

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, December 4, 1962/Agrahayana 13, 1884 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Twelve of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

GRAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS

Inland Water Transport Services to Assam

S. N. Q. 4. { ⁺ Shri Indrajit Gupta:
Shri Daji:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether any moves have been made for early settlement of the strike by the Pakistani section of crews of the Joint Steamer Companies operating in Assam and West Bengal;

(b) whether alternative means of transporting essential goods to Assam by road has finally, been decided upon; and

(c) if so, details of the scheme?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) to (c). A statement giving the information required is placed on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 91].

2340(Ai)LS—1.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: May I know whether it is a fact that during the two months' duration of this strike, the accumulation of essential goods, particularly of tea and jute in Assam, has mounted up to the value of over Rs. 5 crores or so, and if so, whether this is not having a serious effect on our foreign exchange position?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There is no doubt that there has been a certain accumulation of goods, of tea particularly in Assam. But, recently, we have taken steps to move the accumulated stocks of tea and other goods by train and by road.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Has the Government's attention been drawn to the statement made by a Minister of the Assam Government to the effect that the strike has been engineered by the Pakistan Government itself in order to blackmail us and to disrupt our economy?

Shri Raj Bahadur: That might be an inference drawn by the Minister of the Assam Government. I have not seen that statement. But, so far as the strikers are concerned, the demands that they have put forth are not entirely of the nature of an industrial dispute. Some of those demands smack of politics behind the people who are supporting the strike.

Shri Daji: The statement says that the scheme to move the goods by road transport requires about 250 trucks. May I know how many trucks have up till now been made available by Government for the transport of goods to Bengal and vice versa?

Shri Raj Bahadur: At the moment, we have already acquired about eight or ten trucks, to begin with. But we are not getting sufficient quantities of goods to move, because the private trade is not yet sending goods in the required quantities. We have placed orders for 50 trucks, out of which 8 have been received, and 42 are in transit from Madras to Calcutta. We propose to place orders for 50 more.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: From the statement it appears that the Labour Commissioner had discussions with the Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner at Calcutta, and the negotiations have practically failed. In view of the serious situation prevailing there, will Government take this matter up at the Ministerial level, with Pakistan?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Our Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca has been contacting the Chief Secretary of the East Bengal Government in this matter, and the representatives of the company have also been meeting the authorities both in Rawalpindi and in Dacca. I think that whatever contacts can be established and should be established are being established.

Shri Hem Barua: In view of the fact that this strike by the Pakistani crew is a political move on their part, may I know whether Government have tried a political solution to this problem, pending which, may I know whether in order to avoid such situations in the future, because of the emergency, Government propose to Indianise the services, the ratings etc.?

Shri Raj Bahadur: So far as a move on one part is concerned, the representatives of the Joint Steamer Companies sent us a memorandum in which they asked whether the Government of India would be prepared to send a representative to join in the discussions for the solution of this problem, and we have signified our assent to that. A similar memorandum has been sent to the Pakistan Government.

So far as the question of Indianisation is concerned, our desire is that we should have more and more Indians on this service. We shall do that, taking into account the various circumstances that are prevailing now or that may be created because of this strike.

Shri Ranga: It is more than fifteen days since the hon. Minister announced in a very courageous manner that he was going to provide for alternative transport by road. How is it that Government have made arrangements now only for 8 trucks, and how is it that the private trade is not responding, and Government do not know how they can help in the transport of the accumulated stocks of tea and other things?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I can assure the hon. Member that courage is not lacking at all. If there is railway capacity sufficient for the purpose of movement of goods we make use of the rail capacity in the first instance because it is much cheaper compared to the road transport. We would like to place that number of trucks only that might be necessary on the road under the Government organisation. We are trying to see that the required number of trucks needed by the Assam Government for their civilian and other needs are acquired. That is why we are trying to acquire as many as 100 new trucks. Apart from that, 200 new trucks have been allotted to Assam Government and all these trucks will be pushed into service as and when required by the exigencies of traffic.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: Has the Minister's attention been drawn to reports in the Calcutta Press about the false tales circulated in Pakistan by the employees of the fifty held-up steamers that in Calcutta and in India they are being forced to donate blood for our soldiers and whether any attempt has been made to contradict these things?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I am not aware of the tales that the people who are behind the strike are spreading in Pakistan because we do not get the information from Pakistan.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: These are reported in the Calcutta Press.

Recruitment to the Army

S. N. Q. 5, Dr. L. M. Singhvi: Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether any recruitment targets have been fixed or finalised recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received any complaints of favouritism in recruitment; and

(d) whether it is proposed to relax the prescribed requirements for recruitment in the present situation of emergency?

The Minister of Defence (Shri Y. B. Chavan): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is regretted that it will not be in the public interest to give the details.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Some relaxations have been made in the physical standards and upper age-limits for recruitment. No other relaxation is under consideration.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: What concessions and facilities are to be provided by the Universities and other such institutions to those who may be wishing to join the Defence Forces and whether any attempts have been made to frame these proposals for Concessions and facilities on a uniform basis so that they may be available to all students of all universities equally?

Shri Y. B. Chavan: There are no such concessions. The question is not for giving students concessions as

such. The question was about the recruitment to the army in general.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: Recently, the Vice Chancellor of the Madras University had announced that several concessions and facilities would be extended to those wishing to join the Defence Forces. Are these concessions to be implemented on a uniform basis all over the country?

Mr. Speaker: That may be done by the Vice Chancellors or other university authorities.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: It is not to be done merely by individual universities. I am asking whether Government have decided to take any steps in the direction of making rules or giving concessions uniformly all over the country. It is not to be done by a single Vice Chancellor only; it is to be done by all the universities at the instance of the Government of India. Have the Government taken such a step?

Shri Y. B. Chavan: Whatever suggestions may be made by the different Vice Chancellors can certainly be considered.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member says that one Vice Chancellor makes some announcement or observation giving certain concessions. Can Government extend them to the others?

Shri Y. B. Chavan: I am not aware of any such statement and even if somebody makes a statement like that I do not know how it can be binding on the Government.

श्री भक्त वंशन : श्रीमान्, क्या शासन के ध्यान में यह बात आई है कि यद्यपि रिजर्विग आफिसर्स को यह आदेश दिया गया है कि अधिक से अधिक संख्या में भरती की जाए, फिर भी बहुत से सौजवानों को निराश होकर लौटना पड़ रहा है ? यदि हाँ, तो क्या हम सम्बन्ध में कुछ प्रकाश डाला जाएगा ?