

SHRI N. JOTHI (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I have a point to make. Let me clarify this because this is not correct, at least, in one aspect. There is a Section 397 in the Criminal Procedure Code. It is a little softer towards women getting a bail. If a woman applies for bail - there is a mandate under Section 397 of Cr. P.C. - she has to be granted the bail. It is in favour of women. Kindly notice this.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We are talking about civil laws.

Need for a rail line from Dindigul to Sabarimala

SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, my Special Mention pertains to Dindigul-Sabarimala Rail Line.

The need for a railway line from Dindigul to Sabarimala has been insisted upon for the last twenty years. Survey for construction of this line was completed in 1997 itself but the Government have now declined to take up this project citing reason that the cost of construction of this 201 kms. long line will result a negative rate of return. I would like to mention that this rail line falls under the constituencies of seven Members of Parliament. Sabarimala is, undoubtedly, an important pilgrimage centre which stood next to Tirupati and attracts several lakhs of pilgrims from all over the country, who undertake strenuous long road journey in the absence of this rail line. Madam, spices such as cardamom, tea, rubber, vegetables, etc., produced in the hilly regions depend only on the road transport. If the new line is introduced, it would be a boon for the farmers, businessmen and public. Prominent tourist spots like Kodaikanal, Thekkadi, Munar, Kumarakoram are closely connected with the proposed new line. Hence, the question of negative rate of return cannot really be a matter of concern since the goods and passengers' traffic mentioned here will definitely make Railways to earn good profits. Instead of constructing the whole line at a stretch, the work can be taken up in two phases - first, in plains and then in hilly areas.

So, I urge upon the hon. Railway Minister to reconsider the survey Report taking into account the advantages which will accrue to the two States and implement the project immediately.

With the permission of the Chair, I wish to add a few words. A few days before the hon. Minister of State for Railways, Mr. A.K. Moorthy, held a meeting at Madurai. At that meeting, we, the Members of Parliament, Shri Dinakaran, Thanga Tamil Selvan, Srinivasan and myself gave a letter to the hon. Minister to look into this matter. Thank you.

SHRI N. JOTHI (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I associate myself with the views expressed by my colleague, Shri Syed Khan.

SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I also associate with the Special Mention made by my friend, Shri Syed Khan.

Demand for interim package for workers of Bharat Goldmines

SHRI R. KAMARAJ (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the sufferings of Tamil workers of the Bharat Goldmines in Kolar Goldfields, Karanataka, following the closure of the units. Nearly 4,000 workers from Tamil Nadu had been working in that goldfield. They have been rendered jobless due to closure of the units in March, 2001. This closure had been ordered by the Centre, and the workers had not been paid salaries and wages. The workers of these mines had worked for over 25 years, and would find it difficult to seek alternative employment at this stage of their life. Now, the jobless workers and their families are in severe starvation. The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has already written a letter on 16th August, 2003 to the hon. Prime Minister that the Government should take immediate steps to reopen the mines; and, if it is not feasible in the near future, a mutually acceptable separation of workers should be finalised to the satisfaction of the workers. Further, it has also been urged by the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu that the Central Government should take a liberal view and finalise a suitable package, acceptable to the workers, since a majority of them belong to the SC/ST category, and are from economically weaker sections of the society. An *ex gratia* amount, as an interim measure, might be released to the affected workers, since the decision regarding reopening the mines or finalising a package is pending for a long time.

I urge upon the Government to take immediate steps so that relief measures may be provided as suggested by hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

SHRI N. JOTHI (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I associate myself with what Shri R. Kamaraj has said.

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU (Pondicherry): Madam, in principle, I associate myself with what Shri R. Kamaraj has said. I have