affairs have been giving him all sorts of trouble. He appealed to the Government and could not get justice. How can he expect justice from those who have inflicted this cruelty on him. So he had to go before a court of law. I would appeal to the Minister to look into this case immediately. The court ordered that everything done by the Department was wrong and cruel injustice and that he should be reappointed immediately with full back pay. It is unfortunate that the Government and the Board have failed to implement this order even till to-date and now he has appealed to the Government. So far he has had no reply. So immediate orders will have to be passed by the Minister by calling for the papers and action should be taken to reinstate him according to the orders of the court.

Another case relates to an engineer who has put in 10 years of service. In the last two or three years he has applied for other jobs. The Government neither allows people to go out nor give them promotions when due. By following this dog-in-the-manger policy he was not permitted to apply outside and on the other hand they charge-sheeted him and he is under suspension. He has passed his University examination, he has put in 10 years of service and it is rather ridiculous to say that he is not fit. Strict action should be taken against those responsible for his suspension and unless that is done things will not improve. I appeal to the Government and the Minister in charge particularly to appoint a Commission, as I pleaded the other day, for the recruitment of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and to redress their grievances throughout India immediately. I want an assurance in this connection from the Minister. I do not think it is too much for me to ask this. The Constitution provides for 16 to 20 per cent, of seats for the Scheduled Castes but somehow vested interests always allege inefficiency and unsuitability in them. They have competence, qualifications and experience and they show a genuine interest and greater competence but because of the existence of the vested interests they are declared incompetent. So I request you to—of course this was recommended even during Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's time that a Special Service Commission and a special committee

should be appointed to look into the affairs of the Scheduled Castes. Some time back there was an officer appointed in the Railway Board to look into the conditions of service of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes but unfortunately he has been reverted to give place to some one nearer to the vested interests at the top rank. This also will have to be looked into by the Minister and action should be taken against the person responsible for this and explanation should be called for from them. It is not sufficient that people are appointed to look into the cases of Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The Scheduled Castes Commissioner is a great detrimental influence against the Scheduled Castes. Of course we have made several representations to the Government. As many as sixty M.Ps. have put in representations but no action has been taken. You know how distressing it is for us to see the inaction taking place. I request the hon. Minister, about whom many pleasant things are said, that he is a Gandhian, that he is a good disciplinarian—things like that—to do the needful in the representations made by us. Of course many people say pleasant things about him. I also see something pleasant in him and I also see some strange thing in the hon. Minister in respect of this one thing. Clearly, we cannot bring about a good administration unless the people at the helm of affairs are able to correct the people under them when they go wrong. No people go always wrong but, when they commit one wrong and they see there is no action taken against them, they commit a second wrong, and they go on doing wrongs further and further. Thus they become impervious to all these things. They become acclimatised to all these things. In the circumstances, some action is necessary. If the officer at the top takes action against an irregularity committed by a person, the other persons will shiver and do no wrong any further. This is what Rajaji did in those days. This what Rajaji and some eminent I.C.S. officers like Mr. Venkateswaran and Mr. Hejmadi have been doing, which I have seen. Of course this produces a very good moral effect. It is enough. We need not take action against everybody. If the hon. Minister is vigilant, if the head of the department is vigilant and takes action at random against one or two delinquents, that itself will do; it will be able to have a moral check-up; it will act as a morale-booster. But I do think the Government resort to such immediate action as and when such action is necessary.

[Shri G.A. Appan]

Regarding railway lines, let me come to my State. We have been pressing on the Railway Ministry for more broad-gauge lines in the Madras region, from Madras to Tuticorin, to Trivandrum, to Cochin, to Rameshwa-ram, to Tinneveli, to Nagarcoil and to Cape Comorin. In our parts fast trains like the Rajdhani Express will certainly be able to do a great service. The broad-gauge lines I have suggested and fast trains like the Rajdhani Express will effect a saving for the whole Government for the Government of India and to the various State Governments. This will help in transporting foodgrains from one place to another quickly and at a cheaper cost. It will reduce the cost of travelling expenses of Government officers and vested interests who indulge in air-trips for sight-seeing at Government cost. This will also reduce the great strain on the air services. This will help worthy and more deserving people who would like to pay from their own pocket not from the Government exchequer.

Now I have also to request the hon. Minister not to close down the uneconomic lines in our parts. Instead, he can introduce motor coaches wherever necessary. That way the lines will last longer. It will be also economical. Rather than running ten bogies at a time when there are at times only fifty or sixty or one hundred passengers, it is enough we run these motor coaches to carry passengers and goods. This way the uneconomic lines will not continue to be uneconomic.

Then I come to the condition of the labour; of course I have been seeing the condition of the running staff.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA) : Mr. Appan, you should co-operate with me. Now it is time.

SHRI G. A. APPAN : Anyhow, Sir, let me please take two or three minutes more and finish my observations in short.

You know the condition of the labourers) Sir. Their condition will have to be improved. The condition of the III Class passengers will have to be improved to a great extent. II Class passengers have to keep on sitting while they travel on the railways. They fare the worst while travelling in II Class paying more than III class berth holders. So all the people travelling in II Class will have to be provided at least sleeper accommodation as is provided for III Class passengers.

All Express trains and Mail trains will have to be provided with vestibule coaches. Even ordinary coaches can be converted into vestibule coaches at a very small cost. In the absence of such coaches we have been experiencing very great difficulty in the past. So this will minimise the strain on the travelling poor passengers and meal servers.

Then food and the canteen service made available to the passengers is very deplorable. This requires much improvement and the charges also must be reduced.

Then, Sir, I come back to the labour. When the labour claim the right to strike, I do not think even the devil will be able to stop it. Even God cannot stop the right of labour to go on strike. But, Sir, before we resort to our right to strike, we have to resort to our duties and obligations.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M.P. BHARGAVA) : This is exactly what I want you to do, to realise your duties and responsibilities.

SHRI G. A. APPAN : Yes, Sir. It is the concensus of opinion that rights flow as the day follows the night. If you do your duties and discharge your obligations, right is an imperative condition. If you do your duties and discharge your obligations, your rights follow automatically. None of us should insist upon our rights unless we do our duties and discharge our obligations. This was the verdict of the late Mahatmaji in our country, and the other great leaders in countries like America, Russia, U.K., Germany and every where, where the industry is fast developing, where employer-employee relations are also fast improving, I am a regular reader of the 'American Labour, (U.S.A.) 'Labour Review' (U.K.).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA) : It is time to wind up. You have exceeded your time.

SHRI G. A. APPAN : A very important thing I have to say.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M.P. BHARGAVA) : You should have said important things first.

SHRI G. A. APPAN : Sir, we are boasting about the fastness of our trains. Except the newly introduced Rajdhani Express, which may be running at 65 of 70 miles per hour, all the other Express

trains run at resultant average speed of j 25 miles. Here is a country like Germany aiming at a speed of 250 miles an hour. Take the Netherlands; it is a thickly populated country. Yet the trains run very fast. There the signals, level crossing gates and all other equipment are controlled by electricity, and the services are excellent too. I think the Government will have to see that we have such comforts and conveniences as we see in railway travel in countries like Holland, the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, America and other countries. I think we are far behind them in these respects. We lag behind in many other special respects.

Now, Sir, I am afraid I have to stop. I have to obey the Chair. Let me not I take much of your precious time.

I would like to have a ready reply to the various questions that I have referred > to in this House; I have addressed to the hon. Minister through this hon. House. I reiterate the difficulties and inconveniences of my countrymen, of the poor unfortunate Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes who do not have god-fathers at the helm of affairs to look after their interests. There is not even a single Member in the Railway Board. So one member from the Scheduled Caste should be appointed in the Railway Board immediately. This is not an unjust demand that I am making to the hon. Minister. Should not the Government know all these things already. Sixteen per cent, is reserved for them. Nothing more than that we claim at present.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA) : Thank you.

SHRI G. A. APPAN : Sir, pardon me if I have exceeded the time limit by one or two minutes.

SHRI BIRA KESARI DEO (Orissa): Sir, last year we saw many advancements on the railways. We saw that accidents had gone down and automatic electrical signalling equipment had been installed in many places.

(Interruptions)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA) : Order please.

SHRI BIRA KESARI DEO : Now recently the Railways have introduced the faster Rajdhani Express. (Interruptions) Still it appears that the Railway Ministry is not looking to the needs of the people, in spite of the advancement of our economy,

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): Let them look into in the afternoon. The House stands adjourned till 2 P.M.

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

The House reassembled after lunch at two of the clock, THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI D. THENGARI) in the Chair.

**STATEMENT RE DECISIONS BY
GOVERNMENT IN REGARD TO
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLO-
YEEES WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE
STRIKE OF SEPTEMBER 19, 1968**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA,! : Sir, on October 18, 1968, Government had decided upon certain relaxations in the original orders in regard to the action against the employees who had participated in the strike of September 19, 1968. Some more relaxation were announced on January 7, 1969. Government have considered the question of further liberalisation, and have now decided that except where there is a complaint of violence, intimidations or active instigation, the employees still under suspension would be permitted to rejoin duty. Liability to appropriate disciplinary action under the Service Rules would continue in cases in which there is conviction for an offence; other than one under section 4 of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance, 1968/Act, namely, for mere absence from duty.

A careful scrutiny will be made of the pending prosecution cases and in cases in which there is not sufficient evidence steps would be taken with a view to termination of the legal proceedings according to law.

A number of temporary employees has been discharged on giving them a month's pay in lieu of notice. The relaxations announced at the beginning of January had provided that such of these employees whose part in the strike was limited to absence from duty on September 19, 1968 and whose services had been terminated consequent to their arrest or prosecution for an offence only under section 4 of the Ordinance would be reinstated after factual verification. Steps would be taken to ensure that these relaxations are implemented fully and expeditiously so that the order of termination would remain only in cases in which there were stionger grounds for action.