

foundation stone of the buildings in 1955; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for refusing permission for construction of the buildings now?

The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon): (a) to (c). In 1948, a plot of land measuring 30 acres and 32 gunthas at Bangalore was placed with the Government of Mysore for temporary occupation on a "care and maintenance" basis. There is nothing in the terms to show that the land was given at that time for buildings for the Corporation. As the land is an essential open space in Bangalore and part of the oxygen area required by the Armed Forces, it cannot be released.

The facts in regard to the status and role of this site was not before the Prime Minister.

Shri Keshava: May I know if these facts were not taken into consideration while the consent for the building and the laying of the foundation-stone was given by the Government then?

Shri Krishna Menon: There is nothing in the record to show that we ever gave any consent for building. It is very doubtful, even if the land belonged to the Government of India, whether the Defence Ministry would agree to the building on that site.

Shri Raghunath Singh: May I know what will happen to this foundation-stone which is still there?

Shri Krishna Menon: If I may say so, with respect, there is no need to ridicule this matter. It very often happens that a foundation is laid in a place and if a more suitable place is found the matter will be explained to the Prime Minister. There is no need to add to the intricacy of the situation. This land is essential for defence purposes.

Shri Keshava: Is it not a fact that this land legitimately belonged to the Government of Mysore and has never been acquired by the Central

Government nor any conveyance has ever been made, and may I know what is the basis for the Central Government to claim it?

Shri Krishna Menon: I am glad that the question has been asked. It is the property of the Government of India in the Ministry of Defence.

Criteria for Determining Backwardness

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 *573. { Shri D. C. Sharma;
 Shri Ram Krishan Gupta;
 Shri C. K. Bhattacharya;
 Shri Pangarkar;
 Shri Madhusudan Kao;
 Shri Hem Raj;
 Shri Siddiah;
 Shri Chuni Lal;

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 751 on the 9th December, 1959 and state the latest position in regard to fixing the criteria for the determination of backward classes?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): The matter is still under consideration.

Shri D. C. Sharma: The Backward Classes Commission gave the report several years ago, and the Home Ministry has been considering the report as to the determination of the criteria of backwardness. May I know why so much time has been taken in arriving at a decision?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri G. B. Pant): The views of the Government of India were expressed in the memorandum that was placed on the Table of the House. It was also found that there was a sharp divergence of opinion in the committee itself as to the criteria of backwardness. The chairman has expressed very strong opinion about caste being regarded as a criterion. In this House as well as in the other House, the Members of Parliament have repeatedly, not only said, but emphasised that caste should not be taken as

a criterion and that the institution of caste should not be recognised so far as possible, and that no further extension of these principles should be given. In the circumstances, caste could not be recognised. I had repeatedly consulted the State Governments about some uniform principles to be adopted in this matter. They are reluctant to disturb their existing lists as they think that certain interests would be affected by any alteration. In the circumstances, in spite of our best efforts, we have not been able to evolve a uniform principle.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if any commission will be set up to reconcile the differences between the States and the Central Home Ministry, so that a firm decision can be taken about the backwardness, whether educational, social, economic or in any other respect?

Shri G. B. Pant: The States are getting full assistance from the Centre for backward classes and every State has its own list. These lists are not based on any uniform principle. So, when we were unable to find any criterion ourselves, we requested the States to give the maximum assistance they could to the backward classes, to include in their lists people who are really backward and also, continue to give stipends to the members of the backward classes as they appeared in the lists of the States. The Centre itself had no list of its own at any time. So long as the States cannot be persuaded to accept a uniform basis, it is difficult to impose anything on them.

Shri Hem Raj: Some months back, a conference of the Ministers of the States was held. May I know whether this question was considered in that conference?

Shri G. B. Pant: This question was considered with the Chief Ministers. I discussed it with them and only recently again I had requested them to look into this matter. My own view is that there are certain backward classes such as nomadic tribes, ex-criminal tribes and others who are

really backward. So, we should try to help them to the extent we can and ask the States also to assist them and not insist on their revising or altering their lists. We leave it to them, because any other course is not likely to be accepted by them and the primary responsibility in that regard rests on the States. There is no reservation under the Constitution and we cannot over-rule the States in this matter.

Shri Tyagi: With a view to carrying this benefit to the most deserving families in these classes, has the Government examined the feasibility of dropping out of the lists of backward classes those families whose income is above the average?

Shri G. B. Pant: I will pass on the suggestion to the States.

Shri B. K. Galkwad: From the reply given by the hon. Minister, it appears that he is also very keen to solve the problem of the backward classes. May I know how long it will take to solve it?

Shri G. B. Pant: It is being solved every day. The plans that have been framed from time to time are intended to remove the disparity and to raise the position of the backward classes and the amounts set aside for assistance to them specifically in addition to the general assistance they get from the general budget are larger and larger. So, the problem is being solved every day, and we have declared that our aim is to have a casteless and classless society.

Shri Sampath: May I know if the lists of backward classes prepared by the Education Ministry at the Centre could be either abridged or enlarged on the suggestions from the respective States?

Shri G. B. Pant: The Education Ministry has not, so far as I am aware, prepared any list of their own. They are guided by the lists prepared by the various States and now the task of distributing stipends in the States has also been made over to the States themselves, so that the

Education Ministry has not to distribute these stipends either.

Shri Kalika Singh: May I know whether Government are aware that last week in Madhya Pradesh, an IAS officer, Shri Gour, presiding over a conference of All-India Koormi Kshatriya Mahasabha advocated the formation of an All-India caste body and even dragged the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in that connection? The news appeared in all the papers.

Mr. Speaker: How does it arise out of this?

Shri G. B. Pant: I am not so well informed as the hon. Member. I accept whatever he says.

Shri Palaniandy: May I know if Government are aware that recently the Mysore Government has included all the communities in the backward classes except the Brahmin community and if so, what is the criterion they have followed in fixing this?

Shri G. B. Pant: The Mysore Government has, I understand, recently revised their lists and reduced the proportion of backward classes, which was about 90 per cent of the population to 50 per cent.

Shri Tangamani: After the recommendation of the Backward Classes Commission, which enumerated about 14 points, may I know whether Government will accept the list which has been prepared by the various State Governments on the basis of social and educational backwardness?

Shri G. B. Pant: The State Governments make use of the funds that are given to them and the Planning Commission also frames certain schemes for the assistance of the backward people. So, the Centre does not directly administer anything itself.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know whether it is a fact that addressing the State Ministers' Conference on the 31st January in New Delhi, the hon. Home Minister said that the welfare schemes meant for backward classes are not satisfactorily implemented?

May I know how far the implementation has been done?

Shri G. B. Pant: I have been impressing on the States the advisability of implementing the schemes that have already been approved within the time prescribed for their implementation.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know whether any co-operation of non-official agencies for the implementation of these welfare schemes is sought and if so, what are those agencies?

Shri G. B. Pant: I hope the non-officials who are affected should be co-operating with the execution of schemes which are meant for their welfare. If they do not, then other non-officials who hold influential positions should persuade them to do so.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: A suggestion has been made by important quarters repeatedly that poor people below a certain agreed level should be treated as backward classes. May I know if the Government have examined this suggestion?

Shri G. B. Pant: I have sympathy with the suggestion that all those people who are in a position which calls for special assistance should be given such assistance. But it is difficult to say how many people in this country are not poor, and if any such criterion were applied then whether 70 per cent or 80 per cent of the population would be covered or 10 per cent or 20 per cent. So, any general sort of distinction one cannot easily make.

Import of Steel from East European Countries

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*574 { Shri Hem Barua:
 } Shri Aurobindo Ghosal:

Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel be pleased to state:

(a) whether steel is being imported by Government from the East European countries particularly from Russia;