

MR. SPEAKER: It is not forming part of the record

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Will you take your seat?

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN: Sir, these are aspersions because he has challenged the Chair.

SHRI ASHOK ANANDRAO DESHMUKH: I am not challenging the Chair. I respect the Chair. I respect the people of this country. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will look into it. It is a question of understanding, it is not a question of challenge. yes, you carry on.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: How has the Congress embraced a communal person.....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Sir, it should not form part of the record.

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I want to warn the Members that this TV understands the intelligence of all of us over here also!

Cantonments and Military Stations

*639. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cantonments and military stations in the country at present with their total area separately for cantonments and military stations;

(b) the difference between cantonments and military stations in terms of the military-

civilian ratio among the residents, land use and provision of municipal service;

(c) whether it is proposed to abolish the cantonments to convert them into military stations; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUR): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

There are 62 Cantonments and 299 Military Stations, covering 1,89,706 acres and 2,53,478 acres respectively.

2. Cantonments and Military Stations in peace areas are towns designed to house troops along with their families. Cantonments are stations notified under the Cantonments Act 1924 for purposes of Local Self Government. Military Stations are not so notified. The support services like up-keep of roads, disposal of garbage, water supply, sewerage services etc., are done in Cantonments by the static civilian population under the Cantonment Boards. These functions are performed by the concerned Station Headquarters in Military Stations.
3. There is no fixed ratio of Military and Civil population in Cantonments or in Military Stations. There is no supporting civilian population in Military Stations and the minimum essential civilian staff for support services are employees of the Central Government.
4. There is no proposal to abolish Cantonments.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Mr. Speaker, the reply given by the hon. Minister makes a clear conceptual and functional

distinction between a cantonment and a military station. In fact, to the best of my knowledge no cantonment has been established in the country since the early sixties while Defence lands have increased four-fold since 1960 and now occupy over 22 lakh acres. Sir, in many cases the civilian population in some cantonments has increase considerably. In fact, in some cases it has become the majority of the population and some neighbouring towns or villages have also expanded and merged into the contiguous cantonments.

So, my question, Mr. Speaker, is this: (a) whether the Government have made any efforts to demarcate the areas of civilian concentration which are not in military use; and (b) whether they shall divest themselves of the administrative and municipal responsibilities with regard to those areas and hand over those areas to the State Governments or the Union Territory Administrations concerned on mutually agreed terms.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, part of the hon. Member's observation is incorrect. Six cantonments are established after 1947. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: I said, after 1960.

SHRI KRISHAN KUMAR: After 1960, the Ajmer cantonment was established in 1962.

Sir, the cantonments are administered by our Cantonment Boards. The evaluation of the cantonments has taken place in the past and it is true that many of the cantonments, in fact all the cantonments, have a civilian segment that distinguishes or differentiates the cantonment from the military station. Sir, in the process of evaluation of the cantonments where the civilian areas could be scientifically excised from the cantonments, the process of excision has taken place in the past. Now, I appreciate and I agree with the hon. Member that there are certain concerns on the part of the civilian population especially in relation to their build-

ings getting dilapidated and sanctions are difficult to obtain, they are not getting sufficient services and so on. On the other hand, it is very essential that the character of the cantonments is maintained; they are, if I may say so, islands of urban sanity, they are well maintained, better planned and the Government has no intention whatsoever to detract from the character of the cantonments in the country. The process of excision, if any, of civilian areas is a continuous process, we can look at it on a case-to-case basis. But the entire question of management of the cantonments is being reviewed by the Ministry and the decision will be taken for safeguarding the character of the cantonments and at the same time removing the minor irritants which are being faced by the civilian population.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, my second supplementary is with regard to the defence lands which have been declared as surplus. Due to the change of defence strategy as well as security perceptions, there are certain defence properties which have been abandoned or which have been declared surplus. For example, there are some airstrips relating to World War II which are no longer in use. My question is whether the Government proposes to develop these areas and if so, for what purposes and if the Ministry of Defence is not in a position to put them to any useful purpose, then are they prepared to hand them over back to the State Governments or the Union Territories?

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, of the total of about two lakh acres of defence lands available with the Defence Ministry, various forces, namely, the Army and the Air Force have been making a continuous assessment and review of the defence lands and finding out if any other defence lands are surplus and these resources and the capital can be put to greater productive use, especially in the context of the constraint on the Defence budget I would like to mention here that no land within the cantonment has yet been found surplus. (*Interruptions*) There is an apprehension in the media. The surplus land which has been progressively found as

surplus mainly consist of old firing ranges, old camping ground, abandoned airfields etc. We have a rough idea and I would like to again say that these lands, after proper identification, will be first offered to the Central Government, then the State Government, central public sector undertakings, municipalities and other organised institutions and only as a last resort, they will be put to auction in which case private people can bid for it and develop it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DATTA MEGHA: The civilian people have been living in cantonments. I am specially talking about Kamthee area. Kamthee area and cantonment area which comes under Nagpur division of Maharashtra. It has come so much under civilian population that in the recent past the military personnel staged a march past outside the cantonment area, beat the people and man-handled them. Such things and more over the military laws create problems for the civilians. Such things happened in Nagpur due to personal dispute. The civil area and the military area have been joined together. This area should be separated, specially keeping in view the fact that the military battalion had beaten the people of Kamthee in Nagpur. Of course, it was not fair and there were police cases too. Such quarrels take place between the civilians and the military personnel. What action would you take about it and have you any plan to separate the civilian population from the cantonment area?

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUAMR: Sir, the civilian population as well as the cantonment population are living side by side and there is civilian population inside the cantonments also. The Government is aware of certain recent incidents in the cantonments and the environs mentioned. There have been certain incidents and the Army have ordered an inquiry into it and on the basis of the inquiry, further action will be taken.

SHR BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, the Government of West Bengal had sent a proposal four years back to take over an

unutilised defence land to create infrastructure for industrial growth. In my district of Purulia of West Bengal, one airstrip was constructed during the Second World War and after the Second World War, that strip is not being used by the Armed Forces and the entire land is now lying unutilised. So, I would like to know whether the Government will consider the proposal of West Bengal to hand over the land, the Chadra airstrip in the Purulia district of West Bengal, to the State of West Bengal for creating infrastructure for industrial growth.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: There is a well laid down procedure by which the Armed Forces declare any part of their land as surplus. This will be after taking into consideration their present operational requirements as well as projects in the offing and the future requirements. After this process is gone through and the Defence land is declared surplus, it is offered first to the Central Government, State Government and so on.

We have no objection on principal to consider the request of the West Bengal. But we have to go into the details. The hon. Member's suggestion will definitely be looked into.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Kharepatan to Sawantwadi Stretch of N. H. No. 17

*637. **SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT:** Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Khare Patan to Sawantwadi stretch of National Highway No. 17 is in perpetual state of disrepair for money years;

(b) the details of the steps taken by the Government to repair and widen the road to four lanes and straighten the curves on