

motion although we have, all of us, signed it as belonging to various parties. Actually it is a national proposition. I think a little time should be found. Now you will ask: How can we manage? That you discuss elsewhere.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): That is what I am telling you, that we discuss it elsewhere.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Discuss it elsewhere? But we have seen that when the Government needs they give us not only time but they give us also dinner, as you know, to get their things done. I am also prepared to give dinner to all of them from my allowances, from whatever I have got, to Members of that side provided they also take up our things. In fact the House should provide dinner. Therefore, let it not be said that when it is convenient for Government they extend the time of the House and in addition they feed the Members, and when it comes to the Opposition Parties in the House they do not give them even the time, leave alone giving them dinner.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): We shall speak about dinners outside.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH (West Bengal): The House should be extended

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why not?

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Throughout this month, completely.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why not?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): We shall come to it later.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Hathi, you are the Leader of the House. In West Bengal 500 of our

people are in detention, and in Tripura our colleagues are in detention. We are very much agitated about it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA): Now, I had called Mr. Chetia. Let him begin. Will you please take your seat, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta?

THE GENERAL (RAILWAYS), 1968-69—*continue d.*

SHRI P. CHETIA (Assam): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I want to take part in the debate on the Railway Budget only to make some observations on certain essential needs and demands of the State of Assam from which I come. It is needless on my part to stress the point as it is well known to the Railway Ministry that Assam is greatly handicapped in the absence of adequate facilities of railway communication. This has become all the more serious and acute after the clo-through Pakistan from Assam to Calcutta by the Brahmaputra river. It sure of the river transport system may be known to this august House that Assam is endowed with great natural resources. There is immense scope and potentiality for development of various industries in Assam. But on account of the transport bottleneck resulting in very high cost of transshipment of the requisite materials for establishment of industries in Assam from other parts of the country, capital is very shy to go to Assam and industrialists of other parts of India think that they cannot compete with their finished products of Assam in the markets which are being fed and flooded with finished products produced or manufactured in other parts of the country where there are good facilities of communication and transport system. For this reason Assam is lacking in industries and it is lagging far behind in the sphere of industrial development compared to other States during the

[Shri P. Chetia.]

post-independence period. For this reason there has been a very persistent demand for converting the present main metre gauge line into broad gauge line in Assam from all sections of the public. In this connection I would like to remind the House that as far back as March, 1966, a unanimous Resolution was adopted in the Assam Legislative Assembly, requesting the Railway Ministry and demanding the conversion of the main metre gauge line into broad gauge line. I understand that the said Resolution was forwarded by the Government of Assam to the Railway Ministry for consideration and necessary implementation. I understand also that the then Railway Ministry also examined the matter in the context of that Resolution. But I do not know what was the fate of that Resolution and what is the position in regard to the examination made in that connection. This august House, I am sure is aware of the fact that Assam produces crude oil, jute and tea. Assam produces some 25 lakh bales of Jute and more than 300 million pounds of tea. On the other hand we take various merchandise and commodities not produced in Assam, from other parts of the country. For every movement of all these goods—both-ways, i.e. from Assam to the rest of India and from the rest of India to Assam, the present main metre gauge line is essential and needed to be converted into a broad gauge line. This is the primary economic consideration for which the demand for the conversion of the main metre gauge line into broad gauge line is made. The Railway Ministry might say in this connection that a beginning has been made by the opening of a broad gauge line from Borsoi to Jogighopa, a place situated on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra in Goalpara district, which is on the border of West Bengal also. But how many broad gauge line miles fall in Assam? It is, I think, hardly 30 miles. Then again, to what extent can it serve the

essential needs of the State? I think that is also very meagre because from Jogighopa again the goods have to be moved by steamer to Gauhati—a distance of more than a hundred miles—which takes a lot of time and money for the transshipment of the goods.

Then again, on grounds of defence needs also this metre gauge line is to be converted into broad gauge line. It is known to all in this country that geographically Assam is the most strategic State. We are surrounded on all sides by foreign countries with some of whom we have no good or friendly relationship. In times of grave danger to the country from foreign invasion from this eastern region of Assam, there must be adequacy of free movement of our defence personnel and of war materials for which the present metre gauge line cannot cater to the needs. Therefore, this conversion into broad gauge line will facilitate not only the exploitation of the resources but will also help defence measures and I think this must be a very important consideration for which the Railway Ministry should sympathetically consider the demand of the people of Assam.

There is another important point to which I would like to draw the attention of the Railway Minister. There has been a persistent demand from the Assam Members of Parliament as well as from the public that the present broad gauge line from Jogighopa should be extended up to Gauhati by constructing a bridge on the Brahmaputra from Jogighopa to Pansharatna and from there the broad gauge line should be extended up to Gauhati via the south bank of the Brahmaputra. This will facilitate not only the exploitation of the immense natural resources of Garo Hill district but also serve as an alternative route to Gauhati both for goods traffic and for defence purposes. I understand that the Railway Minister, while inaugurating the Political

Conference of Goalpara District in Assam at Goalpara town some time in October, 1967 was presented with, a petition demanding such a line and I understand he assured them that he would consider the matter very sympathetically. He was also met by a deputation and he assured the deputationists that he would give the matter his sympathetic consideration and also that he would get the matter examined by the Railway Board. It is also reported that he had the matter examined by the Railway Board. I do not know what has happened, because there is no mention of this matter in the Budget speech. So I would again request the hon. Minister to give this matter his most sympathetic consideration.

In his Budget speech, the Railway Minister says in paragraph 25 that there is serious consideration given by the Railway Ministry to the question of uneconomic branch lines. Of course, he has also said:

"The utmost care will, of course, be exercised to make a most judicious selection of the branch lines for closure."

But in this connection I would like to point out one important aspect of the matter. So far as branch lines are concerned, they are sustaining a loss both on account of pilferage and on account of the inadequacy of the staff for proper supervision of the railway lines. I may point out one example. There is a branch line from Simalguri to Moran. It is said that this branch line is uneconomic, that it is not yielding sufficient revenue to the Railways. I am told that this line is also under the consideration of the Ministry for closure.

[THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

But if proper checks are made and if there is no ticketless travelling on this branch line then possibly even this line can yield sufficient revenue to the Railways and there would be no necessity for closing any such branch lines. I may give one in-

stance in this connection. I was once travelling from Simalguri to Sibsagar which is a distance of 10 miles by a branch line and I found there was no first class compartment in that branch line. Although passengers are travelling by the third class compartments. In those third class compartments what I have seen is that the passengers coming from one end of the branch line, that is to say, from Moran and going to Simalguri—a distance of 27 miles—they get in without any tickets. It would seem that this entire line is being run as it were privately because no tickets are issued to many of them. The fare from Moran to Simalguri is Re. 1 but these passengers are allowed to travel without tickets and at a few intermediate stations some people come and collect the entire money from the passengers at half the rate. This is what I have seen. So there is pilferage and there is also this kind of ticketless travelling. On account of these things the Railways sustain losses. So far as pilferage is concerned I would say that the Railway Minister should examine the matter thoroughly and see if by proper supervision they cannot stop or minimise this pilferage. This ticketless travel also should be stopped. With these words, Madam, I close my remarks on the Railway Budget.

SHRI KESAVAN (THAZHAVA) (Kerala): Madam Deputy Chairman, I find that the Railway Minister has also contributed his mite to increase the burden of the common people by increasing passenger fare and freight charges. We have seen that the Finance Minister in his Budget has raised the tax on several articles and in this Railway Budget we find that the passenger fares, especially in the case of ordinary people have been raised and the charges on goods are also raised. The reasons given in his speech by the Minister are that more dearness allowances are expected to be paid to the Railway employees and the prices have gone up of many fuels.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN (Nominated): I have serious doubts if we have quorum in the House.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, continue.

SHRI KESAVAN (THAZHAVA): It is said that the price of many fuels has gone up.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: ~An unauthorised sitting.

SHRI KESAVAN (THAZHAVA): It is said that more has to be paid for diesel oil and coal and so on, also that sales taxes have gone up. On these counts, the hon. Minister wants to increase the passenger fares and also the freight charges on goods. I submit that the price of coal rose because the control was lifted by the Government. So it is because of the action taken by the Government that the price has increased. Then if the price of diesel oil has increased it is because the excise duty has been increased by the Government. And if sales tax is paid it is not for anybody else but to the Government. So far the various payments made to the Government the people are made to pay the penalty and I submit it is very hard on the people. It looks as if the Railway Minister is competing with the Finance Minister in increasing the burden on the people. But the field of the Railway Minister is very limited and he cannot compete, with the Finance Minister.

Then he has increased the charges for sleeper accommodation in the third class. I may submit it is the ordinary people who travel in the third class. If some one happens to come from Trivandrum to New Delhi he has to spend three nights and he will have to pay Rs. 14 or Rs. 15 for sleeping accommodation. It is stated that it is not possible to provide sleeping accommodation for all the travelers in the third class but it is also true that even if all the passengers are not in a position to get sleeping accommodation, at least some

people were getting this sleeping accommodation and now that is going to be taken away. As I said the people who travel in third class are not rich people or Ministers or M.Ps, or M.L.As. They are all very ordinary people and it is very cruel to impose this penalty on those people. And the reason that the Railway Minister has given for levying this charge for sleeping accommodation is:

'So far as I am aware, no country in the world offers sleeping accommodation without an extra charge for this extra facility.'

But we are in India, we know the condition of our people. In America all the workers own cars but what is the position here? There is not an inch of land to construct a small house to live in for the common people here. So I request that some concession may be shown in this respect.

It is also stated in the report that the railways would incur a loss next year. In this connection I have to point out that more than Rs. 150 crores have been set apart for payment to the general exchequer on account of dividend at the rate of 5.75 and 6 per cent. Even the Reserve Bank has reduced the rate of interest and why should the Railways pay interest at this high rate? It should also be noted that most probably the Railways is the biggest establishment which pays the maximum to the Central Government on account of excise duty, sales tax and other things. Not only that; in order to promote exports low charges are made on movement of goods for export purposes. All these things are done for the betterment of the Central Government and the country as a whole. Since all these things are done by the Railways for the general benefit it is but equitable that this dividend rate of 5.75 per cent and 6 per cent should be reduced. Even companies do not give this rate of dividend. The Railways is also part of the Government and it contributes in many ways to the general good. During drought

foodgrains are carried to the areas affected by drought free of charge. It is because it forms part of the Government and it wants to help the Government. If the Railway Ministry had realised the proper charges for movement of goods for export and also done away with the various other concessional charges certainly it would have been possible to pay more than Rs. 150 crores towards dividend to the general exchequer. So a substantial reduction has to be made in this figure and if that is done certainly there is no necessity to increase the passenger fares or the freight charges.

Mention has been made of increased dearness allowance. Now increased dearness allowance is given because the prices of articles are going up day by day. Why do the prices rise? If you go on raising the taxes, certainly the prices of articles must rise. If the prices of articles rise then the employees will ask for more pay, more dearness allowance and the Government will be forced to accede to their demand. In order to pay them the Government finds it necessary to impose more taxes. More taxes means the prices of articles go up still higher. So we see this is a vicious circle which can never be controlled. If we are able to control the prices then this will not happen. If dearness allowance has to be increased it is the fault of the Government in not being able to control the prices of essential articles. Even the Food Minister speaking about the prices of foodgrains said that the foodgrain prices were coming down but it was his duty to see that they did not go down. So we see the Ministers themselves want to keep the prices high. That is why there is the cry for increased dearness allowance. So I say the price of articles must be controlled by the Government. Unless and until they are controlled this vicious circle will continue. So the Railway Minister must not increase the passenger fares which affect the ordinary people. I think this high figure is shown so that at the last

minute he might show some concession in this regard.

The next thing I want to say is that. In the report I do not find anything about the damages caused during the language agitation. You know certain photos were exhibited in the Central Hall showing the damages caused to the properties of the Railways. Several stations were set on fire and wagons and passenger coaches were destroyed. All these photos were exhibited and it was also said that the Railways had suffered a loss of Rs. 25 lakhs. But nothing is stated about that in this report. I think the photos were displayed in the Central Hall only to remind the Members that since they passed the unpatriotic Language Bill along with the Resolution and that has resulted in this agitation and the consequent loss of property of the railways. If it is only to remind the Members of Parliament of that I have no objection because passing that Language Bill and the Resolution along with it was the most unpatriotic act done by the Members of Parliament. And if the Resolution is not taken back this sort of thing will continue and more loss will occur. For the moment some responsible persons have intervened and said that some settlement would be made; at least an impression has been created like that.

In this connection I want to point out one thing. I find in the papers that the engineers on probation in the Railway Department are directed to pass some examination equivalent to "Praveen" in Hindi and until they pass that examination they would not be confirmed in their posts. What was said by the Home Minister when the language Bill was under discussion was that for appointment in the Central Services they must know either Hindi or English. Of course that was in favour of Hindi people and for promotion alone this need taken into account. Here what I find from the papers is that for the confirmation of these engineers, who

[Shri Kesavan (Thazhava.)]

are on probation, they must pass an examination, equivalent to "Praveen". not merely a knowledge of Hindi. That is a dangerous thing. If the Railway Minister has issued such an order to the Railways, then it will cause much trouble to the Railways, and railway property. We know, of course, that when a non-Hindi man is appointed in the Railways or in Central Government Service, he is expected to study Hindi. He must have knowledge of Hindi. After he gets an appointment, he must have a working knowledge of Hindi. Here what is stated is that he must pass an examination equivalent to "Pre-veen" in Hindi. This I read in the "Hindu". If this statement is true, it will create much trouble. If the Official Languages Act and the Resolution, which had been passed, are implemented, disintegration is a certainly. I may tell you that we the people in Kerala, and our students, caused no damage to railway property. It is a fact But we know everything. I am emphasizing this with a particular intention. Now, as a result of the Resolution passed along with the Official Languages Act, if they are implemented, the Central, Secretariat and the Central Services will be captured by the Hindi people, because for appointment in the Central Service it is mentioned either Hindi or English is needed. A non-Hindi applicant must have passed some examination in Hindi or English. A Hindi student need study Hindi alone. The other persons who are from non-Hindi States must study their own language and then English or Hindi. The Hindi people are not expected to do that. So, he can easily get entry into the Central Secretariat. The Central Secretariat is the citadel of power. It means that, in due course, the Central Secretariat, the Central Services and also the Railways will be captured by the people of the Hindi area and thereby they will try to run over the whole of India. The non-Hindi people are not going to allow it and trouble will

start. That is the way for disintegration. I was saying all this in connection with the order issued by the Railway Ministry.

I may say one thing more. During last year or the year before last, there were several accidents and near Ernakulam, at Perumanur, an accident took place. Perhaps the Railway Minister knows it. The gate was opened for the passage of vehicles. When the passenger buses were in motion, a train was found coming. The buses could neither move forward nor backward, because in front of them there were buses and behind them there were buses. The train came and several persons were killed and injured. These things are taking place every day. At Kuppam some accident took place. I may say that wherever these accidents take place, Malayalis will also contribute their due share in the death roll because Malayalis are everywhere in India. So, I submit that the Railway Minister must take into consideration the needs of Kerala States also. Kerala State is neglected by the Central Government in several ways.

When these Five Year Plans came, our claims were overlooked. Everybody knows that Kerala is deficit in foodgrains. When we ask for rice, they will say that there is no rice. They will give some 3 ozs or 80 grams of rice for a man like me. How can I live on 80 grams of rice. I do not know.

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA
(Mysore): The Railways have not let you down. They have carried foodgrains to you.

SHRI KESAVAN (THAZHAVA): We given only 80 grams of rice or whatever it be. When we ask for rice, we are not given that. When the Five Year Plan comes, we are not given our due quota. The Railway Minister should not also look at us with a step-motherly attitude. The density of population is the highest in Kerala. If rice is taken

from Andhra to Kerala, it must come through Madras. It may come up to Ernakulam. If broad gauge is constructed up to Trivandrum certainly we can give them a train of rice without any difficulty. The train itself can be brought up to Trivandrum. Then, there was a cry for constructing a new line from Trivandrum to Kanya Kumari, connecting Tinnevelly with Kanya Kumari. That also is not looked into.

In Kerala several cashewnut factories and coir factories are closing down and there is no work for the people. In fact, they are starving without any work, without any food. The Railway Ministry is not establishing any factory or any workshop in Kerala. There are several workshops and factories established by the Railway Ministry in various parts of India, but Kerala is neglected in that respect also. I request the Railway Minister to reduce the passenger fares. The claims of Kerala may not be overlooked in future at least. I hope that the Railway Minister, being very close to Kerala, will know the difficulties of Kerala State and that he will find some solution for them.

With these words, I end my speech.

SHRI P. C. MITRA (Bihar): Madam, before I deal with the Budget, I would like to remind the hon. House that the speaker who preceded me referred, to the language agitation and the destruction of railway property, but I am sorry that he did not say a word to condemn the destruction of railway property or public property. He may have many grievances, but he should have at least condemned the action of the people for destroying railway property on this issue. Anyhow, I sympathise with the Railway Minister in his difficult task of balancing the Budget and also in his attempt

to meet the deficit that is likely to occur by the end of the 3 P.M. coming financial year, I have heard all the speeches made by the Members, and everyone, except of course Mr. Sheel Bhadra Yajee, asked for concessions this way or that way and also for some new lines, etc. But no one suggested any effective economy in the working expenses of the Railways. Of course vague statements were made that the Railway Board should be abolished, but as to how such a big public utility concern can be co-ordinated no suggestion came from any quarter.

Therefore, I feel that the Railway Minister had made out a case for some increase of fares or freight, but I must say that the Railway Minister has not properly assessed the situation and has not put the burden on the section of the people who can bear it. At the same time I think that his estimate of income is also in certain respects an underestimate. For instance, railway passenger fare earnings were estimated for the current year as Rs. 221 crores. But it turned out to be more than Rs. 225 crores. Though the hon. Minister expected that the volume of traffic of passengers would increase by 3 per cent, it increased by 3½ per cent during the current financial year, and everyone knows that the year 1967 was the worst year and in many places there was drought and naturally the mass of people had less money with them. In spite of that the increase was 3½ per cent instead of estimated 3 per cent. Everyone admits that this year the production of foodgrains at least will be unprecedented, and yet the Minister has only expected an increase of 3½ per cent of the total volume of traffic of passengers next year over this financial year. So I think that it can be raised, we can easily expect at least an increase of 7 per cent in the volume of traffic of passengers, and in this way some of the gaps can be bridged.

[Shri P. C. Mitra.]

At the same time one thing I must point out to the Railway Minister that this year's Railway Budget has been more criticised than the General Budget. The proposals of the General Budget have not put much burden on the lowest cadre of the society and they have not inflated the price structure; whereas the proposals in the Railway Budget will certainly inflate the prices. The goods freights are being increased. The goods freight was increased to 6 per cent last time, and this time it has been increased to 9 per cent, of course, it is proposed to be so increased. Naturally every commodity that will be transported by the Railways will cost more. In this way the price structure will rise and ultimately it will recoil on the Railway finance also. So I think that before imposing any surcharge on fares or any increase of freight we should think about the reactions that will arise out of that imposition. Besides one thing more. Last time he exempted foodgrains from the surcharge of 3 per cent, though 3 per cent surcharge was there. This time he has decided to impose the full rate of 9 per cent increase of surcharge on foodgrains. Foodgrains which he considered should get some concession, but now he has decided that that concessional exemption should not be given. I think in this way the cost of foodgrains will be more and people will suffer. But at the same time we have to find some source to get the money. In my opinion the increase of freight last time, in June last year, was a wrong proposition, and the effect was just the contrary. Whereas he expected that in the course of the year 84 million more tonnes of goods would be carried, but the actual fact is that it will be less by 1 million tonnes than the volume of goods carried in the year 1966-67. Why? If you increase the freight rate, naturally people will try to find some other ways to transport their goods, and there is the road transport which charges less. Even if they charge a little more, people prefer road transport as packing costs are lesser and, therefore, they do

not send by railways. Besides, the road transport can carry the goods earlier than the goods trains. Of course, you have got some Express goods trains also, but they are in limited number. Generally it is giving good dividend also but that is not being deployed in many places. Naturally people are not getting full benefit out of that. Besides that, I think that if your service becomes better, then even at the present rate you can get more million tonnes of goods to carry. Therefore, you should take a risk and keep the gap unfilled and see whether there is any chance of more income from this rate. The rate was increased only some time back; not even year has passed when you increased the rate. If every time you come with proposition of an increase of freight rates it will have an adverse effect not only on price structure but also your earning. Of course, I support the proposal for increase of fares in air-conditioned coach or First Class or even Second Class. But in regard to third class fares, I would suggest that up to fare of Rs. 5 there should not be any increase and for more than Rs. 5 you may increase as proposed.

About the increase in the price of platform tickets, you do not expect to earn much from it; only Rs. 38 lakhs or so you expect as revenue. This increase is very small. Only a few months back you increased it from ten paise to fifteen paise and now you propose to increase it to twenty paise. It is very irritating. Outcome of it likely to be this: the station staff will earn; your revenue will not increase. People will pay some tip to the station staff and they will go and come out. I do not think that these irritating pinpricks are prudent and worthwhile. Why did you increase this fee from ten paise to fifteen paise last year and now propose to raise it from fifteen paise to twenty paise for sitting the platform? From that you want to earn revenue. Later on you may say that those who use the railway water taps they will also have

to pay a fee, just as you have to pay water tax to the municipality and other agencies. Of course, the platform ticket system is there for a long time. But it should not be an item which can be increased every now and then. Hardly do you give any service. Therefore, I do not think it should be done.

About sleeper coaches, I have a suggestion to make. You have suggested that for both 2-tier and 3-tier sleeper coaches it should be Rs. 4 per night. I have a suggestion to make. I think the 2-tier sleeper coach may be converted into inter-class. Of course, we decided earlier that there should be only two classes in the railways, upper and lower. But ultimately we are having four classes again, air-conditioned, first class, second class and third class. Why don't you revert to the old system of inter-class also? The financial condition of our people in society is such, actually there are many cadres in our society—the middle class and the lower middle class—who will prefer this inter-class. From them interclass fare can also be realised. For the day time, there should be, just as in the first class, only sitting accommodation and you can charge four or eight annas for that sitting accommodation. And for night journey, from 9.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m., just as in the first class, you will turn them into sleeper berths. The interclass fare should be 1-1 [2 times of the third class fare. You can earn much revenue, out of it. I know that people having means generally travel in this class, particularly business people. Therefore, I would suggest that you should try this, you discuss it among yourselves and the Railway Board about this proposition. The levy that you propose to impose Rs. 4 per night, for 3-tier sleeper coaches should be reduced to some extent. At the most I think it should be reduced to Rs. 2 and not per night; it should be for the whole journey. Of course, I am not in favour that there should not be any charge

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for the third-class sleeper berths. It is an anomaly that persons who do not get even sitting accommodation and others who get sleeping accommodation, both being charged at the same rate. Therefore, I think you should consider my point also.

Lastly, Madam, I would only say that one of the greatest difficulties in running our railways is because of theft and large scale corruption. Of course, regarding the destruction of railway property, I do not want to deal. But regarding the theft of railway bulbs and fans, well, I understand that they cannot be used anywhere else. But they are also stolen. And for what purpose are they stolen? I learn that the same fans or bulbs are again supplied to the Railways. Otherwise, why should they steal those things? I think the Vigilance Department of the Railways should be strengthened.

Besides I want to say about the attendants in railway coaches, of course, in first classes. I have travelled generally in the first class. You see that there is an attendant in every coach. At least on 50 per cent of the coaches I travelled. I found there were no attendants. I even made a complaint. Each time there was some explanation. Naturally, I have given up sending complaints. But these are necessary, particularly for the new type of coaches.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramprasanna Ray.

SHRI RAMPRASANNA RAY (West Bengal): * Madam Deputy Chairman, I am glad that you have given me a chance to speak in Bengali today. (*Interruptions.*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is making a very short speech he says.

AN HON. MEMBER: In Bengali?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has given a script of his speech.

•English translation of the Bengali speech as given by the hon. Member.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: May I ask the Member if it is his very kind intention that almost none of us should understand a word of what he says?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ray, please continue. He wants to speak in his language.

SHRI RAMPRASANNA RAY: When I came to Parliament six years ago I had a desire to speak in my mother tongue in this august house but that desire remained unfulfilled till now. On the eve of my impending retirement from this House, I am glad to have received this opportunity to fulfil my long-cherished desire.

Madam, in order to avoid loss of valuable time of the House, I would like to touch a few important items briefly.

I come from a district in West Bengal which was very badly affected by partition. During the pre-partition days, we had three mail or express trains between North Bengal and Calcutta. But after the partition there are only two such trains now. It is true that a large area has gone to Pakistan due to partition but the fact that in the last 20 years the population has rapidly grown and there is a corresponding increase in the number of passengers carried cannot be denied. We want a fast train between North Bengal and Calcutta to reach Calcutta in the early morning as it used to be during the pre-partition days but by 348 Dn Farak-ka-Howrah passenger, it takes us 17 hours to travel about 200 miles. We have appealed to the hon. Minister for Railways and his colleague, the hon. Minister of State for Railways to accelerate the speed of 348 Dn. to make it reach Howrah before the peak hours by providing a separate local train for suburban passengers.

•English translation of the Bengali speech as given by the hon. Member.

sengers, if necessary. Madam, we have noticed with regret that passengers of the night trains, that is, passengers of 347 Up and 348 Down trains often become victims of thefts and knife attacks. Though the maintenance of law and order is a State subject, I would request the Railway authorities to take up the matter with the State Government.

In one of my previous speeches in this House I emphasised the need for bridging the river Bhagirathi near Azimganj to connect the BAK Loop with Ranaghat-Lalgola section. Nothing seems to have been done to provide this. The general belief is that if this bridge is provided the load on the BAK Loop will be reduced by diverting the traffic via Ranaghat.

With the expansion of the electrification programme we would like the Railway Board to consider if the Bandel-Katwa section of BAK Loop could be electrified, and if the Darjeeling Mail is dieselised it will lead to great convenience to the travelling public.

Sir, we are pained to find that a drastic cut in the number of passes of officers has been suggested. This will no doubt affect their efficiency. The Indian Railway is a vast organisation and the officers hold transferable jobs which means they could be transferred, and at times frequently, from one corner of the country to the other. There is no doubt that the Railways up till now are the most efficiently managed public sector undertaking. It is, therefore, to be considered whether we can run this Undertaking with a band of dissatisfied officers. We are glad the hon'ble Minister in the other House has given us hope for an underground Railway in Calcutta. We sincerely hope that with a sympathetic Minister and his colleagues this project will become a reality and we would be grateful to them.

Lastly, I would like the hon'ble Minister to kindly provide a through I-cwm-IH class coach between Sealdah or Howrah and Rajgir. Conversion

of Bakhtiarpur-Rajgir railway line into broad gauge has done immense good. But there being no arrangement at present of a through journey to and from Calcutta and Rajgir, it is inconvenient for people, particularly patients, who visit Rajgir under medi-cal advice.

Thank you, Madam.

SHRI BIREN ROY (West Bengal): Madam, I rise on a point of order. You have now allowed that a speech can be given in Bengali or any other language provided one submits the translation in English. We submitted before a question on this point which was disallowed. Madam, we have our translation procedure. Why can there be not one point more so that translation can be made in one Southern language and one other language . . .

SHRI A. D. MANI (Madhya Pradesh): In all the languages.

SHRI BIREN ROY: . . . Today the translation is being given in only Hindi language though English translation was provided by the speaker. There is another point. If you have two channels you can always give it. You should arrange for it and have two or more channels for translations. The Question for this in English was sent twice as also a resolution but all were disallowed.

सरदार ख़ुबारीसिंह पंजहजारी (पंजाब):
मैडम डिप्टी चैयरमैन, जहां तक यह लैंग्वेज का सवाल है, लोक सभा में भी यह सवाल उठाया गया था। तो उस वक़्त प्राइम मिनिस्टर साहिब ने यह प्रामिस किया था कि स्पीकर लोकसभा और चैयरमैन राज्य सभा बैठकर फैसला करेंगे कि इसमें क्या तरीका होगा। यह बड़ा मुश्किल होगा कि 14 लैंग्वेजेज का यहां ट्रांसलेशन हो। हां, जो मेम्बर साहब अपनी लैंग्वेज में स्पीच देना चाहें वह पहले से अंग्रेजी में ट्रांसलेशन लिख कर भेज दें। लेकिन जहां तक दूसरी लैंग्वेज में ट्रांसलेशन कराने का सवाल है उसमें खर्चा बहुत पड़ेगा।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think it is very clear. There is no question of privilege. We permit any hon. Member to speak in any of the languages laid down in our Constitution provided he has handed over a script of his speech in English or Hindi, which has been done in this case. About the rest of it we do not have any arrangement and I do not think we will have any arrangement in the foreseeable future that we can give translation or interpretation in other languages.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: Is there any necessity to bother about it, when a speaker deliberately wants not a word he speaks should be understood?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This issue is over. The hon. Member was permitted to speak in Bengali when he had given to us the script in English, Shrimati Paranjpye.

SHRI BIREN ROY: Why was the question disallowed? Therefore, it is a question of privilege too.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE (Nominated): Madam, when I read the speech of the Railway Minister—I was not here to hear it—I also was struck by all absence of any reference to the wanton destruction of the railway and passenger property that is taking place.

SHRI A. D. MANI: There is reference.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: It means there is very little reference if it escaped my notice because I read the speech from cover to cover.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Any-way, he is refreshing your memory.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: Madam, with regard to this aspect of the railway life, I think the Railways should provide a security force of real—and it should be real—force. I understand that the State Governments are in charge of the

[Shrimati Shakuntla Paranjpye.]

railways when they are passing through particular States. But the Railways have no outright authority as regards security. In that case, I think, if such destruction is indulged in, the State should be asked to foot the Bill or some of the bill at least because the railway property and the passengers must be looked after and looked after properly. I would even say that when such a terrible occurrence takes place, then shoot-at-sight would not be a wrong order to give.

Again, Madam, no mention has been made of the broad gauge up to Miraj which had been promised by the Railways. Have you made any mention about the Miraj line?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): In the Works programme which we have given, you will find this particular work included.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: I hope the work will be speeded up. Not only up to this Miraj section, it should go up to Bangalore because I think broad gauge should go from Bombay right up to Bangalore.

As regards luggage, Madam, every passenger who travels by the Railways always has some unpleasant exchanges with fellow passengers. To avoid this, or at least to facilitate the seating of the passengers and the placing of the luggage I would suggest that the fittings of the Railways should be of standard size. Some speaker suggested that there should be standardisation, and I will stress the point. I will illustrate what happened to me when I was travelling very recently from Bombay to Delhi. I had only one trunk. The trunk that I always carry with me, when I go by rail, always finds its place under the seat because I am a person who objects to anybody having heavy luggage placed in between in the compartment and obstructing free movement. So I take care not to be a passenger of that type. This particular trunk has always tra-

velled with me and has always found a place under the seat. But last time when I was travelling, unfortunately the seat was not high enough, and the trunk would not go underneath. I felt guilty all the 23 hours that I was in the train; but it was not my fault. I called the Conductor and he said that it was an old bogie and the seat was lower than it should be. I think these things should be looked into and there should be standardisation of some sort. There may even be instructions as to what the height of the luggage of passengers should be so that travelling is made easy.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA (Orissa): First-class compartments?

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: Yes, first-class compartments.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: It is still worse in third-class compartments.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: Even in third-class compartments this should be looked into. I would like the hon. Member to know that I am not a first-class traveller by any means. I have always travelled by third-class. I have done my family planning work by third class. But, Madam, in every compartment—I am not saying that it should be done in the first-class or second-class compartments only, but in every compartment—there should be some standardisation, the fittings should be standardised, and there should be some instruction given as to the size of the luggage, the height of the luggage and so on.

There is another thing, Madam. Now I am again complaining as a first-class passenger. I find that the travel from Poona to Bombay is the most difficult possible on the Railways except by the Deccan Queen. Even if you want to change the position of your legs, you cannot do it without hitting somebody because the compartment is so crowded and the seating arrangement is such that the opposite persons have got to give place for you to keep your feet in

between; and travelling becomes very-very difficult. I think something ought to be done. Either the seating accommodation should be reduced or, as they have done in the Deccan Queen, the seats should be . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Separate.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: separate or not facing one another but facing the engine or the back. That would avoid this difficulty.

Now, another point, Madam, which I had raised in the Railway Committee and which I am raising again now because I find no attention has been paid to it so far, is the accommodation for attendants who are accompanying you on the journey. I am not a person who wants the assistance of an attendant ordinarily, but when an old woman like me travels with her grand-children, she does want the help of an attendant. But in these new bogies, there is no accommodation for the attendants. The attendant is given accommodation somewhere about four or five bogies away from your own. It is very difficult to call any one when you need help. Formerly, in the first-class and second-class bogies there used to be a small compartment for the attendants so that one could call them at any time. So some arrangement should be found out so that the passengers can have the assistance of the attendants. Or at least, if you like, you can ask passengers to mention these things in the reservation forms when they fill them up, and you can provide a separate bogie for people travelling with children or make some separate arrangements for them to have the help of attendants.

Then, somebody mentioned about speeding up of trains. I had looked forward with great eagerness to cover this distance between Delhi and Bombay in a much shorter time than I used to do. Dieselisation has come into existence as far as the Frontier Mail is concerned; but we take almost

the same amount of time as before. I know that they can do it by one hour less, at least, but it does not seem to happen. When coming from Bombay, the train is stopped at Nizamuddin, I do not know for how long, just because it has come a little early; it will not be allowed into the New Delhi Station before the fixed time. I do not know why they do not speed up trains. It can be very easily done. The same thing happens from Delhi to Bombay.

I agree with Members who suggested that there should be an extra train from Delhi to Bombay and vice versa because the traffic on this route has increased tremendously, and this can easily be done. Here, Madam, I would like to bring in another point and that is, regarding the halting of trains. I feel that if all halts during the night time were omitted, the trains could run much faster, and instead, if you run more trains on the route, I feel the public would not mind. I think that would be a splendid arrangement and I hope the Minister will give some thought to my suggestion. If the trains stop at night, it is not very convenient for the passengers to get in or get out, and if you do away with halts during the night time and run more trains instead, I think the difficulty in that respect could be overcome.

Then, Madam, the question of ticketless travel is raised in the House after every Railway Budget. But I do not think that anything has been done to solve that problem. Perhaps if the Railway police force acts in the firm and strong manner that I suggested, they could also help to prevent ticketless travelling and I think the Railways will be all the better for it.

Now, the narrow-gauge and metre-gauge, Madam, are obsolete and ought to be sooner or later abolished. And the narrow-gauge according to the point of contact should be converted into metre-gauge or broad-gauge and the metre-gauge into broad-gauge. W«

[Shrimati Shakuntla Parajpye]

are losing a tremendously lot on this. We are behind times and the sooner we catch up with the times, the better will be the financial position also.

A reference was made here to pilferages taking place on the Railways. It is really most annoying. Only the other day, a friend of mine told me that her sister-in-law had sent her eight kilograms of grapes, but when they arrived here she only received two kilograms and that too, in such a mouldy and juicy state that it was difficult to pick out even half a kilogram of grapes in an edible state. Now, this, I think, should be looked into and something must be done about the pilferage that is taking place on the Railways.

A friend of mine here had suggested that the Railway Board should be done away with. I am inclined to agree with this suggestion. I know it is said that the Railway Board is an institution which exists because of the non-existence of a Secretariat for the Railway Ministry. But I think there is too much of the Railway Board and I think a re-appraisal of the Railway Board, at any rate, could be done.

Now, I come to catering. I must say that at least this time when I came back from Bombay, I found that catering had improved and I congratulate the Minister for it. But I feel that as regards catering, one should introduce several new ideas. We get the food on *thalis* and western food, if you like, in the manner it is usually given. But supposing lunch packets were sold, I think some passengers like me at least would go in for them and it would be less messy to eat, and perhaps it would in the long run—very gradually, of course,—change the food habits of our people.

SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY (Madras): What would you have in that *feiBch* packet?

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PA-RAN JPYE: Sandwiches, tomato, banana, eggs, whatever you like, vegetarian or non-vegetarian.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sambar and I rasam?

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PA-RAN JPYE: Sambar and rasam are messy and messy food cannot be included. Even in the South, from where my friend comes, the 'annam' that is sold in banana leaf is a delicious dish and if that was sold on all the Railways, I would be the first to jump at it.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH): It is already sold.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PA-RAN JPYE: Now with regard to increasing the freight rates, many Members have spoken about it and the Minister complained that goods traffic had not increased as much as he was expecting. I am not an economist, I am very ignorant, but I am wondering if the law of diminishing returns is not having some play because of the increase in freight rates. We have increased the rates too much perhaps and the people prefer to send their goods by road transport. These are all the suggestions that I have to make. Thank you.

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA: Madam Deputy Chairman, the task of the Railway Minister is by no means enviable because he has to plan a budget which has a very large deficit and without restoring to taxation he may not be able to keep the Railways on wheels. But any taxation proposal is not welcomed by a large number of people. In my language there is a proverb. In Mysore they say:

"If it is free, give me three and six to my father, If I am to pay back, I am a boy and my father is too old."

So no one takes kindly to any taxation proposal but how far the people can bear that new burden, that is the issue. That is of course a larger question and I would like to go into it later. But in the meantime, I would like to take this House into confidence and say that, by and large, the Railways lack a progressive, forward looking, national policy. We must take the whole country into the picture while looking at the Railways. Whether it is about running the railways, about development, about providing greater facilities, the whole country must be taken into view. Although the Railways harp on longterm planning, they look more to their immediate needs. So they lack perspective planning. They are more or less pursuing a policy of hand to mouth. Even that has become very difficult. National outlook is lacking not only in the Railways but even among most of us. Take for instance the question of these unremunerative lines. No one has the guts or the courage to suggest to the Railways that these old, outmoded and hackneyed unremunerative lines be disbanded. This is because everyone looks to the next elections—this man or this party instead of getting a new line has not been able to retain the one old line which was in the State. So, everybody is keyed to the idea of winning the next election. We lack a national outlook. Even while pleading for the establishment of new lines we look to the particular region from which we come. We must look to the North, East, West and South and take the overall picture of the needs and requirements of the country.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: You talked about unremunerative lines. Can you conceive of all the railway lines being remunerative? Secondly, these unremunerative lines may be at the end of remunerative lines in order that the people may reach from one place to the other. Why are you criticising that nobody here had the guts to ask for their closure?

Many people have already said that. But I would like you to let me know whether it is possible that every section of the railways can be remunerative, and what can be done particularly when these are attached to the remunerative lines?

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA: Shri Ramachandran's point of view differs from mine in regard to some of these narrow gauge lines.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: All these can be converted if necessary to the broad gauge, not closed down.

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA: If the coffers of the Railways permit, I do not mind converting them all into broad gauge or any gauge that the country needs. I was referring to the needs of the country, North, East, West and South. Take for instance Assam, a far-flung State of ours which is very vulnerable from the point of view of defence. That line has got to be strengthened because after partition Pakistan has come into being and on the northern border the threat of China is there. Unless that line is sufficiently strengthened, we may not have sufficient contact with that part of the State. Also added on to that is the problem of Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, etc. So, that line has got to be strengthened taking the overall picture of the defence of the country into view.

SHRI R. S. KHANDEKAR (Madhya Pradesh): The theory of remunerative lines will go away in that case.

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA: The line is already there, only it has to be strengthened. That is what I am pleading for. Then in the North the railway has to go up to Jammu which cries for this line. In the West, thanks to the Railways, we have gone up to Jaisalmer which is a very vulnerable spot. The same facility must be extended somewhere from Saurashtra in the Kutch region so

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that we may not be caught napping and we will have sufficient contacts with that area. Similarly I would also plead with the Railway Ministry that Trivandrum should be on the broad gauge line, so that a link may be established and we can have a network touching all parts of the country.

Analogous to that I would bring to the notice of the Railway Ministry that the Ministry lacks some sort of coordination in regard to the programme of broad-gauging or establishing new lines. I would like to give one instance here. Iron-ore from Mysore is being exported to Madras, almost a distance of 450 miles, overlooking the claims of its being exported from Karwar which is only 182 miles. So, this is something very strange. Many of these wagons that carry iron-ore to Madras are to be hauled back empty to Hospet, once again adding on to the cost of transport. The Minister can vouchsafe because he was the Chairman of the State Trading Corporation. A ton of iron-ore exported from Hospet to Madras costs about Rs. 49 or Rs. 50. But if there was a rail link to Karwar, it would have cost only Rs. 33. So, Rs. 7 are lost in futile transport to Madras. The broad-gauging programme has not been extended from Hospet to Hubli which is its natural terminus. It is now only from Gunta-kal to Hospet. If this line is extended to Hubli, it would help the transport of iron-ore enormously.

The S.T.C., during the Fourth plan period has envisaged the transport of 20 million tonnes of iron ore from the Mysore area. They have planned to transport some through Goa—about 5 million tonnes which is their target and which I doubt very much because the Goa Port is already overcrowded—and they have planned to export about 5 millions from Madras. Even if that is granted, it comes to 10 million tonnes. Supposing 5 million tonnes go through the Mangalore Port when that port is .

complete! I, even then 5 million tonnes are left. Where are they going to export it? Moreover, most of the buyers of our iron ore are from the East European countries. Some of it goes to Japan. They want the iron ore to be exported through, the Western ports, not from the Eastern ports. The export through the Eastern Ports entails five shillings per ton more and if there are any mathematicians in the Railway Ministry—I am not, one—they may calculate what it amounts to per year.

My friends from Maharashtra have suggested that the line from Poona to Miraj be extended to Hubli and then on to Bangalore. I have another suggestion. At present Bangalore, which is a very important centre of ours, many of the Central industries are located there, should be directly on the B.G. Of course now it is there up to Madras, but if the small link between Bangalore and Guntakal is broad-gauged, it would be directly in line with Bombay and Delhi as well as other part of the country. So this small piece may be taken up immediately so that Bangalore can have a direct link with the rest of the country. Also, analogous to this, there is one small Railway in Maharashtra. It is the Barsi Light Railway. It is a tiny railway and a man can go to take coffee when the train leaves and after finishing his coffee he can catch the train although it has left the station.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN (Maharashtra): Even attend a marriage party.

SHRI PATIL PUTTAPPA: Yes, I agree. That may be disbanded. There is enormous traffic to Pandharpur, a pilgrimage centre, and that may be converted into B. G. or M. G. according to the feasibility of the Railway Ministry. I am not here to plead for the abolition of the Railway Board. There might be deficiencies in its working but it is the only connecting link with our nine zones and the Railway Ministry. It co-ordinates the

work and enormously helps the Railway Ministry. If there is no Railway Board, it might be very difficult for us to locate the Minister who might be lost in the vast Railway empire. So I am not going to plead for the abolition of the Railway Board but I would like to streamline its activities so that it can be more useful to the Railway Department.

In the brochure supplied to us it has been said that the efficiency of the Railways has improved. Of course, by statistics we can prove anything or we can disprove anything. Statistics are just like the bikini suit, they say. What it reveals is significant but what it conceals is vital. So in these statistics we can manipulate anything, we can prove anything but those who are accustomed to railway travel know what that efficiency is. Most of the trains never run on time. That is one factor which is known to all including the Railway Minister if he travels by train or to the Members of the Railway Board. Perhaps they may run on time when they are travelling but if they are not travelling, most of these never run on time. So we have to do something about this late running and slow running of trains. They attribute many reasons like faulty hauling, shortage of water, inferior coal, etc. Of course the public cannot do anything about these. It is just like talking about the weather, everybody talks but nobody does anything about it. Something must be done about streamlining the administration of the Railway Ministry.

I am not against giving special facilities to the Railway employees but at the same time we must expect better service from them. It is only through better service, better efficiency and greater economy that the railways can survive in this competitive world. All over the world the revenues of the railways are falling. India is no exception. The road transport has stolen a march over the railways. It has created a dent into the coffers of the Railways. So hereafter they may have to face years of lean

budget. So that point must be borne in mind by the railways and only by greater efficiency and greater service-oriented outlook that the railways can survive.

I would bring to the notice of the Minister two or three matters particularly pertinent about some of our traction. We want to do away with the steam traction and have dieselisation and electrification. Although electricity is abundantly surplus in some States, I do not know what the Railway Ministry has done to utilise that electricity which is available. I know, for instance, the Mysore Chief Minister offered to the Railways that he was prepared to give bulk electricity to the Railways if they want to electrify the lines, may be Bangalore-Mysore or Bangalore-Madras or any of those lines in that region. I do not know what they have done. This conversion of traction is very important and it must be given priority and we must convert many of these lines. The other thing is about the clandestine traffic that is going on unchecked in the railways to the utter loss to the railways. Only a few people are benefited. I do not know where that money goes. Many a time goods are pilfered, the passenger fare is not collected. This is a very serious matter. My estimate is, we might be losing about Rs. 100 crores by this every year. If only greater vigilance is exercised we might be able to get back at least half of this money and there may not be any occasion to tax the poor passenger who is badly taxed already. So some of these loopholes must be plugged. Ticketless travelling must be checked.

In regard to facilities for the third class passengers, I would say that they contribute much to the Railway coffers but the facilities they get in return are very meagre. Although there is staff for sweeping, cleaning, etc., I do not know where they are. The railway trains pass through many stations and they are not attended to. Therefore greater staff vigilance is called for on the part of the Rail-

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ways. Perhaps this may be one of the reasons—I have been thinking that these divisions have been created some 40, 50 years back when the workload was less. Now the workload has grown enormously. Therefore it might be very difficult for them to look after them. The Zonal Headquarters is at one end about 700 miles away and another place is at the 4 P.M. other end. The elephant does not know where it is pricked. So I plead for creation of more Divisions with the existing staff, without any increase, with no more recruitment because over the last eighteen years the number of employees in the railways has gone up from 9½ lakhs to 13½ lakhs or so, an increase of 4 or 4½ lakhs within the last eighteen years. There are too many people; they have very much less work to do. So full work must be taken from them.

One more point I would like to say about the facilities. The Estimates Committee has spoken about withdrawing some of the benefits that are being given to railwaymen. I am not pleading for their abolition, but some sort of curtailment is required. Here I would like to bring to the notice of this House the reply given by the Ministry—a very strange reply. They say that "the grant of the concession of free travel appears to have been recognised as a means of ensuring the continued loyalty of the employee. He must feel that the organisation is his own, that he is part of it." If free travel is conceded he feels that the organisation is his. If we carry this analogy, if we extend this analogy to other enterprises, it comes to this. Suppose a man is working in the Security Press at Nasik. Now for him to feel that the organisation is his own, that he is part of it, he must be allowed to go away with some currency notes. Suppose a man is working in the I. T. I., Bangalore, he must carry away some telephones, because he must feel that he is part of it. Again suppose a man is working in the Hindustan Machine Tools, he must be

allowed to take away some watches because he must feel that he is part of it. This is something very strange; this logic does not carry much weight. But when giving these concessions, which has been going on, I plead that at least the employee must be made to realise that he owes a duty to the nation which gives him all his sustenance because we talk so much but do nothing. The III Class passenger requires greater attention. I was given to understand that, without incurring much loss, entailing not much expenditure, most of the trains in India, metre-gauge and broad-gauge, could be converted into air-conditioned coaches. That may be far off, but an attempt should be made, because these III Class passengers deserve more. He requires water, he requires light, because in many compartments you do not find lights. Even in I Class compartments, many a time you have to bring light to search for lights, to find where they are. But I am sure the Railway Minister is a man from the masses, that he would realise the difficulties of the masses and offer them some succour.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, I have seldom seen a Minister more patient than the present Railway Minister. He has been sitting in his seat all the time and listening carefully. I tried to canvass a little more audience when I raised the issue that we had no quorum. But I got a background reprimand that the quorum issue need not be raised. I stand reprimanded but not convinced. But in so far as the Minister is listening, we lose nothing, and he has been listening very carefully.

Now, his empire, the railway empire within this Republic of India is perhaps the biggest empire in the country. Its bulk is tremendous and its heart throbs reaching every part of the country. So anyone throwing a stone at it even without aiming properly can hit that bulk. It has happened.

Year after year the same complaints are made. This is no reflection on the present Minister. Year after year the same complaints are made; the same notes are taken; the same answers are given—often very helpful—but things go on merrily as before.

When we were fighting for the independence of India, Mr. Minister, one of the pledges that we gave to our people over and over again was that when we became free we shall take care of the III Class passengers. Now we have done a little in that direction, but what we have done is more flashly than the reality of services, some fans on the platforms and some little concessions here and there, but his basic needs have not been met yet. The first one is the terrible overcrowding—it has been mentioned; I only want to look at it in a different way. You can do nothing about this. I can assure you. You may run ten more trains on every line, but the crowds will still remain, because the "multiplication of the human material in this country is greater than the multiplication of any other material and you are not going to catch up with it! But I wish to ask: Is there real collaboration between the Railway Ministry and the Transport Ministry, in road transport? They must divert as much as they can to the road instead of saying that they might lose customers. They will never lose customers. In other countries advertisements are put up to invite people to come to the railway. May

I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that you put up notices discouraging people to travel as far as possible. Because I see this every day, on every line, terrific overcrowding in the III Class, a little less overcrowding in the II Class and even overcrowding in the I Class, even if there are reservations. The subtle ways of overcrowding in the I Class are delightful. How they can overcrowd! Somebody mentioned about luggage. Now this is another point. Luggage takes more space than human beings in the upper classes. Why should you allow people to carry big luggage in the compartment when

there is a luggage van? In no country in the world is this allowed. I am saying it just for information. I have travelled in other countries, in Europe and America, and nowhere, are passengers allowed to carry such terrific weight of luggage in the travelling compartment. Somebody will come and say, "Sir, whose is this luggage? May I remove it to the luggage compartment?" But I come back to the III Class passengers, to the terrible overcrowding in III Class compartments. And then we have terrible insanitation, Mr. Minister. At the railway stations, you go into any lavatory or urinal at a railway station. You cannot approach it because of the stink, and I have very often seen men and women tying towels round their heads and noses to go in. And the newcomer does the same thing, ties a towel round his head and nose all right, but he would urinate in the wrong places, pass stools in the wrong places, and the whole place becomes a bit of hell. So the insanitation continued as before, and inside the compartments also it continues as before.

Then what about the food for the III Class traveller? So much has been said about catering, Mr. Minister. I have heard this every time. I personally once went to my old friend, Mr. Dasappa, and he said, "Come and discuss this with me." I went to him. I trotted out to him the idea which my lady friend gave today, that we should accustom our passengers to food packets. Not these big thalis with so many tumblers and katoris. It is a terrible nuisance. During the war time I travelled up and down this country and everywhere they had food packets because it was emergency time and the British were taking jolly good care to see that the soldiers passing up and down got the value for their money. They got food packets, not this kind of slovenly stuff which runs on from one end of the bench to the other but something compact, nicely packed and neatly

[Shri G. Ramachandran.]

arranged. Why should not the Railways take up catering on their own? You talk of socialism. You talk of public enterprises, but whenever there is a hard thing like this, to be done you hand it over to private enterprises. The Railways must ensure good, decent, clean food to every passenger travelling on the Railways and specially to the Illrd class. This is one of the imperatives of your Administration. But this is the one thing which has never been done. I ajjee that during the last few years catering has improved, but it has not improved sufficiently.

I also remember that up to a time, before the emergency came, the Railways were improving. There were guides for passengers at every sTaffon and ni the corridor trains there were attenders. But they have all disappeared. They disappeared during the emergency. They have come back only in some of the main lines. Now take the corridor trains. A corridor train is a long thing with so many compartments. I am talking of the first class compartments now. There is not a single attendant anywhere. What happens? In the night we close our own doors, but the other doors outside are drumming away viciously all the time we travel, making a terrific noise. All kinds of people come and walk along in the corridor because they know that the passengers are locked up in their own compartments. This is happening in almost all corridor trains. Why don't you give at least one attender for a long corridor train? He was there at one time im many places. Now the guides have also disappeared. I found the guides doing very good work in their day.

Taking all these into consideration, rail travel in no pleasure in this country. It is a great pleasure in the American continent, in the European continent, where there are fine trains

and even these with plenty of Money for air travel like to go by Train because there are so many amenities. I am not suggesting that my country can become America or Germany or something else overnight. But then improved life in this country and travel in this country must keep pace with each other. We have developed in many ways. There are very old compartments still kept running and, totterin gal lthe time which must be scrapped at once. For the last few years, Madam, if I roughly calculate, there would be hardly 10 per cent of the first class compartments in which I have travelled where everything was in order. Either the windows would not close properly or they would not open properly, which is even more annoying. The doors often cannot be locked properly. When you go into a first class compartment's lavatory you sometimes find that the pipe is closed by a wooden plug and when you draw it out you get a gushing flush-water bath at the wrong part of your anatomy. Wheh you pull the chain for getting water for the commode, instead of water coming in the commode it starts flowing all over the place. Hardly a lavatory is really clean. It is a terrible disgrace. Let me tell you, if foreigners travel in our country in our trains, they will carry away a very poor image Of our country and this is happening. In fact, today no foreigner travels by our trains, if he can avoid it. They avoid it and even poor people fly and avoid this menace on rails. You have a very difficult job, I know Mr. Minister. Once I went to my old friend Mr. Dasappta, to congratulate him when he was made the Minister of Railways. He said, "My dear fellow, don't congratulate me. This is a most difficult Ministry. It is most far-flung and whatever I do, things will take a long time to improve." I look upon the whole of our Railways, our Railway system, as a priceless heritage, if I may say so, derived from the British rulers. We have many other quarrels with them. But this is a very good legacy they have left to ua l>t us taie ctre ot

this legacy and make travelling more pleasant than it is today. If you do that, then you can ask for increased fares and charges. While making these demands, if you give the people some real return for the money, then nobody will complain. The whole trouble is you ask more from the people but you are unable to give more to the people. There ought to be a proper equation and then all-will be well with the Railways of India. Thank you.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Madam Deputy Chairman, I do not know whether I should congratulate the Railway Minister on the presentation of the present Budget because the Railway finances are in a very bad way, and at the present rate at which the Railways are progressing and their finances are deteriorating, I think a day will come when the Railways in which we have invested some Rs. 35,310 millions will become another Durgapur Project. I am not suggesting that this is due to any shortcomings on his part. But it is on account of the fact that while operating expenses are going up very much, there is little cushion in our Railway finances to absorb these deficits. I would like to point out to him that for the second year in succession the Railways have shown a deficit of Rs. 22 crores as against Rs. 18 crores in the preceding year. Unfortunately the aggregate balance in the Reserve Fund has fallen from Rs. 169 crores to Rs. 149 crores. In 1950 the capital at charge was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 800 crores and it is now much more than Rs. 3,100 crores and according to one set of figures it is as much as Rs. 4,460 crores. I would like to tell the Railway Minister that we would have no objection to railway fares being increased. But as my hon. friend Shri Ramachandran just now pointed out, there must be a proper return for the money. Unfortunately there has not been a proper return for the money either to the passenger or to the tax-payer.

There has been some indication of the progress made by the Railways in the brochure published—called Indian Railways, 1966-67 which gives a number of revealing figures. I would like to invite the attention of the hon. Minister to page 35 of this handbook and bring to his notice the efficiency indicators regarding operations.

SHRI OM MEHTA (Jammu and Kashmir): There is everything in the book, we all know. They read it.

SHRI A. D. MANI: There under (b) on line—An services, you find that the efficiency indicator for 1960-61 was 137, and in 1965-66 it is 142 and for 1966-67 the figure is 143. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that some 55 per cent of our goods and passenger traffic are now being taken by diesel and electric traction. With this increase in the percentage of diesel and electric traction there should be greater improvement in the efficiency of operation. I would like to point out further that the wagon turn-round in 1960-61 was 11.2. It is now 12.3, in spite of all the diesel engines that are being manufactured and put on the lines. All this shows that while we have increased the capital at charge, there has been a decrease or a progressive running down of the efficiency of the Railways. All this in spite of the fact that we have been spending substantial sums, crores of rupees, for meeting the dearness allowances of the railway employees as per recommendations of statutory authorities from time to time.

One thing has puzzled me about our Railway Budgets. So far the Railway finances showed that there was as much as Rs. 20 crores as Railway Reserve Fund. This Railway Reserve Fund was meant to absorb deficits. If there was a deficit what was coming in the way of the Railway Minister's adjusting Railway Reserve Fund towards meeting this deficit so that the increase in the passenger fares of the order that he has suggested could have been avoided? This is a ques-

[Shri A. D. Mani] tion which he has got to answer when he replies to the Budget debate. I am raising all these points because while operating expenses have increased and while operational efficiency has decreased, the passenger is being asked to pay for the inefficiency of the railways. If we do not put our railways in order I want to warn the Railway Minister that a day is coming when the railways will have to borrow from the General Revenues to run the railway administration just as many other public sector undertakings are doing at present.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: The passenger is the safest cushion for them.

DR. B. N. ANTANI (Gujarat): A very easy target.

SHRI A. D. MANI: One other point that I would like to raise in regard to the operational expenses is this. From the forest of figures that he has supplied in the various handbooks I find that about Rs. 9 crores have been spent on import of fuel like diesel oil. Now I quite agree that dieselisation of railways has meant very quick turnover of railway traffic and that is inevitable that one day the country will have to go completely diesel. But we are spending Rs. 9 crores for importing fuel.

SHRI M. RUTHNASWAMY: Diesel trains a¹ so run late.

SHRI A. D. MANI: I am glad my hon. friend Mr. Ruthnaswamy has raised that point. I will ask the Railway Minister to see the efficiency indicators in regard to speed of goods trains. It was 16.4 in 1965-66 and it was 16.5 in 1966-67. We have had a 0.1 increase; in spite of dieselisation and in spite of electric traction, we have not improved the performance of either the passenger or the goods trains. I have examined a number of

figures in regard to the various Railways; somehow we have never been able to improve the operational efficiency as far as the Southern Railway is concerned. The Eastern Railway is doing better than other Railways and the South Eastern Railway has shown very good improvement in operational efficiency but by and large there has not been any substantial increase in the speed of trains. Now I ask the Railway Minister whether he is satisfied with the figures of working of the railways which he has put out in his various handbooks.

Now, Madam, it has been made very clear that railway revenues are becoming inelastic and that as far as the high-rated commodities' traffic is concerned there has been a diversion to the roadways. The railways are still being run like a Department of Government as they were run during the British days but the time has now come when the railways may have to meet stiff competition from road traffic. I do not agree with my friend, Mr. Ramachandran, when he says that the railways should put out advertisements asking people not to go to the roadways. Both these must run well, the roadways as well as the railways. As long as the Commercial Departments of the various Railways are run as administrative Departments run by people who have been condemned by the Operating Department and sent on to the Commercial Department as a sort of a refuge as is being done at present the efficiency of operation of the Commercial Departments will not be high. The time has come when the railways have to go out and meet the public and canvass traffic just as the various medical representatives are going about giving samples of medicines and asking the doctors to prescribe their medicines. The railways have to enter the field in a very commercial way, in a very competitive way.

Madam, it will be a surprise if the House is told that the salary of a Station Master is between Rs. 140 and Rs. 240. The Station Master is the

person who represents the Railway Administration in the Station. From the point of view of public relations he is the most important person in the Station because he has got supervisory work not only over passenger traffic but also over commercial traffic. A Clerk in the Government in the superior division gets much more than Rs. 240. And this Station Master is the man who is cashiered in Parliament when some train runs into another train and when sometimes there is a collision. And the officers come down upon him when something goes wrong in the railways. How do you expect this person to act as a very vigilant spokesman of the railways? I would ask the Railway Minister and the Railway Board to examine the question of giving some sort of incentive payments to the Station Masters and to the goods personnel who be given a percentage of the income earned so that they do run their Departments as a diehard administration. I would ask the Railway Minister to reveal what steps he is going to take to overhaul the Commercial Departments of the Railways in order to see that these Departments go out and attract traffic which has not been done so far all these years the railways have been in existence.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Their advertisement says travel if you must.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Madam, I would like to make a reference in this connection to a remark made by my friend, Mr. Patil Puttappa, who said that because the Estimates Committee has recommended that certain passes should be withdrawn those passes should be cut down.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: They are for Sadhu Samaj and Bharat Sewak Samaj.

SHRI A. D. MANI: The railwaymen have got to work in desolate areas. Suppose one has got three children whom he has to send to college for education, he must get all the PTO

passes that he has got. Any curtailment of passes will mean infringement of trade union rights and I hope that nothing will be done by the Railway Minister to yield to the pressure of the Estimates Committee or other Committees of Parliament and take away the valuable privilege of the railwaymen which they have been enjoying from the time when the old Bombay-Thana Railway started 100 years ago.

Madam, I would like to go on to one other factor about railway operation. We have got a number of steam locomotives. I believe some thousands of steam locomotives are there and at the rate at which dieselisation is going on many of them may have to be taken off the line. And with regard to this diesel operation I would like to ask the Railway Minister to tell us whether he is sure of the source of supply of this fuel in the event of an emergency. We are importing Rs. 9 crores worth of fuel at present and the cost may go up as years roll by. Even though indigenous crude is there a time may come when in an emergency this source of supply may not be available to us.

Also the booklets that have been supplied to us do not indicate in what direction economies have been achieved by dieselisation of the railways. I believe diesel operation is certainly more economical than steam operation because the maintenance of diesel-locomotives I understand is less costly than that of steam locomotives but I would like the Railway Minister to let us know whether any work study has been done to find out whether dieselisation has been so strikingly economical as we expected.

I would like to pass on to another matter and that is about ticketless travel to which references have been made by previous speakers. Again I take the view that unless incentives are provided ticketless travel is not going to be checked. Madam, one has only to go to the various Bootcing;

[Shri A. D. Mani]

Offices to find a clerk being asked to issue tickets to 300 or 400 people and maintain records of the numbers of the tickets that he has issued and most of them are care-worn and haggard. Some kind of incentive payment has got to be given to the ticket collectors also to check ticketless travel. If we recover penalty fare from the passengers who travel without tickets why not pay a part of the penalty fare to the man concerned so that he has some incentive to check ticketless travel?

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: That way they will have double earning.

SHRI A. D. MANI: I want the railwaymen to earn much more in spite of the *mamooli*. The hon. Minister knows that a large number of rail-waymen do get illegal earnings particularly in the goods traffic section where many of them take *mamooli*. And they become millionaires later on. Why not put a stop to it and recognise that incentive payments would play a better part in promoting efficiency?

The other question I would like to raise is about the unremunerative lines. (*Time bell rings.*) I will take only two more minutes. I have been mentioning whenever I spoke on the Railway Budget that these unremunerative lines should be closed down but before doing so I would like a work study to be done regarding the load of passenger traffic so that the State Government concerned may be in a position to supply alternative mode of transport and the people are not stranded. This has got to be done and if the facts are not before the State Governments they would also agree with the railways that these lines should be closed but the railways also should examine the question of working a road transport in order to secure a link between such lines and the main rail heads. For example, you can book a through

ticket, part of it to be done by road and part of it by rail, so that the passenger does not get stranded.

Another point about passenger traffic is whenever any one goes to Calcutta, one is not sure of accommodation, because the city is so crowded. So, also the city of Bombay. Why cannot the Railways build hotels, as the British Railways have done? They have done it in Scotland and I have gone and stayed in their hotels. They are very well maintained. Such hotel accommodation can be sold as part of the railway ticket.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat): In Ranchi it is there.

SHRI A. D. MANI: In Ranchi it is only for holiday resorters, not for people who go on tour.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: They should accommodate them also.

SHRI A. D. MANI: This also can be examined by the Railways in order that passenger traffic may be stimulated.

Thank you.

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: Madam Deputy Chairman, I rise to intervene in the Budget discussion which is going on here since yesterday and in which many hon. Members have participated and expressed their concern at the Railways running into deficit for the second time in the last thirty years. I was listening to the debate very carefully. Hon. Members have made many valuable suggestions and have also expressed their concern at some of the shortcomings both in respect of passenger and goods traffic. There is no denying the fact that there are many shortcomings in respect of both passenger and goods traffic on the Railways and it is our constant endeavour to improve them as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Still, when we look at the problem, we have to look into the background of the stresses and strains

that have developed in the economy of our country in the last few years.

Before* I go into the details, I must say that though the economic recession in our country has definitely affected the budgetary position of the Railways, their basic financial position still remains very sound. The deficit last year and in the current year is not a working deficit. The Railways have met their operational expenses and they have not defaulted their dividend payment. They have struck a bad patch because of the unexpected pause in the development of our country and because of that they are now drawing into the Revenue Reserve Fund, which has been specially created for that kind of contingency.

The Railways are one of the biggest public enterprises in our country in which approximately Rs. 3,000 crores have been invested. The general view is that the Railways, being such a big enterprise must be run on a commercial basis and must also exercise that kind of commercial discipline which is expected of an enterprise of this nature and magnitude. The Railway, being the biggest enterprise of its kind, cannot be run purely from the commercial point of view. It has some social obligations and it is also a public utility service. The Railways, on their part, are actually carrying a big social burden by way of providing a very cheap mode of transport to the vast suburban section of the travelling public, in which we do not even cover our working expenses. Besides the Railways are also charging a very low rate on many of the items like food, fertiliser, cement, iron ore, coal, etc. We are also giving concessional rates on many items for the sake of export promotion.

SHRI BRAHMANAND PANDA:
On human beings you charge more.

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: In the case of city commuters we are charging fantastically so low that it does I 279 RS—6.

not even cover the working expenses. *Un-
terruption.*) Normally in many countries it is expected that it should be borne by the general exchequer. In our country the Railways have looked after all these things in the usual way, but in times like this it constitutes a severe strain on the Railways' economy.

Now, I come to some of the main points that have been raised by many of the hon. Members. Mention has been made of road transport and rail transport. This is not a very peculiar phenomenon that all of a sudden our Railways have been caught unaware of; This is a phenomenon which is common to all the countries of the world today. Road transport is something which has come to stay in our country, for which capacity is being created by our own Government by constructing National Highways, States Highways and many other roads even inside cities and towns. Every day more and more buses and trucks are coming on the road and they are also being manufactured in our country. These are factors which will definitely go towards competing with the Railways. Now, the point here for consideration is whether the budgetary position of the Railways is only because road transport has come into existence or there are other factors which have come to play their role in our economic development. It is not that whatever traffic that was anticipated by the Railways did not materialise because it had been taken away by the roads. If we study the position of road transport, we will find that some kind of recession is going on even in road transport, as is being faced by the Railways today. Class-wise it is admitted that some of the high-rated goods traffic has definitely gone and is being diverted to road transport, because of certain inherent advantages that road transport can give to the general public. We have mentioned in our Budget Speech and other papers the number of steps and precautions that we have taken to

[Shri Parimal Ghosh]

counteract this. We have been successful, in a number of "cases, in winning back some of the high-rated traffic that had already gone to road.

Now, I come to another point. In this content because of the development of roads in quite a number of places, which are running almost parallel to the Railways, quite a number of railway lines have become unremunerative. The question of unremunerative railway lines has got a bearing on this aspect also. We have now 71 unremunerative lines and we have referred some of these to the State Governments concerned. We have explained our position. That there are places where the traffic, that is now being carried by the Railways, could easily be taken over by road, with the addition of some buses and trucks and, if necessary, with some improvements in the roads in those areas. Even we have gone up to suggest to the State Governments to the extent that if necessary the Railways would even be prepared to contribute towards the financial implications which the State Governments may have to face for putting up more buses and even for the improvement of the roads. All these factors will have to be considered and decided at the State Government level. The Railways have no intention of taking any hasty decision in this respect. The requirement of the place, whether the lines could be improved—all these things will be taken into consideration and a decision will be taken.

Now I come to the question of catering. I am glad that one hon. lady Member has mentioned that she has found some improvement in the catering, and the hon. Member, Mr. Ramachandran, also asked why the catering was not being taken over by the Railways themselves. Madam, as the background I must say that originally the entire catering service used to be run by the contractors. Since 1956 the Railways have also

entered into the field of catering. Now in most of the long distance trains and in almost all important stations the Railways have their own catering arrangement which is run departmentally. On the last Budget occasion the hon. Members of both the Houses had raised that issue that, whether in the departmental catering or in the private catering, the catering leaves much to be desired and it is not up to the standard which they expected. On that basis a Catering Committee was constituted in which two of the hon. Members of this House are also members. I am glad to mention that the Committee have gone into details. They have visited almost all zones and different places. The Committee also submitted a questionnaire to each and every Member of Parliament. Some of them have kindly given their valuable suggestions. Some of them have also met us in different places where we met under the different zonal Railways.

SHRI OM MEHTA: What about the recommendations of the Committee?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: The Committee have already finalised their recommendations and the recommendations are now under the consideration of the Government. I can assure the hon. Members that within a very short time a copy of the suggestions and recommendations made by the Committee would be made available to them.

SHRI OM MEHTA: We are concerned with the implementation, not with the availability of the report.

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: Regarding implementation, I must warn the hon. Members that simply suggesting and recommending will not immediately make that change in the railway catering. Of course it will take its own time, and it is our belief that after some time, given some time, definitely the catering in the Railways will improve.

I would take up some of the points mentioned by hon. Members yesterday in their speeches. Mr. Yaji has referred about a Wage Board. This point has also been referred to by some of the Members in the other House, and I would like to mention here also that after all the railway employees are part and parcel of the Central Government, and any unilateral decision for fixing a Wage Board only for the railway employees will not be a very suitable approach. Whenever any Wage Board is being thought of and designed by the Central Government, the effect of the decisions of that Wage Board will automatically come to the railway employees. There have already been two Pay Commissions, one in 1947 and another in 1957, for the Central Government employees.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: When you have a special budget, a separate budget, it is only proper . . .

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: We have a separate budget only for Railways, but the railway employees are part and parcel of the Central Government.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM (Andhra Pradesh): Yours is a profit-making concern.

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: I wish it had been entirely a profit-making concern. In that case I would have asked the hon. Member not to insist on that point. The Railways then should only run on a commercial basis, and many of the suggestions the hon. Members are making today are on the basis of giving social and public utility services. These two things cannot go together.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Are the salaries of your officers in conformity with the officers of the Central Government?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: The salaries of our officers compared to the salaries of the other Central Gov-

ernment staff rather do not compare favourably . . .

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Including the Railway Board?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: Including the Railway Board.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Thank you. Considering perquisites also?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: Mr. Kumaran in his speech yesterday mentioned about the installation of computers and their absolute under utilisation. He mentioned that the computer machines that we have recently installed are not working for even an hour a day. But I must say that the information of "Mr. Kumaran is not wholly right. Though the computer machines that we have installed are not working fully, they are working for at least seven to seven and a half hours a day. Very soon they will be working 10 to 10½ hours a day and ultimately the computer machines will be working to their fullest capacity. That is exactly the intention for which the computer machines have been installed.

AN HON. MEMBER: How many have been introduced?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: So far we have introduced about 4 computer machines in some of the railway zones, and we already have computer machines installed in our production units.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: How many employees will be thrown out?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: Not a single employee has been thrown out. Not a single employee's avenue of promotion has become stagnant. Not a single employee would be transferred without his consent.

Mr. Anandan yesterday raised the question about the working hours in some of the workshops. The work-

[Shri Parmil Ghosh] ing hours in some of the workshops basically are more or less on the same lines, and immediately after the proclamation of emergency the working hours in all the workshops had been raised to 48 hours, and after the lifting of the emergency they have come back to the original working hours which they were having before.

I now would like to refer about the two points raised by the hon. Member, Mr. Khandekar. He mentioned about labour relations and he wanted that most of the problems that arise should be settled at the bottom level and should not come to the top level at the Railway Board where we should discuss only on the broad policy matters. I fully agree with Mr. Khandekar on that point, and there are the normal instructions and facilities are available to all railway Zones so that each point could be decided at that level, and only those points which could not be decided at that level should be forwarded to the higher level, which constitutes the Railway Board.

Regarding his another point, he suggested that the passenger trains should run quicker and there should be more passenger trains. Though it is our intention to increase the passenger services as much as possible within the financial limits, still I must for the information of Mr. Khandekar say the new trains that we have introduced within these seven months. In the first seven months of the current year 35 new non-suburban trains were introduced, 24 on the broad gauge and 12 on the metre gauge, and the run of 39 trains extended. In the suburban sections, we have introduced 43 new trains. 30 on the broad gauge and 13 on the metre gauge, and the run of 12 trains, 8 on the broad gauge and 4 on the metre gauge, has been extended.

SHRI R. S. KHANDEKAR: What about the trunk routes?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH: Quite a number of new trains has been introduced and the run of trains has also been extended. Because of dieselisation the number of bogies that they previously used to take has been appreciably increased.

There are also many Members who have referred to many points and given various suggestions which we have already taken note of, and it would be our endeavour to give consideration to them as much as possible within the limitation of funds. And regarding the other vital points about fares and other things, I would leave it to my colleague, the Railway Minister, to deal with them when he replies to the debate.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: I must at the outset congratulate Mr. Poonacha for so brilliantly expressing the character of this Government in his Budget Speech.

AN HON. MEMBER: What do you mean?

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: I will explain it and I speak of it characteristically, it has no character except that it has developed a theory of killing the cricket to feed the robin. Many things have been said by the previous speakers and as Mr. Mani put it, the forest of figures that come to us makes little meaning to a man like me because I know very little of figures and also of mathematics. Mahatma Gandhi once said that in a socialist society no one will be the first and none the last. But what I feel during these 20 years is that the common man, the working man, the struggler, is completely lost. He is neither the last nor can he ever dream of becoming the first.

The Minister has been pleased to raise the fare on sleepers to Rs. 4 per night. Let him oblige me once as a Member of this House and oblige the people of Orissa in general by passing it through Orissa once taking the Madras Mail from Howrah station.

onwards towards the South. Of course, he will be flying often. And it wiH be a difficult task to travel even in the first class in a train now-a-days. But he will see that all the fast running trains that move from Howrah or from Madras pass through Orissa only during the night. Therefore, if the Minister travels on that line, in Orissa he will travel through darkness and he cannot find out that it is difficult for the passengers of Orissa to travel in these fast trains from different stations. That is why our grievances remain unseen and unheard. What I want to suggest is that the country can grow not lop-sidedly; a country must grow proportionately. Then only can there be complete development and a country can flourish only in that way. But so far as Orissa is concerned, whatever we ask for from the Minister, the answer is merely, no. I would point out here that Orissa is dependent only on the South Eastern Railway. It passes through five different States. But we have no other go. We do not have even one train to connect the highlands in Orissa or the western districts with the coastal plains. We have been repeatedly asking for a train that -win go from Jharsuguda to Cuttack, and we have not been given any.

Another thing. Cuttack, the foremost city in Orissa, has unfortunately got a level crossing near ihe station. And when shunting goes on in the shunting yard, vehicles from either side line up, not for minutes, but for hours _we do not have an under-bridge or an overbridge. I hope the Minister wiH at least look into this.

As Mr. Ramachandran has put it, we should put up posters or placards in every station to see 'hat people travel less. This Government is in the habit of asking us to eat less, to travel less, to talk less, to sleep less, only to work more anti

and vote the Congress to power
(Interruptions) I hav_e included it. The family planning also, they are doing it that way. They want us only to work more
(Interruptions) You have bee_n there for the last 20 years. If God helps you will b_e there for five or six years more.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Let us hope not.

SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA: Against the wishes of God, I am talking. Do something that will be remembered after you are no more in office. The railways are our life line. But why is there so much of talk going on that road traffic is growing? It is simple, because if you send anything by the railway, God only knows when that thing wiH reach the man to whom you send it- Pilfering or taking away goods from the godowns op from running trains i_s done with the special knowledge of the lower staff of the railway. So, if you employ a vigilance man, that vigilance man wiH be looked after bj' another And this vicious circle will go on in 'uch a way that you will only be giving them money but not getting any benefit. I would definitely differ from Mr. Mani, although I agree with many of his points; that some incentive should be given to the station master or th_e T.T.I, so that he wiH be dutiful. Nowhere in the world can you cite instances where money alone has instilled character in _a roan. I have seen ticketless travelling because before entering this House I had the proud previlese of travelling in the third class and out o* this House. I will travel also in the third class because I cannot afford to travel in first class or second class. I have seen people i.e. 3rd class passengers. But I have yet to see a few railway officials who behave well with the ordinary passenger, the third class passenger, and treat him as a gentle-ment he is kicked and pushed jtrat as in the short story written by ^eari

[Shri Brahmananda Panda]

Buck, in that famous book, 'Today and For Ever'. It was the same condition in China, an over-populated country where railways had not been developed. I say even, because we have some extra lines here and there, the Indian Railways have not developed.

I was travelling that day in the Kalka Mail. When I got down at the Delhi railway station, I never thought that there was a metamorphosis; I had changed. I went before the mirror—I was all dust. That is the plight of the first class compartment. You must give a little comfort to the traveller, to the man who travels in the sleeper coaches. He is a man who may be coming from Madras, to his service in Calcutta. You do not allow him to sleep at least for two or three hours in the train. You should give him better service. He will be having a nagging wife at home and all the troubles. He cannot be paying for vegetables and milk. And above all that, national loans, crores worth, you are accumulating. He must have taken something from his friends. So, when the salary comes, that salary is only for a few days and by the 5th probably his money is finished. And if he wants to run away from all this and sleep for a few hours, I am sorry Mr. Poonacha does not allow him to sleep. He cannot afford the extra levy.

Therefore, I would request the Minister to see that this Rs. 4 levy is completely struck off. You cannot understand the common man's difficulty. Of course, I also include myself with you because we are used

to a way of life. It is unfortunate that in India even after 20 years of independence we have completely forgotten the common man. We want to govern him, we want to rule over him. But we do not feel his pulse; we do not feel his feelings; we do not want that he should rise up and find for himself a place as an independent and sovereign citizen of India. We have nothing but sufferings to offer him.

Therefore, it is high time that we view things in a different way. If a country or a government is to be dynamic, it should not be static. There are two things that destroy dynamism.

One is the vested interest of the mind and the other is conventional wisdom. Be it the Railway Budget or the Finance Budget, whatever is placed before us is nothing but a picture of the vested interest of the mind and that of conventional wisdom. I wish the Railway Minister, with his ingenuity and his character—I have heard about him, I have not personally met him of course, outside this House but I have heard good things about him—develops a new look into it. We have made many mistakes. But let us not brood over them. We cannot cover mistakes by mistakes.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can continue your speech on Monday, The House stands adjourned till 11.00 A.M. on Monday.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Monday the 11th March, 1968.