

**Cholera and Smallpox**

\*2094. { **Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:**  
**Shri S. M. Banerjee:**  
**Shri K. T. K. Tangamani:**

Will the Minister of Health be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cholera and smallpox have spread in virulent form in West Bengal, Bihar and Eastern U.P.;

(b) if so, the causes for the same; and

(c) the special precautionary steps taken to control these diseases?

**The Minister of Health (Shri Karmarkar):** (a) Smallpox has spread in a virulent form in the three States. Cholera has broken out in virulent form in Calcutta.

(b) The Governments concerned have been advised by the Government of India to form an expert Committee, to investigate *inter alia*, the causes for the undue rise in the incidence of these diseases during recent months. The replies of the State Governments are awaited.

(c) A statement is laid on the table of the Sabha. [See Appendix IX, annexure 4].

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** The hon. Minister has stated that the State Governments have been advised to appoint expert committees to investigate into the matter. May I know whether the doctors or experts have been deputed to go into the areas to help the patients or persons who have become victims to this disease rather than to investigate into the matter?

**Shri Karmarkar:** It is true, so far as our information goes, that the State Governments are taking all possible measures of relief as also of prevention.

**Dr. Sushila Nayar:** Have any steps been taken to mobilise all the personnel,—medical, block personnel, village level workers, gram sevikas, etc.—

for mass vaccination of the affected States?

**Shri Karmarkar:** I have not got information on these details. I am informed that the State Governments have actively taken to compulsory vaccination and also the other necessary measures.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** As the hon. Minister has admitted that these have spread there in a virulent form, is there any proposal to send doctors from other areas into the affected areas for the relief of the people?

**Shri Karmarkar:** Such a measure, it has not been found necessary. On the 16th of April, we had a discussion and some Directors of Health Services of the States were here. The conference went into the whole matter and it was settled in this Conference that these measures should be taken: namely, the introduction of compulsory vaccination in the States and Administrations, constitution of expert committees in each State to investigate the epidemiology of small pox, rise in the incidence of the disease during the early months of 1958 and the potency of the vaccine manufactured at the various manufacturing institutions and to suggest short term and long term measures for controlling the spread of this preventible disease.

"I should like to repeat we are actively in touch with the States and if the States ask for help either at the expert level or any other level, we are always willing to help them. Till now they have not sought aid from us and they have largely succeeded in their efforts.

**Dr. Sushila Nayar:** In view of the fact that smallpox is one of the easiest diseases to control and we have not been able to control it till now, has the Government any proposal overall plan to suggest to the State Government without waiting for the State Governments to ask for Government of India's assistance?

**Shri Karmarkar:** I have given the overall plan. As I said it is one of the easiest diseases to control. But sometimes people are very difficult to

control. I am not joking. The hon. Members must have read in the papers that a vaccination squad was beaten and sent out of a village where the people said: "What business is it of yours? This is due to goddess. What can you do in this matter?". In spite of these difficulties, the question of vaccination has been taken up in all seriousness and the State Governments are tackling it to the best of their ability. My latest information is that in Calcutta the disease has been largely controlled.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** May I know whether it is a fact that 3,000 men have died in U.P. alone in one month due to smallpox and about 350-400 are dying daily in Calcutta because of cholera? What steps have been taken to prevent these deaths?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, Order. I admitted this question though it is a State matter. All that the Centre can give is only assistance. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh has asked whether men have not been sent or why the aid has not been sent. There has been a conference. There is no good going into all the details here. When there is an epidemic it is unfortunate and a number of people die. All that we can ask here is: what are the steps that are being taken by the Central Government in co-ordination with the State Governments? No State Government will allow the Central Government to come in officiously unless the State Government is not able to tackle the situation and then it may request the assistance of the Central Government. What am I to allow to be asked here? The hon. Members must ask their counter-parts to ask that Government to request the Central Government for help with men and material. I cannot understand why we should go into such details as are to be gone into in the local Assembly. Next question. Shri Tangamani.

**Shri Tangamani:** Sir, I have tabled this question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member may table a question. There is no guaran-

tee that I should allow every hon. Member who has tabled a question to put supplementaries.

**Shri Tangamani:** There is a purpose in putting it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. Next question. I have made up my mind not to allow.

**Shri Tangamani:** Sir, I will make a submission. On cholera and smallpox I gave a calling attention notice and then it was returned to us. Ultimately it was admitted as a question because there was already a question admitted in the name of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh. There is a purpose in putting this question. My name has been clubbed in that question. I may be given an opportunity to just say what is the information that I would like to elicit. If that has been elicited, I would not have wasted the time of the House by putting another question.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is for me to decide whether a question has been answered sufficiently or not. Of course there may be very important questions also shut out sometimes. I have allowed a doctor on the one side, a layman on the other side and the sponsor on the third side and another sponsor also. I have not given an opportunity to one other sponsor in this question. There seems to be no end to these questions. Every possible step is being taken by the State Governments. Beyond that I thought the hon. Minister need not answer although he read out what was done at a conference. I allowed that too. There are only 25 questions and I have not been able to reach all the questions notwithstanding the fact that some hon. Members have been absent. In some questions I go on step by step and the House itself gets exhausted. I am really surprised that the hon. Members take this occasion for argument. It is not a general debate.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** We are not arguing; we are submitting only one thing.

**Mr. Speaker:** I feel I ought not to have allowed this question at all.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Sir, this Cholera started actually from Calcutta—Sealdah station. A number of refugees were there.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sorry. The Question Hour is over.

### Short Notice Question and Answer

#### Food Poisoning in Kerala

**S.N.Q. No. 20. Dr. Ram Suthag Singh:** Will the Minister of Health be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of food poisoning about which reports have been received by the Government from Kerala;

(b) the places where they occurred;

(c) the foodstuffs that people took;

(d) the number of persons who died in each case;

(e) whether analysis of those foodstuffs have been made;

(f) the causes of those food poisoning cases; and

(g) the action taken by Government to stop the supply of such foodstuffs in future?

**The Minister of Health (Shri Karmarkar):** (a) 152.

(b) Parur, Trichur, Trittunithura, Sasthamkottah and Trivandrum.

(c) Food stuffs made of Atta, Maida or sugar.

(d) Parur	..	..	11
Trichur	..	..	6
Trittunithura	..	..	3
Sasthamkottah	..	..	65
Trivandrum	..	..	10
			95

(e) Yes.

(f) The cause of food poisoning was the presence of zinc phosphide in the foodstuffs;

(g) The following steps have been taken by the State Government:—

(1) Prohibition of use of food made of wheat flour and maida, People also warned not to use sugar and products containing sugar.

(2) Collection of samples of atta, maida and sugar from stockists for examination and immediate freezing of stocks found to contain poisonous ingredients.

(3) Appointment of an expert Committee to inquire into the food poisoning cases, in different parts of the State, excepting Sasthamkottam, in respect of which a court of Enquiry has been set up by the Ministry of Defence.

These steps have been taken by the State Government.

I should like to add that after this information was compiled we have received a telegram yesterday from the Health Secretary, Kerala, which gives some further details apropos this question. The telegram reads like this:

"REFERENCE YOUR TELEGRAM KERALA GOVERNMENT APPOINTED A COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF FOUR MEMBERS VIZ. SECOND MEMBER BOARD OF REVENUE RETIRED DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH RETIRED SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY AND PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TRIVANDRUM—NUMBER OF SERIOUS CASES TREATED 232—NUMBER OF DEATHS TILL 4TH MAY 1958 97—NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM 4TH MAY 1958 TILL 7-5-1958 NIL.—RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF ATTA FLOUR USED BY VICTIMS AT SHASTHAMKOTTAH SHOWED FOLIO-DOL 605—BEING CONFIRMED—GOVERNMENT HAVE AUTHORIZED COLLECTORS TO PROHIBIT SALE DISTRIBUTION OF ALL FOOD MATERIALS SUSPECTED CONTAIN POISONOUS