

Shri Hathi: We have been asking the members of the Committee to send the final report and that is still awaited.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know, Sir, if by this delay the work of accounting and cost accounting and so on and so forth is being disrupted?

Shri Hathi: It is a matter of opinion, Sir.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know what are the main features of this interim report, Sir?

Shri Hathi: The Committee has not been unanimous in their findings. They have, of course, suggested that a new method other than the one that exists for accounts procedure should be devised, but what it should be, of course, they will in due time incorporate in their final report.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know, Sir, if under these conditions it is not necessary to appoint another Committee to give a recommendation in this matter as soon as possible?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The final report is awaited.

PERMISSION TO VISIT NANKANA SAHIB

*1228. **Sardar A. S. Saigal:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Pakistan Government refused permission to a Sikh Jatha to visit Nankana Sahib to observe Guru Nanak's birthday there;

(b) whether it is a fact that on many occasions previously such permission was not given and whether permission was given at any time previously and if so, on how many occasions;

(c) whether Government have lodged any protest with the Pakistan Government on their action in not allowing the Sikhs to visit Nankana Sahib; and

(d) whether Government propose to pursue the matter so that such permission may be granted in future?

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chanda): (a) This is not correct. The Government of Pakistan gave permission for a party of 200 Sikh pilgrims to visit Nankana Sahib from the 29th October 1952 to the 2nd November 1952 on the occasion of Guru Nanak Devji's Birthday.

(b) Permission was applied for and given every year from 1948 onwards.

(c) and (d). Do not arise.

Sardar Hukam Singh: May I know why that permission could not be availed of when the permission had been given?

Shri Anil K. Chanda: The SGPC informed us that they were not ready with the passports and therefore they could not avail of the opportunity given to them.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Did the Government make any representation to the Pakistan Government that as the passport system was newly introduced, this opportunity could not be availed because it was very difficult for these persons to get visas for these persons who were dispersed all over the country?

The Prime Minister (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): I think, Sir, it is not very easy to reply to that question. It was a confusing period and I think, I must admit, looking at these papers that there was some slight delay in my own Ministry, the External Affairs Ministry, in this matter, not a great delay but a few days' delay, which, perhaps also came in the way, I give the dates. The Shiromani Gurdwara Committee's request came to the Punjab Government on the 28th July. It was received by the External Affairs Ministry from the Government of Punjab actually on 4th August. Then the External Affairs Ministry wrote to the High Commissioner at Karachi on the 14th August. It took about ten days; it might have been done sooner. Then within these days the passport system came in and so, unfortunately, time slipped by and there were difficulties perhaps in the way of the Shiromani Committee then to take advantage of the permission from Pakistan.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Is it a fact, Sir, that even on occasions when the permission had been given and the pilgrims had gone there, they had been escorted by Police and allowed only to move within the precincts of the Gurdwara?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is quite possible. I cannot answer straight-off without reference. But, it is quite possible that they were escorted by police on those occasions. Of course, the Pakistan Government will presumably say that they were being escorted for their own convenience and protection. I do not know what answer they may give.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Were they permitted only within the precincts of the Gurdwara, there?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Does the hon. Member mean that they were not permitted to move in the precincts of the Gurdwara?

Sardar Hukam Singh: No, outside?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I really do not know, Sir; I will have to enquire.

Sardar A. S. Saigal: As regards the police escort to the Sikhs who are visiting Gurdwaras and they are not being allowed to go outside, will the Government be kind enough to make an enquiry, Sir?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: There is no question so far as the first is concerned. We have pilgrims from Pakistan coming to various places in India and our police accompanies them, not to harass them but to help them and to see that no untoward occurrence takes place. But the other point is certainly apart, whether they are allowed to go outside the precincts or not, we shall enquire into that.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Are the pilgrims coming from Pakistan to India visiting their sacred places in India subjected to any restrictions as to their movement, in seeing their friends etc.?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Not that I am aware of. But there were in particular places some arrangements actually in the place of pilgrimage, but, otherwise, I do think there have been no particular restrictions.

Dr. N. B. Khare: Is it a fact that India is liberal and Pakistan is not?

Sardar Hukam Singh: Has our High Commissioner, ever since partition, sought at any time the permission of the Pakistan Government to go round and see these holy places, shrines, temples, and gurdwaras, whether they are kept in proper repairs?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I could not give a straight answer to that question, Sir. The High Commissioner normally resides in Karachi. He does pay visits to Lahore and parts of the Punjab. I know for a fact that he has been taking great interest in these matters because we have been corresponding with him about these gurdwaras. We have been writing to the Pakistan Government and our High Commissioner has also done that. As to the places he has visited in the course of the last one or two years, I cannot say anything definite.

Sardar Hukam Singh: On a previous occasion, we were told that a request had been made to the Pakistan Government to negotiate on the question of these visits in the respective countries and there had been no answer to that. May I know, if subsequent to that any reply has been received, whether the Pakistan Government wish to convene a conference or discuss these things?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: If the hon. Member gives notice of that question—I have not got the papers here—we could get facts and place them before the House.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Has the High Commissioner or the Deputy High Commissioner at Lahore considered the importance of going round and seeing whether these holy places are kept in proper repairs?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That, Sir, if I may say so, is our constant advice and we shall do it again if the hon. Member likes. We have constantly written on this subject to the High Commissioner who is greatly interested in it. Certainly, we shall pursue the matter further.

PREVENTION OF ASSAM-EAST PAKISTAN BORDER INCIDENTS

*1229. **Shrimati Khongmen:** (a) Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the P.T.I. Report appearing in the "Hindustan Times" and "Hindustan Standard" of 30th November, 1952 to the effect that the discussion between the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District officers and Sylhet District officers to prevent occurrence of border incidents between Assam and Pakistan broke down and whether the purport of the report is correct?

(b) If the answer to part (a) above is in the affirmative, what steps Government are going to take to safeguard the lives and properties, specially paddy crops and orange crops, of Indian citizens of border areas in Assam and particularly of Khasi and Jaintia Hills?

(c) How many Indian citizens of Khasi and Jaintia Hills District are in the custody of Pakistan marauders or Pakistan Government and what steps Government are contemplating to take to obtain release of these prisoners?

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chanda): (a) and (b). There has been no breakdown of discussions as reported in the