

certain days of the week, has the Union Government received any news from that Government as to the amount of saving in rice effected in that State as a result of this step?

Shri A. M. Thomas: No, Sir, we have not received any news.

12 Year National Savings Certificates

*969. **Shri N. R. Munisamy:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether 12 year National Savings Certificates which duly matured after the expiry of the 12 year period remain unpaid even after their presentation to the Post Office in time; and

(b) the total value of such certificates which having been presented to the Post Offices before the 15th January, 1958 still remain unpaid?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (**Shri Raj Bahadur**): (a) Yes, a few.

(b) No record showing the total value of the certificates which, having been presented before 15th January, 1958, still remain unpaid, has been maintained.

Shri N. R. Munisamy: In view of the disappointing trend that we have been finding due to the inordinate delay in disbursements after presentation of these National Savings Certificates, may I know whether steps have been taken by the Government to remove this impediment in order to give an incentive to persons living in urban areas for going in for these Certificates because we are facing a shortfall in this respect?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I would like to say that the impression that there is always delay is not correct, because delays occur only when some defect has been found out in a particular certificate or in regard to the title of the person who claims the amount. We found that some technical and clerical errors did creep in in the

making of these certificates. Then we approached the Finance Ministry and by a blanket order they condoned those irregularities. They have also now vested the Postmaster-General of Circles with power to condone such irregularities in case they are of such a clerical nature. With this, I think much of the difficulty which occurs in future cases will be obviated.

Shri N. R. Munisamy: May I know what is the shortfall in the current year as against the target fixed?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I think that question may better be addressed to the Ministry of Finance.

Shri Heda: Has it been brought to the notice of the hon. Minister that in the rural post offices, particularly where the people are just illiterate, the signatures of persons concerned were not found to tally and although the Postmaster knew those persons very well on technical grounds he did not make payments?

Shri Raj Bahadur: If the certificate is presented for payment at the office of issue there is not much difficulty. I think in very exceptional cases there might be some difficulty, but in case after maturity the certificate is presented to another office other than the office of issue then there might be some difficulty even in regard to this particular matter. But an identifier always solves that problem.

Corruption in Howrah Goods Accounts Office

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*970. { **Shrimati Renu Chakravarty:**
Shri Nardeo Snatak:
Shri H. N. Mukerjee:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 995 on the 11th December, 1957 and state:

(a) whether the enquiry into Howrah Goods Accounts Office corruption case has been completed;

(b) whether the employees suspended departmentally have been asked to rejoin; and

(c) whether there has been departmental enquiry as well as enquiry by Special Police Establishment?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) Out of 76 cases listed for enquiry, disciplinary proceedings are over in 11 cases.

(b) The question does not arise at this stage.

(c) Yes, in two cases.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May I know whether it is a fact that in the case of one Shri R. K. Mazumdar even though the officers in charge of accounts after having made the necessary enquiries from the Special Police Establishment clearly decided that the gentleman should be asked to rejoin his duties, the Superintendent, against whom also corruption was alleged, refused to do so?

Mr. Speaker: Shall we go into individual cases here? I would like that during Question Hour questions of a general nature are asked. Individual cases as to what happened to X, Y or Z should not be raised here.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: A particular employee was kept under suspension for having given evidence before the Corruption Enquiry Committee. May I know whether it is a fact that in spite of the fact that higher officers decided that he should be reinstated, it was not done?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member wants to know whether anybody has been victimised for having given evidence before a Committee, and even though superior officers acquitted him, still he has not been restored to his position.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: The hon. Member drew the attention of the Railway Ministry to such a thing and she was assured that no employee will be victimised or put to any difficulty on account of his having

given evidence; may be, if there was something specific against that employee, apart from giving evidence before the Committee, then, of course, that would be dealt with separately on its own merits. Merely giving evidence before a Committee would not be any ground for victimising anybody.

Mr. Speaker: In such matters, I am sure if the hon. Minister's attention has been drawn he will certainly look into it.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I have tried every possible way, I have given the papers and done everything. I just want to know one other point of principle. May I know whether in the case of employees who happen to give evidence before a body set up by the Government, evidence against higher officers on whom charges are made by the employees, it is not kept as a secret matter and, whether departmental enquiries can take place after such charges have been made in the Government department?

Mr. Speaker: I find it difficult to follow the question.

Shri Ranga: She wants to know whether such evidence is released to higher officers on whom the charges are made.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: How do we prevent this from happening. How do the Railways guarantee that the employees, who are asked to give evidence against higher officers on charges of corruption, are not taken to task by their superior officers against whom such charges are made? That is a very serious thing.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: It is a question of a very general nature. All I can say is that no such victimisation takes place. That is all I can say. In this particular case, about 76 cases of irregularities in the accounts were detected. First of all, an enquiry by the Assistant Officers was

held. Then, where it was considered necessary, an enquiry by senior officers was held, and in certain cases, enquiry by the Special Police Establishment has also been held. So, each case will be dealt with according to the seriousness of it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is only driving at this. Those subordinates who give evidence or who are called upon to give evidence—their interests must be safeguarded, lest there should be victimisation. Steps ought to be devised for that purpose. That is all that is suggested.

Shri Ranga: Has any effort been made by the hon. Deputy Minister to give some personal attention to these matters as they affect the general interests of the employees? Otherwise, they would not be able to give any evidence against any corrupt officials.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: The hon. lady Member brought this instance to my notice. I have gone very thoroughly into that case, and I am sure that no victimisation will take place.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: The point is not with reference only to this particular case. The Minister has not given us any assurance regarding this principle. There are large number of cases that I have taken up, not directly with the Minister but with the administration,—of workers who have given information about corruption and so on. Then, when action is taken against them, they have to apply or write answers to the charge-sheets, and they have to pass through what is called the proper channel. The proper channel is always that particular official who is above him who is involved in the case. Therefore, what is going to be done about such matters, what is going to be done to protect this individual against this thing, because, otherwise, it gets bogged up in the proper channel.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: I deny the assumption that any employee who brings forward or exposes any case of corruption is victimised. I deny that. I may inform the House that wherever we feel that there is a *prima facie* case, we have our own Vigilance Branch in the Railway Board, and sometimes we order direct enquiries. We send our own inspectors from here, and enquire into it without bringing any of those officers into the picture at all.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: One small point.

Mr. Speaker: These are larger issues. So many questions are sought to be put. Now, if they proceed without allowing these officers to know about it, that will come under the Detention Act which will be applied in such cases. The hon. Members are opposed to it. Therefore, it is rather a large matter. Let this matter be investigated more thoroughly by the hon. Minister; let ways and means be devised. Otherwise, persons would not come forward if there is a danger of their being found out afterwards. Therefore, the hon. Minister can, in individual cases, see to it that there is no victimisation. As a general rule, not only the hon. Minister, in this department, but those in other departments also, may see to it. There may be a statement of policy as to what ought to be done, what procedure ought to be adopted, not only for this but to such other matters also. The hon. Minister has taken note of this. Next question.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Sir, one direct question. How many officers have been suspended in this particular case, with respect to those against whom charges have been brought?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: As I said, the investigation in a large number of cases is still going on, and it would be a little premature to give any information at this stage when enquiry is proceeding.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Let the question be answered first. Otherwise, nobody is able to understand what the question is. The hon. Member wanted to know how many of these 76 people have been kept under suspension.

Shri Shahnawas Khan: It is not 76 people, Sir. There were 76 cases of irregularities in the accounts.

Mr. Speaker: How many of them have been suspended? That was the question.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: One officer has been removed; one suspended.

Engine Collision at Ajani Station

*972. { **Shri Tangamani:**
 { **Shri Raghunath Singh:**

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that shunting engine collided with another engine in the loco-shed at Ajani Station on the Central Railway on the 26th February, 1958;

(b) if so, what is the extent of damage; and

(c) whether Railway employees were injured due to the accident?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) Yes. At about 18-00 hours on 25th February, 1958 (and not on 26th February, 1958), while the empty rake of No. N Up local was being drawn into the Loco Shed at Ajani, its engine entered a short dead end siding in the Loco Shed and collided with another engine stabled in the siding.

(b) Rs. 530 only.

(c) Yes, three Railway employees travelling in the empty rake sustained minor injuries.

Shri Tangamani: May I know whether it is not a fact that this accident took place because of the wrong shunting of the rake of the

local train, and whether, but for the brake applied by the driver, the damage would have been considerable, and if so, what benefit has been given or what promotion or benefit has been given to the driver, by way of any reward, for having averted this major accident?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member ought not to argue this matter. A simple question like "Any award will be given or not" may be put. That is all. It appears as if the hon. Member is now taking up the matter of any award that could be given to the driver. It is for the Government to decide whether any reward is to be given or not.

Shri Tangamani: In this particular case,.....

Mr. Speaker: It is embarrassing for the Government—whoever may be in position, and the Opposition may also find it so, when they come to occupy that position—to deal with such questions. In the Question Hour we are not to take up such matters. This is not a General Discussion of the Budget or the railway budget discussion. The simple question should be, "Has any reward been given or not?" I will not allow any suggestion to be made in the Question Hour and the Question Hour being utilised for that purpose.

Shri Tangamani: May I know whether any reward has been given to the driver?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: As far as the result of our enquiry goes, we feel that it is the driver who was responsible for this accident and far from awarding him any rewards, he may have to be punished.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: It is really unfortunate that in spite of my saying again and again on the floor of this House that individual cases ought not to be taken up here at this time, it is persisted upon. There is no difference of opinion so far as con-

*The reply was corrected by the Deputy Minister of Railways on 27th March, 1958. See Debates of 27th March, 1958.