

I am asking him through you whether he is prepared to change the law of evidence to enable people to give evidence before a court to prove that «o and JO or such and such an officer or such and such Minister is corrupt. I am ready to prove hundreds of cases before any court that such and such forest officer, such and such conservator or such and such Minister is corrupt, but I cannot do that. I will •cite an instance One forest officer sold recently rosewood timber for Rs. 3000.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can write to the Kerala Government about it.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: The difficulty is that I cannot prove it before a court of law that in a particular case timber was sold by one forest officer for Rs. 3000 which in the next stage was sold for Rs. 28,000, because under the forest law no outsider is permitted inside the forests, and if I give evidence, then I will be prosecuted for trespassing into forest areas.

SHRI B. N. DATAR: Has he men-Honed this to the Kerala Government?

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: There are so mrny cases on the railways, there are so many cases . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no use making these allegations.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: So, I say that the hon. Minister need not assert that there is no corruption. If there is no corruption, then this amendment will not be necessary to be brought before the House.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You write to the Kerala Government.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: But let the law be certainly passed and tightened up and corruption rooted out.

SHRI B. N. DATAR: No reply is necessary.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed." The motion

was adopted.

# THE BUDGET (RAILWAS), 1958-59— GENERAL DISCUSSION

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND (Uttar Pradesh); Mr. Deputy Chairman, I congratulate the hon. the Railway Minister for presenting a surplus Budget and I also congratulate him tor supplying a Hindi set to the Members of Parliament. I am glad to know that the use of Hindi is increasing day by day in the Railway Ministry. In spite of various handicaps the Railway Minister has been able to run the railways on sound lines. The track may be slippery here and there, that might have caused accidents here and there or there might nave been something lacking on the part of a particular officer serving the railways, but on the whole the picture that has been presented to us by Vol. I on Indian Railways is correct and is to a large extent a fair picture of the progress that has been made by the nationalised railways of India during the last year. I know that hon. Alembers are aware of the handicaps that the Railways have had to face. We know that there have been ?even major railway accidents; we know that railway officials have been murdered on the railways and some civilians have al\*o been murdered here and there; we know that passengers have complained of thefts both while travelling and boarding the trains and on the platforms. We know that about 2,26,242 days man labour was not available <sup>PM</sup> to the Railways during the current year because of some strikes which were illegal. We know about the begger nuisance, we know that about 17,834 cases of non-settlement of claims are yet pending. We know that over-aged locomotives to the tune of 30-74 on broad gauge, 23-13 on metre-gauge and 35-81

[Shri Amolakh Chand.] on narrow guage are yet moving and carrying about 18 million persons—if I recollect correctly—I will give this later,—on the Railways. We know that about 10J lakhs of people are emplo'ed in the Railways and probably this is the greatest nationalised concern which has to deal with public servants.

In spite of all these facts, I find that there are reasons to congratulate not only the Railway Minister but also the Members of the Railway Board and every Railway employee who is working in this great national enterprise. It is not proper for me to point out here and there the lapses of one particular officer or a particular pointsman or a Railway Station Master. We have to take a complete survey and see how the Railways have functioned, how they have tried to solve all the problems which come daily before them in so many matters.

The first thing which I would like the Minister to consider is, whether we should continue with the non-Governmental Railways. I was looking into the report and on page 154 on calculating we find—I think the Railway Board could have given the figure somewhere else—that the Indian Railways are operating on 34,391 miles and there are non-Governmental Railways run by various District Boards and private companies to the tune of 453 miles. There are 11 companies which are running these. We know that the type of administration which we get on the national Railways is quite different, the amenities are different. And now is there any reason that we should permit these non-Governmental Railways to carry the passengers? There are three States in which these 11 non-Governmental Railways are run and that too, they are run on 2' 6" and 2' gauges. I want to know why steps were not yet taken to nationalise these Railways. This matter should now be taken up. We are getting foreign exchange, we are getting money from other countries to improve our national Railways and I see no reason why it should now be delayed any more.

Now if we go through the report we find that the Estimates Committee of the Parliament looked into the estimates of the Railway Budget and have submitted 15 reports to the Houses. What we find in these reports is that they have made 645 recommendations and what do we find? The Railways have been able to take action on 527 recommendations **till the 31st March 1957** and the left-over are 118 cases. I hope probably they would have taken action by now or by 31st December 1957.

Speaking on the Railway Budget or Railway Appropriation Bill I wanted last year that more and more cooperation should be taken of the National Railway Users' Consultative Councils. What I find in the report is that in the year under review only two meetings were held, one in July 1956 and the other in January 1957 and it is mentioned that various questions of Railway administration, passenger amenities and improvements were discussed. I would like that more and more co-operation of this Council should be taken. There should be more meetings as we find in the case of Zonal Committees and I understand **that** more meetings were held—about 103 meetings—of the Zonal Committees. What I would suggest is that there should be, if not monthly, at least two monthly meetings 6 meetings in a year and more and more coopera-ti»i of the public and the users of this industry should be there. I am glad to-note that there has been a proposal for Divisional Consultative Committees. This is a step in the right direction. I cannot understand what the report meant when they said that on railway stations, in addition to cloak rooms, lockers have been introduced. At least I was not able to find any locker on any station on which I had to travel. As a matter of fact I was not aware of it and I would like to take advantage and see what these lockers are. We know that experiments are being made by putting camping coaches on various railway stations where there are no waiting rooms. I think this is again a thing in the right direction and more and more advantage should be-

taken of these. I don't know what is the experience of the Railways or of the passengers but I hope it would be satisfactory.

Then I come to the question of cooperative movement in the Railways. We do find that there are cooperative societies and banks and going through the report, I did find that they are working well. The Railways are also contributing something and we do feel that this is also a step in the right direction. We find that steps are being taken to house the personnel who are working on the Railways. Till now first-class officers and second class officers, station-masters and some other employees had quarters attached to their railway stations and had places to live in. What we find in the report is, that in the year under review, 9,645 quarters have been constructed and I hope that there is a regular programme that in every year of the Second Five Year Plan about 10,000 houses would come up to accommodate those who are too needy of accommodation. By giving accommodation not only you satisfy the curiosity of the men to live in quarters, but I would like to submit that by giving proper accommodation, you increase the efficiency of the man because he becomes care-free and can see that his wife and children are lodged well.

We find that new security measures, after the passing of the Railway Protection Act, have been taken but to the regret of so many of us, we find that thefts have not decreased as they ought to have been. Theft on certain lines of railway fittings, carriage fittings, electrical and sanitary fittings etc. are going on. We find that bags and bags are yet being removed from railway premises and the Administration should find out ways to stop them.

I was just saying about the number of persons who are travelling on the Railways. What I find from the report after calculation is that 11,739 lakh passengers have travelled according to the earnings. This does not mention

110 RSD—5.

about the number of persons who are travelling without tickets and according to my computation, subject to correction by the Ministry itself, there would be at least another 261 lakhs ticketless travellers, making a total of 12,000 lakhs persons or 120 crores of persons travelling on these Railways. What we find is that the Railway has taken the right steps to check this ticket travelling and further I think to curb this, they have attempted and have tried to collect fares from 69 lakh persons. If you see the report, you will find that the financial results of the working are quite favourable. The total income this year is Rs. 347-57 crores as compared to Rs. 316-29 crores in 1955-56. Thus there is a clear increase of Rs. 31-28 crores. This earning is both from passenger traffic and from goods traffic. Naturally there might be the objection that the running expenses have also increased, but this is but natural. You expand your business and improve it and certainly in that you have to spend more, pay more for it. Without spending more you cannot have better efficiency.

Regarding the general operating efficiency also there is greater efficiency and we find that the operating ratio and the working expenses are also decreasing.

If you look into the Report with regard to other problems like punctuality and so on, I regret to note that there is an increase in unpunctuality of trains and not a decrease which will appear from page 23 of the Report. It says, in 1955-56 the percentage was 77-99 for broad gauge and 70-84 for metre gauge and in 1956-57 they are 77-91 and 70-78 respectively. There has been an improvement in the marshalling yards and that is going to help us to move the greater production which we anticipate during the Second Five Year Plan. Some marshalling yards have been improved and many more are going to be improved and that is very necessary.

There is also the subject of concession travelling. I was looking into this matter from another angle and I

[Shri Amolakh Chand.] wanted to find out whether without additional trains and more and more accommodation being made available, this was very desirable. We have to increase the number of trains to important cities and the capitals of States so as to enable the employees to go home on festivals and public holidays which are sometimes from 4 to 7 days. When they give this concession—and I think they should give this concession to these people—there should also be a corresponding arrangement made to carry the extra number of passengers that are lured by these concessions.

Regarding these concessions there are restrictions. In a question I wanted to know whether students are getting any concessions in these vestibule air-conditioned cars or not. If I remember right, the hon. Deputy Minister while replying said that it is not so. I would like him to consider this particular point once more. I think these vestibule cars, the *de luxe* trains should be increased more and more and third class coaches added to them. You should also consider why our young people of India should not accustom themselves to travelling in these vestibule trains with concessions.

I was trying to find out information about old, over-aged stocks and it is apparent from the Report that we have such stocks put on railway lines. I do not know whether these locomotives are allowed to be run on mail and express trains. I was pointing out that punctuality had decreased. I do not know whether this is not one of the reasons why these trains are not punctual, being run with old stock.

I also understand that probably trains are held up sometimes not only because they run late, but because there is a connection which has to be given to another train. When I say this I refer to various incidents which happened between Howrah and some of the stations on the Asansol side. I can understand the anxiety of those persons who go to attend offices in suburban trains. But is it not neces-

sary for the Railways to see that other passengers also, travelling by mail and express trains have to reach Howrah, reach Calcutta in time to attend the High Court or attend to some other official business? This is a point I would like the hon. Railway Minister to consider. There has been some hubbub, if I remember correctly, on this issue in the trains.

I come next to the various amenities that are being provided to passengers and to railway officers. This morning we heard the Deputy Minister for Railways saying something about holiday homes. I was told this morning that there are rest houses or **rest** rooms for Class I and Class II officers and these holiday-homes are meant **for** class III and class IV officers of the Railways. It was also pointed out that the charges are very modest and within the means of the railway employees. But then I was wondering why Wellington on the Southern Railway, has been closed. I found that the explanation was that it was too expensive and was not taken advantage of. I would like the Railway Board to look into this matter and see that more and more persons are able to take advantage of these holiday-homes and if necessary some contribution in the nature of subsidies may be granted to these homes. I do not know if only sick persons who are on leave can go there. I think even the dependants **of** railway officials of class III and class IV should be permitted to go, and rest there so that an employee **who** is working on the Railways has a peaceful atmosphere to work.

During this year new buildings **and** railway stations have been constructed. I do congratulate the Railway Minister on this account also. Sarnath Station which is going to be taken within the limits of Banaras Corporation is one of them. Unfortunately I had not the advantage of seeing that station myself, but I saw its picture in the Report and it looks like a very good building. I hope more and **more** new stations will come up wherever they are absolutely necessary. I **would**

like the hon. Minister to see that all places of interest for tourists are provided with good stations and rest houses and places to stay in. That will bring in more revenue not only to the Railways but this will also encourage tourism and enable the tourists to look into the cultural heritage of this great country.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. B. Josm) in the Chair.]

Particularly I would remind the hon. Minister how popular these retiring rooms are with the travelling public. I have seen these retiring rooms at various stations and also the latest ones at New Delhi Railway Station. I have found people who have stayed there, complimenting the Railway Administration on having such fine hotels and rest rooms. I know the Railways are running two important hotels, one at Ranchi and the other at Puri. In a question I suggested that steps should be taken to increase the accommodation at these hotels and retiring rooms wherever it is possible to do so within the means of the Railways.

Now, Sir, we know that great projects for the electrification of railways have been undertaken and I think it should be said to the credit of the Railway Ministry that they could do this well in advance of the schedule in the case of Calcutta. Now, the electrification of the railways has become a necessity in these days. When I was going through the Report I did find somewhere a reference about tube railways. Recently, what we find is that people are thinking of railways not on the earth but on pillars. We know, Sir, that in the case of the London Airport it takes the passengers more than two to three hours to reach the city. That also is the case in respect of the Paris Airport. What we find is that they are attempting to have pillars on the roads for railways to run on them. I do not know whether that would be necessary in India at the moment; this may be needed later on in great cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi which are growing very very swiftly.

While talking about Delhi, Sir, I am reminded about the circular train around Delhi. I do not know what its present position is. I understand that it is not competing well with the buses which are running in the city of Delhi. I think the Railway Ministry should look into it to find out whether that system is fulfilling the purpose for which it was introduced and whether the passengers are taking advantage of it or not. I understand that the frequency of the trains does not meet with the demands of the people. This is a matter which may be looked into.

The Railways have taken interest in providing canteens to the tune of 203 in number. I think, Sir, it is the desire of the Railway administration to introduce more of canteens. They have referred to section 46 of the Factories Act which makes it incumbent on them to have a canteen at a place where more than 250 persons are working. As they have said in the Report, they have provided the facility of canteens even in places where the number is less than 250 which would not make it incumbent on them to compulsorily provide a canteen. If you want efficiency, Sir, you must have something nearby for the workers to fall back upon and this system of having canteens should be encouraged and we should have more and more of canteens. I understand, Sir, that these canteens are very popular not only because they provide good food but also because they provide good food at cheap rates. Speaking about this question of cheap food, I am reminded of the reduction in the quantum of *chapq-thies* or rice supplied. It used to be 20 oz. before which perhaps has been reduced to 16 oz. or something like that. I am not interested personally because I never take any food from these places but I do find that the people have a grievance. You have not reduced the price but you have reduced the quantum. There is no doubt that with the introduction of Government catering, there is an all-round improvement and people like

[Shri Amolakh Chand.] the food supplied. You must give sufficient food to persons which they may not throw away but that they may not remain hungry. If they could reduce the quantum of food supplied, why can't they reduce the price also proportionately? Probably, these days the price of a *thali* is fourteen annas or a rupee and it can come down to fourteen annas or twelve annas. There appears to be no logic behind the whole action.

Coming to the great projects which are progressing very well, I would like to remind the House of the Brahmaputra project, the second Jamuna bridge and the Ganga project which is going on at Mokameh, etc. I feel, Sir, that the progress that the Railways are making deserves all consideration, not unfavourable but favourable because they are trying their best to do what they can under the circumstances and in the atmosphere in which we are working these days.

I am glad to note, Sir, that about 162 new trains have been introduced. I am not quite sure about this number because one report says that it is 162 while another one says that it is 145. Might be that 145 new trains might have been added and some might have been extended and the total number might be 162 but taking the figure as it is, it is over 100, more than 150 and it is likely to reach the 200th mark in this year. It is a good improvement. I find from the Report that bogies up to fifteen in number have been put on a train. That means that uptill now the Railways were carrying only about thirteen to fourteen bogies in one train although I have seen these express goods and the goods trains carrying more than forty to fifty carriages, such huge long trains running. (*Interruption.*) I know that the speed is ten miles but in places where the congestion is great, you can introduce something like that. The idea is that trains may be punctual to some

extent, but if you can carry more passengers at a cost of a few minutes or even half an hour, that would not be much because, those who attach much value to time and have much in their pockets do not patronise the railways but fly by plane or go by motor cars. You know, Sir, there are numbers of passengers who travel from Delhi to Agra everyday by bus and not by your railways. This is because there are not suitable trains and the trains take about four to five hours, not knowing how much more they would be delayed for the simple reason that the line is being doubled or something like that and the other trains have been advanced by one hour. So, Sir, this increase in the number of bogies to fifteen should be a welcome sign although the Railway Board should look into it as to whether it is possible for them to increase the number of bogies in such a manner. For the last six or seven years it is being said that capacity of the locomotives and the line capacity are not adequate to bear this burden but now we find that attempts are being made in that direction and probably they would be successful attempts and I hope they will progress further in this direction.

There is another thing that I have been wondering about. Why should not the Railway Minister and the Board, instead of having these six annas-time tables every six months, profit by their experience of over hundred years and find out whether they could not publish a constant time table which may be supplemented say every six months or even a year? I would ask you and the hon. Members of this House also Sir, to recollect this fact. Have they, in the last ten or fifteen years, noticed any material changes in the timings of the mail and express trains? I can very well recollect, Sir, that the mail and express trains are running practically to the same time; may be there is a difference of a few minutes here or there. Why should not the Railway

Ministry think about this and not have a permanent time table? By 'permanent' I mean a time table for a year. You can get it supplemented whenever a new train is introduced or a change is made and the result of this would be that there would be saving of paper, there would be saving of labour, there would be saving of printing and there would be saving to our pockets if we do not have to buy time tables every month.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Bombay): How should that be executed?

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: Why not? The Railways have the experience of the past 110 years. Do you find that the time tables that are issued every now and then contain any material change in the running of the trains? They do not. Correction slips may be issued. You know, in Government departments manuals run from year to year with correction slips.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): You will make confusion worse confounded.

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: To a confused mind it is confusion but to a clear mind, confusion goes away.

Now, Sir, I was trying to find out the position regarding shortage of paper. The other day, yesterday if I recollect rightly, the Commerce Minister was saying that "we need more paper; we are importing paper." In these days when our foreign exchange position is hard I submit, Sir, that this is a thing which could be considered by the railways.

To-day in the morning, Sir, we heard that there were 46,000 and odd cases of pulling the alarm chain. Now, Sir, the hon. Minister was not able to reply as to how many persons out of these 46,000 and odd cases were convicted and what was the action taken. Now, Sir, I do feel that it is the responsibility of every right thinking citizen or a passenger

in a train not to disturb the running of the trains. One hon. Member asked the Deputy Railway Minister what was the reason, and probably he was anticipating a reply that there was some defect in the railways or some other thing and he wanted probably to throw the responsibility on the railway administration. I know of cases, Sir, where on frivolous grounds people do pull the alarm chains . . .

SHRI D. A. MIRZA (Madras): Even M. Ps.

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: My friend is talking about M.Ps. Is an M.P. a normal man or something above normal? He is a man. We are dealing with men, the passengers, and the passengers may be M.Ps. or the few Ministers who may care to travel by railways, who generally prefer to travel in the air leaving aside people who live on the earth.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: In the air or by the air?

SHRI AMOLAKH CHAND: I was trying to point out, Sir, that this unnecessary pulling of the alarm chain should be strictly dealt with and when persons are found guilty of it, irrespective of the position of the man, he should be prosecuted, not that the matter will be over if he pays the penalty of Rs. 50. (*Interruption.*) Our friends are doubtful whether it is Rs. 50 or Rs. 100. Whatever the amount may be, the case should be promptly dealt with, because it creates confusion, it creates unnecessary delay in the running of the trains, and I would like to tell the hon. Members that if a train is delayed for one reason or the other, not only is that train disturbed, but the whole line is disturbed. Those of us who may have the occasion to go and look into the control room will see how they are managing things, and a little difference of time this way dislocates the whole programme. So I consider it as an important item to be considered not

[Shri Amolakh Chand.]

only by the administration but also  
by people like us who represent the  
people and we should bring it to  
their notice that this is undesirable,

Now, Sir, I am one of those who like the de  
luxe train. I do not know if some suggestions  
made by me last year have been  
implemented or not, because I had not since  
the occasion to travel in them, because some  
of them were not running. So I would like to  
know from the Deputy Railway Minister  
whether some footrest has been added to  
those chairs or not.

Now, Sir, I find that a unique type of  
*satyagraha* is going on in Jodhpur against the  
Railways. Probably the reason is that there is  
a demand that some Janata train should run  
over that section. I do not know what the  
Railway Ministry is thinking in the matter.  
There is a question on that subject and  
probably I will get a suitable reply. Possibly  
they have tackled the problem. A new line,  
Gwalior-Shivpuri-Ujjain line was to be  
surveyed. From the papers I find that it has  
been surveyed. I would like to know how  
much more time they are going to take to run  
it.

Then, Sir, there is another point to which I  
would like to refer, and that is, the civility of  
the railway officers towards the people. Last  
time I complained about that, that usually we  
don't find the railway officials very courteous  
to the passengers, and I suggested to the hon.  
the Railway Minister then that a circular  
might be issued. I do not know, Sir, whether  
any circular **was** issued, but I do find the  
effect of it this year and I have found the rail-  
way employees more civil and more obliging  
and more helpful for which I want to  
congratulate the Railway Minister. He might  
have taken the action as suggested by me, or  
not, but I do find a change.

Then, Sir, I fail to understand **why**  
the Information Ministry and

the Railway Ministry cannot **put** their  
heads together and think of publicising  
the aims of the Second Five Year Plan,  
ambitious as it is, of bringing to the notice of  
the people what they are doing to-day. I  
suggested last time, Sir, not only to the  
Railway Minister but to the Information  
and Broadcasting Minister that railway  
platforms and railway carriages should be  
taken advantage of for publicity purposes.  
If you can put the railway time-table, mirror  
and all those things in the com-  
partments, where is the handicap that  
you cannot put your posters to do all this  
publicity in the railway compartments? I  
had occasion, Sir, to consider this from  
a practical point of view. There was huge  
literature lying, which was meant for  
the public. It was thought that if the  
literature was to be distributed that might  
cost more than might be considered  
reasonable for the distribution thereof. I  
thought that the thing could be done this  
way, that all this literature could be sent to 7  
or 8 big junctions, and be distributed  
among the railway passengers and the  
railways may put them on the platforms  
where the passengers may go through them,  
because when a passenger is travelling,  
usually what he wants is to read light  
literature or to know something which may  
add to his knowledge. Our daily life, Sir, I  
beg to submit, is education minute by  
minute; we learn minute by minute,  
and I feel the railways have a potentiality  
to convey not only very good  
messages, not only information for the  
people, but they can also do something to  
raise the morale of this great country. I  
complimented the Minister last time for  
putting boards like that in the trains, "This is  
the property of the nation; you have to  
look after it," something like that. It is an  
idea, Sir, which should be more and more  
used for publicity purposes, and I do  
feel, Sir, that advantage should be taken of  
it

Now, Sir, having made all these suggestions I  
feel, on a balance, that, by and large, the  
railways do deserve



some congratulation. I find, Sir, that they are publishing also the second volume of the Indian Railways dealing with some statistics and all that. I believe Sir, the Railway Minister and the Railway Ministry must have come to know after all who are the Members in this great Parliament who do take some interest, and if it is not possible for them to supply those copies to all the Members, they can select and choose, and by that we may be able to understand their selection also.

I think, Sir, the railways deserve all consideration, all help, all civility from all types of persons, from the passengers who use them, and the railway administration can **only** deserve it if they are able to do the same. As I have said, Sir, the railway administration is rising to the occasion and" I hope, Sir, that year by year the railways would prosper and under the signal piloting of our Railway Minister and the Deputy Railway Minister they will pass through prosperous days for the betterment of the country and her people.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR (Kerala): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I do not want to go into details . .

SHRI KAILASH BIHARI LALL (Bihar): May I bring to your notice the point that I always raise in every session? It is this, Sir. In the beginning of a debate -Members are allowed to speak for hours together and towards the end some Members are given only five minutes' time. Cannot something be done so that there may not be this grievance on the part of some Members later on?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. B. JOSHI) : I see your point; it will be considered tomorrow; your suggestion is very right.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: Sir, I do not want to go into the details of the Budget submitted to this House. At

the same time I would like to dilate on certain important subjects which need greater attention of the Railway Board.

SHRI D. A. MIRZA: We can't hear you.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: Don't you hear me? Well, my voice will rise up; don't worry.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: He has got a little cold.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: I have a bad cold.

Now, Sir, in the Budget Speech of the Railway Minister budget figures for the current year as well as for the coming year, that is, the Budget year, are given. In the revised estimates for the current year the Ministry has shown the figure for passenger earnings at Rs. 120-90 crores against the sum of Rs. 119 crores in the Budget whereas in the budget estimate for 1958-59 the figure has been placed at Rs. **124-73** crores, that is, an increase of Rs. 3-83 crores has been shown over the corresponding figure for this year. In his speech the hon. Minister has mentioned that passenger earnings have gone up over the earnings of last year. I would like to ask whether the increase in passenger earnings is due to **the** increase in the volume of passenger traffic or whether it is due to **the** raising of the passenger fares. That is not clearly shown here and it will be interesting to know what has been the actual increase in the volume of traffic and . . .

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: It is due to both.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: If it is due to both, then the increase should not have been this much. That is my point. We should know clearly **how**

[Shri N. C. Sekhar.] much it has been due to the increase in the actual volume of traffic and how much it has been due to the raising of the passenger fares. Because we see before our naked eyes that a competition between road and rail traffic is going on in full swing. In our part we see that happening and that is, I think, mainly because of the leniency shown by the Railways to the road traffic thinking that road traffic should also be encouraged in its activities. At the same time here in the Railways, particularly in the southern parts, so many coaches have been reduced. For example, in the case of the Mangalore-Madras Express two coaches were reduced in this budget year, so also in all other local shuttle and other trains the number of coaches were reduced with the result that passengers find it very difficult to travel in trains because the trains are always found to be very over-crowded. Several times even the Ticket Examiners find it difficult even to enter the compartments because of over-crowding. It is also the constant complaint of the passengers that they find it very difficult to even sit inside the compartments because of over-crowding which is the result of the reduction of the number of coaches attached to the local, shuttle as well as to the express trains. Apart from this the number of trains were also reduced. The Southern Railway management may claim that they have increased two trains over what it was in the previous year but the complaint of the people is that the number of trains are very much reduced in comparison to the number of trains that were there some five years back. I find the hon. Minister is nodding his head but I say this is a fact. We know that because we are regular travellers in the trains. For instance, there were seven trains from Calicut to Cannanore previously—one at 5-30, one at 8-00 and one at 9-30, then the mail, then one at 1 P.M. and then there were the 4-30, 6-00 and 8-00 P.M. trains. In the morning people used to come to Calicut from the north and for them

there were three trains between 6 and 10 A.M.; because 10 A.M. is the office time and school time, students, office people, merchants and traders found it convenient to travel by any of these three morning trains. So also there were three trains in the evening for them excluding, of course, the two expresses going to and from Mangalore to Madras. Now the trains are very much less than before and the number of coaches have also been reduced. You should have heard constant complaints from passengers from Mangalore to Madras. Passengers travelling beyond 300 miles find it very difficult to be inside the compartments which are always overcrowded as a consequence of the reduction of the number of coaches. That is why I want to know specifically from the hon. Minister whether the increase in passenger traffic earning is due to the increase in passenger fares brought into effect this year or due to increase in the volume of passenger traffic. Of course, the passenger traffic has increased but not to the extent as it ought to have if there were more trains and more coaches attached to the trains.

Now, the increase in passenger earning in the current year over that of the last year, that is, 1956, is Rs. 5 40 crores while the increase anticipated in the Budget Estimates for 1958-59 under this head is Rs. 3.83 crores. Now, if the passenger traffic has increased, if the volume of traffic has gone up, the anticipated increase should have been much more, even more than what it has been last year. Why is there this reduction? If the increase during last year was Rs. 5 40 crores, the increase expected during 1958-59 should have been much more. We see actually passenger traffic is increasing day by day by trains as well as by road. I do not know whether this figure will be raised when this Budget will be revised at the end of this Budget year. I think this must be the case, since the volume of traffic has considerably increased. I think this should be examined.

The second point I want to make is this. Before I go to that, I would say in the case of goods traffic also, they should examine in the light of what I have suggested in regard to passenger traffic.

The hon. Minister in his speech in May last referred to the difficulty in the availability of critical materials, especially iron and steel and mentioned that a serious situation had developed and in his speech now he has said that the situation has improved to some extent. He has also said that "a Purchase Mission was sent abroad in the summer of last year with a view to locating dependable sources of supply, placing orders and finalising the contracts on the spot, so that deliveries could commence in the shortest possible time. The Mission entered into contracts for the supply of 5-30 lakh tons of pig iron, steel track materials and wagon plates worth about Rs. 34 crores." Now, in which country did they locate these and which concerns have been found to be dependable for supplying these things? This is not mentioned in the speech of the hon. Minister. I do not know whether it is mentioned in any other paper. It will be interesting to know in which country these have been located and which firms have been found to be dependable and with whom contracts have been entered into by our Missions for the supply of those materials. There were complaints previously with regard to certain Missions which were sent to Canada and America for placing orders worth some crores of rupees. The complaints were with regard to embezzlement of huge amounts, of lakhs of rupees. Also the firms with which the Railway Ministry entered into contracts seemed to have been not very dependable. They have taken much time, that is to say, they failed to deliver the goods within the period which they promised. They have prolonged delivery of goods by and by for which the Government had to pay more prices than what are due according to the contract. Would it end like that or is the Government

taking every step to see that delivery is made in time without further loss on the part of the Government?

Then, Sir, as everybody knows, Railways are one of the most important commercial undertakings which are responsible for the economic development of our country. They are important not only in respect of earning revenues but also in respect of carrying goods from one end of the country to the other. For that reason every part of our country, each and every State in our country, is now clamouring for the extension and development of the railways. They have put forth their respective demands, and in accordance with their demands Government have undertaken survey over certain routes. Of course the Minister made mention of these routes in his speech and said that out of 2,500 miles, survey of 1,600 miles has been completed and the report is before the Ministry. It is very important to note that the Railway Ministry under one pretext or other is out to take up electrification of certain branches of our Railways. I do not say that it is unimportant, I do not ask you to put it aside. I know it is important. For example, Calcutta-Moghalsarai section is to be electrified because it is carrying a great amount of traffic, and in order to carry goods to and fro as easily and quickly as possible electrification is necessary. So also the Government has decided to take up the electrification of the Madras-Villupuram line and Bombay-Bhusaval line. At the same time the Ministry is quite conscious of the short fall in the revenue and in the plan estimates of the Railways. A short fall of something like Rs. 50 crores is there. May I ask why the Railway Board is very insistent upon taking up these lines for electrification while in the other parts of the country very necessary routes are set aside without being taken up. You say that for the successful implementation of the development schemes and also for the successful carrying of goods from one end of the country to another certain

[Shri N. C. Sekhar.] branches are to be electrified as soon as possible. So also it is necessary to open certain railway lines in certain parts of our country to facilitate development and also to do away with uneven economic development. For example, as far as the south is concerned, opening of Tellicherry-Mysore railway is as important as the Bombay-Bhusaval line. That line is very important for our economic development. So also the line proposed to be opened from Ernakulam to Bodinayakanur is as important in respect of trade and in respect of development of Malnad area. Malnad area is only an agricultural area whose development commensurate with the modern development of our country is urgently called for. I find the Railway Minister paying scant attention to this question, because to open these lines so many crores of rupees would not be necessary as it is for electrification which I think is not so urgent in view of the uneven economic development of our country. Whenever the Central Government takes any measure to build up any industry or to open railway lines, certainly it must first consider the demands of each and every part of our country in order to help them to develop their economy for which railway development is very necessary. I will, however elaborate this point later.

Then, Sir, another important point which engages the minds of our countrymen is the question of railway accidents. Here I am concerned with the human element which is referred to in the Minister's speech as well as in the statements made the other day in this House. In the Minister's speech it is said that due to human failure most of the accidents are taking place. "Technical improvements, which can help to mitigate the incidence of human element, are being progressively effected, but a significant improvement can only be expected if

all those engaged in the running of railways are fully alive to their duty and responsibility." Whenever the Ministers make reference to these accidents, they always put forth human failure, meaning thereby the railway employees, that is drivers, firemen, and such people. In view of the increasing number of accidents, as public men we are also interested to study the cause of these accidents. From the railway employees what we understand is this. It is not because of their wanton negligence that these accidents take place. They say that there are three main reasons for the accidents. One is mainly due to the Railway Ministry, the Railway Board. The keymen are of the opinion that derailment—I am not talking of the collision of two trains but derailment—takes place always on the tracks where the fish plates are of steel. Wherever wooden sleepers are placed derailment is much less, it seldom takes place. Whereas, wherever steel sleepers are placed, there derailment is always occurring. One keyman has shown me how it happens. The keyman showed me a wedgelike thing which immediately slipped after a train had passed off. That is, between the rail and the fish plate there is a wedge, not wooden wedge, but an iron piece which gives way soon after the train has passed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. B. JOSHI)  
: I think you are finishing now.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: After making my points.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. B.  
: Then you can continue tomorrow. The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 20th February, 1958.