

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: In view of this re-survey of the Madras-Arkonam section for electrification, may I know what interim measures are being taken to tackle the difficulties of dislocation and density of traffic on that particular line?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: The present capacity is enough, the steam locomotive is enough for the present; but in anticipation of developments we will have electrification. As I have submitted, there is no competition or conflict between the two. The civil engineering works, as a matter of fact, on the Madras-Villupuram line is going on.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: In view of the fact that most of the locomotives there are old ones, is there any step being taken to see that newer locomotives are sent there?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I do not admit that they are old.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: I can give figures.

Mr. Speaker: He only meant that even if they are old they are good.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: New locomotives are never sent to the broad gauge section in the south. They are sent there after being used in the north for two or three years. That is a fact.

Mr. Speaker: The hon Member was allowed to stray away from Madras-Arkonam line—the question relates to that—to Madras-Villupuram line. Now she is going from electrification to steam locomotives.

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: It is very closely related, because electrification is to relieve the density of traffic.

Mr. Speaker: All are connected, I agree. We will go to the next question.

Messrs. Bird & Co.

*465. **Shri V. C. Shukla:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply to parts (c) and (d) of Unstarred Question No. 1539 on 5th September, 1958 and state:

(a) from what date the retired member of the Railway Board has joined Messrs. Bird & Co. (Private) Ltd.;

(b) on what date the notices terminating the then existing Handling Contractors' approved services at Sakrigalghat and Maniharighat were issued by the Railway; and

(c) on what date the Handling Contracts at the above Ghats were awarded to Messrs Bird & Co, (Private) Ltd ?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) It is understood that the member of the Railway Board, who retired from service with effect from 1st August, 1955 with the sanction of the Government, joined Messrs Bird & Co (Private) Ltd; on and from the same date.

(b) Notices terminating the then existing handling contracts at Sakrigalghat and Maniharighat, which had already continued for a number of years without ascertaining the market conditions, were issued on 27-9-55 and 29-9-55 in respect of Sakrigalghat and Maniharighat respectively.

(c) Notices inviting tenders were issued early in the year 1956 and the contract was given to the overall lowest tenders on 27-4-56. The contractor commenced working on 1-5-56.

Shri V. C. Shukla: May I know whether or not this Bird & Co (Private) Ltd. have extensive dealings with the Indian Railways, and under what circumstances and under which considerations of propriety did the Government give permission to the ex-Chairman of the Railway Board to join this firm?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): As a matter of fact,

all the important business houses of the country have dealings with the railways. In the first place, those Government servants who are not covered by the pension rules do not require any permission from the Government, after their retirement, to join any firm or not.

Shri V. C. Shukla: May I know if it is not a fact that after the ex-Chairman of the Railway Board joined Bird & Co. (Private) Ltd, the company secured valuable handling contracts at Sakrigalghat and Mamharighat securing huge amounts for extra loads running to lakhs of rupees, against the fact that no other big contractors at those places were given such payments before?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I do not agree to the presumptions and insinuations involved in the question.

Shri V. C. Shukla: No insinuations were made

Mr. Speaker: He has not finished the answer

Shri Jagjivan Ram: The contract was given to Bird & Co not on the consideration that an ex-Chairman of the Railway Board had joined it. Tenders were invited and they were examined on merit and the contract was awarded to the lowest tenderer.

Shri V. C. Shukla: Will the Government lay a statement on the Table of the House, giving the comparative figures of the various tenderers with other terms and conditions and mentioning the considerations that weighed with the Government while awarding this contract to Bird & Co?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Yes, Sir. I shall place on the Table of the House the rates quoted by the tenderers for the information of the Members.

Shri V. C. Shukla: Also the considerations which weighed with the Government. That also may be mentioned.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I have said that the contract was awarded to the lowest tenderer. That was the consideration. The tender was examined on

merits, and the contract was awarded to the lowest tenderer.

Shri Thirumala Rao: Is it not a fact that the comparative figures, before this Bird & Co came into the picture, revealed that the Government have sustained a loss of more than Rs. 2 lakhs on this contract?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I was going to say that. I have just now been comparing what were the rates before the tenders were invited and what were the rates quoted. I find that the Government has benefited very much by inviting the tenders.

Shri Thirumala Rao: The date of relinquishing of office of this officer and the date of his joining the new firm are the same—1-8-1955, and the date of finalizing the contract is 27-5-1956. Is it wrong to assume that this gentleman has exercised undue influence for securing this contract for Bird & Co?

Mr. Speaker: What is the value of the contract?

Shri Thirumala Rao: It is a continuous contract.

Mr. Speaker: I am asking the Minister to say what is the value of the contract, so that I might decide whether I can allow further supplementaries or not. That is my concern here.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It will be something like Rs 11 lakhs to Rs 12 lakhs per year.

Shri A. C. Guha: For how many years?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): It is a three years contract.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know whether the tender was accepted by the Government after obtaining the financial concurrence from competent authority?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I presume that all the necessary formalities should have been taken before the contract was awarded.

Shri Tyagi: The very fact that this officer has joined the private firm

immediately on the very day when he was relieved from service, leads one to doubt as to whether he was negotiating for his service with the firm previously, before he relinquished charge in the railways. May I know, therefore, whether the Minister was taken into confidence in regard to the negotiations for the new employment?

Mr. Speaker: What is the doubt? I am really surprised. How can there be any doubt? He seems to have been talking to them in advance!

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I may add one thing more. As a matter of fact, the officer retired a few days earlier than the date when he was due to. Normally, he would have retired some time in September of that year. He retired in August, and he applied for permission and the Government gave permission. He retired and joined the company:

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: This is a very important matter in the sense that it concerns a matter of policy. If persons who are in charge of the administration of railways and who have to place orders with various firms get such jobs immediately on retiring, naturally this House is anxious to know whether any consideration is behind it. For that purpose and without making any insinuation, the hon. Member, Shri Tyagi, wanted to know for how long there has been negotiation regarding the appointment of the officer concerned in this firm. Suddenly, overnight, it could not have been done. That is the object.

Shri Tyagi: I also wanted to know whether the Minister was being consulted.

Mr. Speaker: Yes; and also when was he consulted.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: He was not the Chairman at that time as he was on leave for some time before. Somebody else was officiating. He was

not the Chairman; he was on leave. Negotiations might have taken place. It is too much for me to say. Of course, there is nothing on record to show for whether any negotiation was going on. But certainly he applied for retirement, and he indicated that he was going to join Bird & Co. That is on record. Whether the then Minister was taken into confidence during the period of negotiation or not, it is too much for me to say.

Shri Tyagi: What I wanted to emphasize was . . .

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister does not know when that officer started negotiations with the company.

Shri Tyagi: I was interested in emphasizing this point. According to the service rules, no Government officer is permitted to negotiate for any other employment without going through the proper channel so long as he is already employed in Government, whether he is on leave or not.

Shri A. C. Guba: If that is the position. (*Interruptions.*)

Shri Sinhasan Singh: Did the officer join there with the permission of the Government or not?

Shri Ranga rose—

Mr. Speaker: Shri Ranga.

Shri Ranga: In view of the fact that a rule is already there, and also the undertaking that Government has given to this House, both after 1945 and earlier to that, that no officer holding such responsible position would be allowed to join any private concern which has direct or indirect dealings with a particular Ministry or with the Government except after a particular minimum period, may I know what was the justification for the Government to have given this gentleman special leave to retire and join this private service on the very same day? I do not think there was any precedent for this at any time before.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I have said, no permission from the Government was necessary in his case . . .

Mr. Speaker: In this case?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: . . . in his case after retirement, to join any firm that he liked, because the rule that stands for permission covers the Railway officers who are on pensionable posts, and not the officers who enjoy only provident fund benefits. The officer concerned was not on pensionable post. He was on provident fund benefits. Though he was not required to take the permission of the Government he still applied for permission and permission was given. *(Interruption.)*

Shri Joachim Alva: One question.

Shri Tyagi: This is a matter of great importance I am afraid the administration is becoming too slack. We are doomed.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I am afraid the Members want one whole day for this business! The hon. Minister replied that technically, the person who changed over to the other service after retirement is not called upon or is not bound under the existing rules to ask for permission because he does not draw pension. It may be provident fund benefit, but that will cover not only his lifetime but some other lifetime also! But, all the same, so long as the rule stands, only persons who receive pension will have to take the permission. In this case, by way of abundant caution, he must have taken the permission. So, why should we pursue the matter?

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Shri Thirumala Rao.

Shri Joachim Alva: One question, at least. He has put three questions.

Shri Thirumala Rao: In the reply given at the beginning we were told that the concerned officer has taken the permission of Government. Now, on further examination or recollection, we are told that such permission was not necessary. I would like to bring to

your notice that a great principle is involved in such a thing, because I want to know whether he is a member of the recruitment board for the industrial pool of the Government, the Import and Export Promotion Council and several other bodies in which Messers. Bird and Company have got inter-linked financial interests?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: This question may be put to the concerned Ministries.

Shri Thirumala Rao: The whole thing has arisen out of the question relating to the Railway Ministry, I would like to know whether it is within the knowledge of the Railway Ministry that the gentleman's services are being utilised in quasi-government bodies, which will enhance the prestige of this concern?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I am not competent to answer this question.

Shri Joachim Alva: Is Government aware Bird & Co. is the wealthiest British firm in India? If you walk into their office, you will see the sign-boards of hundred officers . . .

Mr. Speaker: What is his question?

Shri Joachim Alva: Is Government aware that names of a hundred officers are there on the sign-boards, among whom not even half a dozen are Indian officers and this was an inducement given to the ex-Chairman of the Railway Board, who has been drawing a six-figure sum as provident fund, over a lakh of rupees?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has only given information. I am not able to follow his question.

Shri Joachim Alva: Government must possess sufficient information. In Bird & Co. there are not sufficient Indians as executives . . .

Mr. Speaker: I am not satisfied that this calls for an answer. He only gives information. Shri Guha.

Shri A. C. Guha: Even if it is not technically necessary for a member of

the Railway Board to take permission, when that particular officer has written for permission, why did not the Ministry think it advisable at least to convey to him that this would be in contravention of a general convention prevalent in Government services?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I said, the officer applied for permission and he brought to the notice of Government that he was going to join Bird & Co.

Mr. Speaker: What the hon. Member wants to know is this. The person need not have applied to the Government at all. He knows the rules. But if he thought it was necessary to take permission to avoid any misunderstanding, in spite of the rules being in his favour, what was the great hurry for the hon. Minister to give him permission, without finding out what the implications of this office are and how far the inter-relation will work adversely to the Railway administration? That is exactly what is behind all these questions asked one after the other.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I have said, we are concerned with this particular contract . . .

Shri Ranga: We are not so much concerned with this contract, as with the wrong convention.

Shri Tyagi: It is a wrong convention established in the services.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I have explained, I will lay a statement giving the comparative rates quoted by the different tenderers in this case. The tender was decided on merits; the officer joining or not joining the firm had nothing to do with the matter.

Shri Tyagi: May I take it that all members of the Railway Board are free to negotiate while they are still in the service of the Government?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members evidently want to know if really the officer does not come under the rule.

Shri Tyagi: The rule covers it.

Mr. Speaker: Whether it covers or does not cover, I will allow a half-an-hour discussion on this matter.

Shri Sinhasan Singh: I submit that half-an-hour is not enough. At least two hours must be given, because it is important.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: So far as this rule stands, if Parliament feels that no officer after retirement should join any firm having any dealing with the Government, it is for Parliament to decide and we will abide by that.

Mr. Speaker: Normally it is only a half-an-hour discussion arising out of a question. But having regard to the importance of this matter, if any hon. Member tables a motion, I will allow 1 hour or 1½ hours, as may be necessary.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I would like to have one clarification. I will be in a position to deal with this particular case only. When the general question is raised, the Railway Ministry as such will not be competent to deal with it. It will be for the Home Ministry to deal with it. So, we will have to consider whether the question is to be dealt with by the Railway Ministry or by the Home Ministry.

Mr. Speaker: I expect that all hon. Ministers who are concerned with this will be present here. I will issue notices to all hon. Ministers.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: May I point out that it will be good if the Railway Ministry lay a statement on the Table of the House giving details of all the members of the Railway Board who have retired and who have joined private concerns and the intervening period before that?

Shri Joachim Alva: Starting with Mr. Bakhle.

Mr. Speaker: Why not the other Ministries also? Why only the Railway Ministry? This question started with the Railway Ministry. If the Railway Minister does not find it highly inconvenient to the extent possible, he may gather information within recent

memory, say, since 1947, regarding who were all the Chairmen or members of the Railway Board who have taken to private service and with or without the permission of the hon. Minister. That information may be given to the House.

Shri Joachim Ajwa: What is the name of this hon. gentleman?

Mr. Speaker: He has been following the question for about 20 minutes without knowing the name? He can find it out. Next question.

Calcutta Durgapur Express Way

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*466. { **Shri Subiman Ghose:**
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Shri H. N. Mukerjee:
Shri Muhammed Elias:

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

(a) whether there is a proposal to construct a national express way from Calcutta to Durgapur;

(b) if so, whether the plan and estimates for the same have been prepared;

(c) when the work is expected to be taken up and finished;

(d) what would be the quantum of land required for the purpose; and

(e) how much arable land would be affected?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes. The proposal is at present in the preliminary stage of examination.

(b) No, Sir.

(c), (d) and (e). This information can be supplied only after a detailed survey is carried out and plans and estimates prepared, which will take about one year.

Shri Subiman Ghose: May I know by how many miles this proposed road will be less than the national 257 L.S.D.—2.

highway between Calcutta and Durgapur?

Shri Raj Bahadur: So far as I know, it will be 24 miles less and the total mileage will be about 100 miles.

Shri Subiman Ghose: In view of the fact that the proposed road would affect a vast tract of arable land, have we examined at the time of formulation of this scheme whether the same purpose may be achieved by widening the grand trunk road from Calcutta to Durgapur?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Initially we thought of widening the existing national highway. But at the instance of the Chief Minister of West Bengal, the new proposal is under consideration. The various aspects pertaining to that proposal are also under examination.

T.B. Survey in Orissa

*407. **Shri Panigrahi:** Will the Minister of Health be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 479 on the 25th August, 1958, and state:

(a) whether parts of Orissa were included in the National Pulmonary Tuberculosis Survey; and

(b) whether incidence of T.B. in Orissa has been assessed from any other source?

The Minister of Health (Shri Karmarkar): (a) The National Tuberculosis Survey was not taken up in any part of Orissa.

(b) No, Sir.

Shri Panigrahi: The Tuberculosis Adviser to the Government of India has stated that nearly 5 lakh persons are dying of T.B. every year. May I know whether Orissa has been included in that figure?

Mr. Speaker: Does the figure include that for Orissa also?

Shri Karmarkar: Orissa is part of India.