

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 8th May, 1964 [the 18th
Vaisakha, 1886 (Saka)]

The House met at eleven of the
clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWERS

CLOSURE OF A RAILWAY LINE AT PURULIA

5. SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: Will
the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased
to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that hartal
was observed in Purulia in West
Bengal recently in protest against the
decision of the Government to close
down a railway line there; and

(b) whether Government propose
to reconsider the matter in view of the
public resentment and the incon-
venience likely to be caused to the
public there as a result of the closure
of the railway line?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
S. V. RAMASWAMY): (a) The Gov-
ernment have no information.

(b) A statement is laid on the
Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

Earlier orders issued for the closure
of the Purulia-Kotshila narrow gauge
line with effect from 1st April 1964
have since been revised and it has
now been decided not to discontinue
the train services till 30th September,
1964. This line has been working at
an annual direct loss of Rs. 1.7 lakhs
and with interest on capital etc. the
loss will be Rs. 2.70 lakhs per year.
The very meagre traffic both passenger
and goods that is offered on this line
can be easily catered for by the road
services. It is proposed to discontinue
the train services on this narrow
gauge section after 30th September
1964. However, with a view to find
out if there is sufficient justification

for the conversion of this narrow gauge
line into broad gauge and appreciate
the financial implications of the propo-
sals, Preliminary Engineering and
Traffic Surveys are proposed to be
carried out. The decision on this mat-
ter will not in any way be influenced
by the closing down of the N. G. line,
continuance of which, as such, in
any case, beyond the stipulated date,
is not justified.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: May I
know whether in such matters of clo-
sure of railway lines the Ministry
takes into account the revenue or in-
come from a particular line or public
convenience? If both the aspects are
considered, then which is the aspect
on which emphasis is placed?

SHRI S. V. RAMASWAMY: Sir, this
is always done in consultation with
the Government. We had been in
touch with the late Dr. B. C. Roy and
subsequently the present Chief Minis-
ter of West Bengal. Considering all
these aspects and after discussing with
them we have taken this decision.

SHRI R. P. N. SINHA: The Deputy
Minister said that he has been in touch
with the late Dr. B. C. ROY. May I
know how he has been in touch with
the late Dr. B. C. Roy?

SHRI S. V. RAMASWAMY: The
Railways, by correspondence. (Inter-
ruption) Obviously, Sir, it means
when he was alive.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: May I
know whether the Government con-
siders it to be expedient to disturb the
status quo and create public resent-
ment during the period of emergency?

SHRI S. V. RAMASWAMY: Sir,
there might be some people who are
interested in keeping this but from our
point of view it is working under loss
and even if this line is dismantled, the
people will not be put to inconveni-
ence, because there is a parallel road-
way and a number of buses are
running there.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: May I
know whether a Memorandum was

[Shri D. L. Sen Gupta]
submitted to the Ministry of Railways by the Lok Sewa Sangh, Purulia, and if so, whether it has been considered?

SHRI S. V. RAMASWAMY: Sir, the Memorandum has been received, not one but several representations. They were all considered and we have come to this conclusion.

SHRI A. B. VAJPAYEE: Sir, the Railways are a public utility service and not a commercial concern. So the question of profit and loss should not outweigh other considerations. May I know on what grounds this line is being closed?

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: Sir, we cannot accept the suggestion of my hon. friend over there that the Railways are only a utility concern and not a commercial concern. It must definitely be understood that it is both. We cannot ignore commercial considerations.

SHRI A. B. VAJPAYEE: You can ignore public convenience?

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: We have not said that. We cannot ignore public convenience. Well, my hon. friend, the Finance Minister, is here. I may inform the House that for any extra capital outlay that we are going to incur hereafter he expects a return of 5.75 per cent. Well if that is so, I cannot accept the theory that it must only be a utility concern and should not have commercial considerations. In this case, Sir, because of the continuous urging by the public as well as the Government of West Bengal we have postponed the time for closing the narrow gauge line. Sir, all these narrow gauge lines are working under tremendous losses and we have got to do one thing or the other, close these losing concerns or find a way of making them profitable. In the earlier stages we had considered the question of converting this narrow gauge into a broad gauge and then given it up because there was no prospect of any good return. We are again doing it, having a fresh look at and if it is

likely to be of some help financially, we shall certainly consider taking it up.

DR. NIHAR RANJAN RAY: Is it not a fact that at one stage talks were going on to have the line replaced by a metre gauge line or even a broad gauge line? What happened to that?

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: As I said, Sir, we did consider this matter. It did not hold out any prospects and, therefore, we abandoned the idea. But in the light of further developments if there is a chance of its proving a commercial success, we shall certainly see what we can do about it. But in view of the data that we have before us just now, there is no chance of its proving a commercial success.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: May I know . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hope this is your last.

SHRI D. L. SEN GUPTA: Yes, Sir. May I know whether the Government of West Bengal has made any representation to the Central Government against such closure of the railway line?

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: I gather that there has been a representation from the Government of West Bengal that it should not be closed but the question of converting it into broad gauge may be considered, and that is why I said that we are having a second look at it. How far it will hold out any real prospect of becoming a commercial success, I do not know.

SHRIMATI SHAKUNTALA PARANJPYE: Is there more passenger traffic or more goods traffic?

SHRI S. V. RAMASWAMY: There is practically no goods traffic. There is only passenger traffic, and there are a number of buses plying there.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA: I may reinforce the point made here. A recent assessment of traffic over this narrow gauge section indicated that the passenger traffic is barely 60 to 70 passengers per day and there is very little goods traffic, the average being about 2 quintals of parcels and 2 quintals of goods per day.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

AMENDMENTS IN THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE (PAY) RULES, 1954

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Notifications of the Ministry of Home Affairs publishing certain amendments in Schedule III to the Indian Administrative Service (Pay) Rules, 1954, under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the All India Services Act, 1951:—

- (i) Notification G.S.R. No. 1821, dated the 22nd November, 1963.
- (ii) Notification G.S.R. No. 484, dated the 16th March, 1964.
- (iii) Notification G.S.R. No. 485, dated the 19th March, 1964.
- (iv) Notification G.S.R. No. 486, dated the 19th March, 1964.

[Placed in Library, for (i) to (iv).
See No. LT-2885/64.]

AMENDMENTS IN THE INDIAN POLICE SERVICE (PAY) RULES, 1954

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: Sir, I also beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Ministry of Home Affairs Notification G.S.R. No. 525, dated the 24th March, 1964, publishing certain amendments in Schedule III to the Indian Police Service (Pay) Rules, 1954, under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the All India Services Act, 1951. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2886/64.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

THE WAKF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1964

SECRETARY: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha:—

"In accordance with the provisions of Rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose herewith a copy of the Wakf (Amendment) Bill, 1964, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 6th May, 1964."

Sir, I lay the Bill on the Table.

NOMINATIONS TO HOUSE COMMITTEE

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hereby nominate a new House Committee consisting of the following Members for the period commencing on the 22nd May, 1964 and ending on the 21st May, 1965:

Shri D. P. Karmarkar
Shri Mahabir Dass
Shri Krishan Dutt
Shri M. S. Gurupada Swamy
Shrimati Shyam Kumari Khan
Shri Dahyabhai V. Patel
Thakur Bhanu Pratap Singh

I nominate Shri D. P. Karmarkar to be the Chairman of the Committee.

RESULT OF ELECTION TO VARIOUS BODIES

MR. CHAIRMAN: The following Members being the only candidates nominated for election to the bodies respectively shown against each, I hereby declare them duly elected to be members of the said bodies:—