

Swatantra Party

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When replying, please quote our Ref. No.

February 25, 1970

General Secretary's Letter No. 224

Dear Friend,

The Railway Budget introduced in the Lok Sabha on February 23 has been denounced by every Opposition Party. It has been described by passengers and businessmen alike as the worst ever budget. There has been a rise in passenger fare for all classes and of freight rates ranging from 2 to 7 %. Though the rise in fares has been proposed in the name of "rationalisation of tariff", it actually means that railway passengers will have to pay a minimum fare of Rs 1/- for journeys upto 28 kilometres instead of 20 Paise and 85 Paise upto now.

It is necessary for us to organise countrywide public meetings to denounce this anti-people budget and demand a reduction in the proposed fares and thus lend support to the attack that our MPs will make on the Railway Budget in Parliament.

* Enclosed, please find a few particulars on the Budget which may be used as Talking Points.

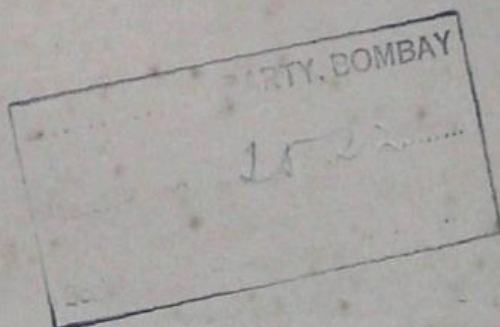
Reports of meetings held should be sent to us as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

R. C. Cooper

(R. C. Cooper)
General Secretary

pk
Encl : *



THE RAILWAY BUDGET - WHAT IT MEANS TO THE COMMON MAN

FEATURES OF THE BUDGET PROPOSALS

(a) RISE IN FARES AND SURCHARGES

(1) IIIrd Class Passengers

For instance if you have to travel from Bombay to Madras YOU will have to pay by the Madras Mail :

Rs. 2.70 more on the ticket you purchase

+ Rs. 3.00 more on the 3-tier berth

which means You will pay:

(1) Rs. 36.50 for the ticket

(2) Rs. 0.50 for the reservation ticket

(3) Rs. 8.00 for the three-tier berth

Rs. 44.00 in all

instead of

(1) Rs. 33.80 for the ticket

(2) Rs. 0.50 for the reservation ticket

(3) Rs. 5.00 for the three-tier berth

Rs. 38.30 in all

If you want to travel by two-tier you will have to pay Rs. 5.00 for the first night and Rs. 4.00 for every subsequent night.

E.G. A family of 4, consisting of a husband, wife and two children above 3 but below 12 years will be paying as much as Rs. 264/- for a return trip to MADRAS by 3-tier (3rd Class) by the Madras Mail.

(ii) If the family has to make a trip from New Delhi to Madras it will have to pay Rs. 375.60 for a return trip.

(iii) I Class Passengers

A person travelling by the Ist Class from New Delhi will have to pay Rs. 171.50 per ticket instead of Rs. 160.00 as at present, i.e. a straight increase of Rs. 11.50.

(iv) Monthly Season Tickets

A person travelling by IIIrd Class between Borivli and Churchgate in Bombay will have to pay Rs. 2.40 more while a person travelling by Ist Class will be paying Rs. 36.00 straight-away.

A N D

The Railway fares in respect of the Season Ticket holders were increased only recently.

(v) Platform Tickets

Platform tickets which were available only at 10 paise a short while ago and which was increased to 20 paise in the last Railway Budget will now be costing 25 paise.

(vi) Goods Traffic

Have the goods traffic been spared ?

NO. VEGETABLES, SUGAR, SALT, KEROSENE, COTTON, PIECE GOODS, OIL CAKES, HYDROGENATED OIL, NEWSPAPERS, are among the items on which freights are going to be higher.

And on whom the "extra" burden of these charges going to be passed ? THE COMMON MAN, who is hardly able to make his ends meet !

These increases will invariably and naturally lead to increase in prices.

Who is to hold the price line ?

THIS IS SOCIALISM !

"This is no Socialism - Indira Gandhi is a hoax" - was the reaction of a COMMON MAN in New Delhi (quoted from the Indian Express, 24 February 1970).

Another said :

"I was thinking of going to Ooty for my honeymoon, but now I am having second thoughts". (quoted in the Indian Express, February 24, 1970).

And yet, Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, the week-old Railway Minister described these increases as MARGINAL !

Some preliminary Comments by our Leaders:

1. Prof. N.G. Ranga, M.P., leader of the Party's Group in the Lok Sabha said that the increase would create further difficulties for the Common people and raise the cost of living.
2. Mr. D.N. Patodia, M.P., said that it was surprising that the inefficient performance of the railways in 1969-70 had brought about a deficit of Rs. 12 crores for which the people were now being penalised.
3. Mr. Piloo Mody, M.P., said that the Common man had always been the "milch cow of inefficient governments".
4. Mr. S.K. Tapuriah, M.P., has said "The budget is yet another raid on the slim purses of the Common Man".
5. Mr. P.S. Koppiker, General Secretary, Bombay Regional Unit : "This is the first dose of Socialism under the new dispensation of the New Congress. It is necessary and urgent that both commuters and consumers should rise as one man and give a combined fight to this mirage of Socialism which, under the garb of helping the poor, sucks them dry instead of giving them sustenance and succour".

OUR DUTY

1. It is the duty of every party worker to mobilise public opinion against this "anti-people" budget and organise protest meetings and rallies to compel the Government to withdraw these increases and spare the COMMON MAN, the ORDINARY CONSUMER, the COMMUTER from paying for the inefficient and inflationary policies of the Government.
2. Effectively organise Consumers and Commuters and launch signature campaigns which should be sent to the Railway Minister through their respective M.P.s.