

Shri V. V. Giri: There was no question of violation: there were some omissions made. Some misunderstandings had arisen and we have cleared the whole situation now.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: May I know, Sir, if strikes have taken place both in Bombay and Calcutta for the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. Is it due to the unawareness of the Central Government?

Shri V. V. Giri: It is not due to the unawareness; it is due to misapprehensions.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: The hon. Minister has just said that instructions were issued to the Port Trust authorities at Madras and Calcutta. May I know from him whether similar instructions are proposed to be issued to other port authorities also like Visakhapatnam?

Shri V. V. Giri: I suppose so. I am not certain. I shall look into the matter.

LICENSING OF FOOD VENDORS

*1292. **Shri Jhulan Sinha:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the licensing of food vendors at the Railway platforms has been centralised at the respective headquarters of the various Railways and whether the authorities of the stations concerned have any hand in the matter;

(b) the system of check on the supply of unwholesome and adulterated food to passengers on the platforms; and

(c) what provisions have been made for supply of wholesome food at reasonable rates to passengers?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) Subject to the general policy laid down by the Railway Board, the licensing of food vendors is centralised on some Railways at the Headquarters Commercial Office, on some at District, Divisional or Regional Offices. On no Railway,

however, is this work entrusted to the station authorities.

(b) and (c). A check on the quality of food served to passengers is exercised by frequent inspections through station masters, inspectors and railway officers. Railway medical authorities also inspect periodically all stalls and vendors and articles sold by them. Prices are fixed by Railway Administrations in the light of the prevailing market rates in the locality.

Shri Jhulan Sinha: May I know, Sir, if the Government have considered the desirability of licensing the actual vendors of foodstuffs instead of giving licenses to bigger people who sublet and exploit the vendors?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: Subletting is strictly prohibited on the Railways but if the hon. Member would bring any specific case to the notice of the Railway administration we will deal with it very severely.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know, Sir, how many food experts have been appointed for checking, how many checks have been made in the Refreshment car of the Grand Trunk Express for its food supply which is very often unwholesome and prohibitively costly?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Four questions are asked—unwholesome, prohibitively costly, any food experts are appointed and whether it has been checked?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): Checks are very frequently made by Railway Inspectors and Railway officers and also by the station staff.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Are there any experts on food?

Shri Alagesan: Just now I am unable to give the information. As far as the service on the Grand Trunk Express is concerned we have received complaints from hon. Members of this House as well as the other House. I immediately looked into these things and brought them to the notice of the Contractors that they should mend the affairs. I think some improvement is being made.

Shri Thanu Pillai: Has the hon. Minister satisfied himself regarding the conditions prevailing in the dining car attached to the Grand Trunk Express?

Shri Alagesan: I have done it more than once.

Shri Thanu Pillai: May I know, Sir, whether the hon. Minister is satisfied with the conditions that are prevalent in the dining car?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He says that he is fully satisfied. Some improvement is being noticed.

Shri A. N. Vidyalkar: May I know, Sir, if it is a fact that subletting is not only most common but it has become the rule in the Railways?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: As I said before, we would like to have definite cases and not vague statements.

सरदार ए० एस० सहगल : क्या सरकार को मालूम है कि कंप्लेट बुक कांटेक्टर्स के पास में रखी जाती है और उस पर जो कंप्लेट की जाती है, क्या उन पर भी कभी गौर किया गया है ?

श्री शाहनवाज खां : बहुत और से गौर किया जाता है ।

श्री रघुनाथ सिंह : हम यह जानना चाहते हैं कि रेलवे में जो फूड मिजा करनी है और दूध मिलता है, उस में पानी का अंश कितना होता है ?

श्री जांगड़े : अभी माननीय पालिया-मेंटरी सेक्रेटरी ने कहा कि प्लेटफार्म पर आने की वस्तुओं की जो कीमत होती है वह स्थानीय बाजार के भाव के बराबर होती है । क्या सरकार को मालूम है कि इस्टर्न रेलवे के प्लेटफार्म पर बिकने वाली चीजों की कीमत बाजार के भाव से दुगुनी होती है ?

श्री शाहनवाज खां : मैं ने कहा है कि जहां तक मुमकिन हो सकता है चीजों की कीमत जगमग जो बाजार की कीमत है, वह होती है ।

लेकिन यह खास तौर पर कहना कि जितनी बाजार में कीमत है वही स्टेशन पर होगी, यह मुमकिन नहीं है क्योंकि स्टेशन वालों को खास हिसाब किताब रखना पड़ता है और कई जगह पर शायद कीमत थोड़ी ज्यादा होगी ।

Sardar Hukam Singh: It is generally said that subletting is strictly prohibited. Should the House understand that there are no contractors who sublet their contracts to the vendors and charge exhorbitant fees? Are these vendors directly licensed now by the Government?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Some vendors are also licensed directly.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary has already said that it is not a practice which is allowed by the Railways. If any particular case is brought to his notice he will deal with it not ordinarily but severely.

ठाकुर युगल किशोर सिंह : क्या यह बात सही है कि सोनपुर रेलवे स्टेशन पर जो छोटे छोटे वेंडर हैं, वे कांटेक्टर के जरिए रखे गये हैं ?

श्री शाहनवाज खां : मुझे हिन्दुस्तान के हर एक स्टेशन पर क्या क्या हो रहा है, यह मालूम नहीं है ।

सरदार ए० एस० सहगल : क्या माननीय मंत्री महोदय इन सारी चीजों के बारे में जो कि इस हाउस के सामने आई हैं, उन के लिये एक कमेटी बिठा कर तहकीकात करने की कोशिश करेंगे ?

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : क्या कमेटी ?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): The food is generally not so bad as it is made out, because the sale of the contractors is so large. Therefore to say that the food is bad is not quite correct. Why should the hon. Members or the passengers take that food if it is so bad.

Some Hon. Members: Should they starve?

Shri L. B. Shastri: They need not starve. They can live upon milk, fruit or anything like that. I may however inform the House that the whole question of catering, contractors and vending licenses etc., would be placed before the next meeting of the National Railway Users Council and it is proposed to consider the recommendations made by them and try to act upto them.

सरदार ए० एस्० सहगल : क्या इस का नेशनलाइजेशन करने की कोशिश करेंगे ?

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : कुछ नहीं कर सकते ।

The question hour is over. Let me not be misunderstood—I am not speaking on behalf of the Minister. Only the question hour is over.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Why is it that a similar question put long ago—about the *Times of India*—it was put by me 15 days ago—has not till now been answered, nor has a reply been received?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I do not know. I do not think I make any difference in these things, but anyhow, I shall enquire.

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): I will answer that question also.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Not even a letter of acknowledgment has been given.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Sometimes...

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: My question was the first.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Possibly the hon. Member does not know when the lady Member gave the question,—may be earlier.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Especially at this session, when questions have not been allowed, no intimation has been given to the Members.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall certainly look into the matter. I only wanted to introduce a better system, but in

the meanwhile I wanted the present system to continue until a better system came into operation, but in view of the future system that has not come into operation, possibly here and there they stop the present system. Now, I want to say something about the proposed systems just as when cheques are not honoured, on the back of those cheques a number of items are entered, 1, 2, 3, etc., showing the grounds on which they are dishonoured. Similarly, we are proposing that such a procedure may be adopted, and a slip showing the grounds on which the question is not allowed may be attached. We are preparing the items under which the objections can be taken. In the meanwhile, the ancient practice was being followed. We receive some complaints, here and there, from hon. Members that they have not received 'yes' or 'no' to their questions one way or the other—whether they are admitted or rejected. I shall be looking into this. I am sorry that this is brought to my notice at the fag end of the session. Anyhow, I shall see to it.

Shri Gidwani: Sir, many inconvenient questions—questions which may be considered inconvenient—are being converted from 'starred' into 'unstarred.'

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I can assure the hon. Member, personally, that so far as the staff of the Parliament is concerned, have no inconvenience, we have no party bias. Sometimes, hon. Members in their anxiety, would like to bring all questions before the House. But they may relate to matters on which there may be honest differences of opinion as to whether they are to be starred or unstarred. If any particular point is brought to my notice—that in the interests of the House it ought to be taken up as a starred question—I will take it up and then suggest what is to be done.

Shri Gidwani rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: For instance, in the questions that we went through today, there are questions which range from (a) to (h), and their volume is such that one page is occupied by four questions.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: Apart from the instance given by Shrimati Renu Chakravartty about the *Times of India*, there is another instance also where a similar short notice question on floods in Malabar had been given by me and had been rejected. After that, several short notice questions and ordinary questions, as far as floods are concerned, had been allowed in this House. So, there are two instances of this kind. There are other instances also where some questions put by us had not been allowed and questions put by others had been allowed. There are two instances now—one about the *Times of India* and the other about the floods. May we know the reason why this discrimination, if I can say so, is shown as far as questions are concerned?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I can assure the leader of the Communist Party that no discrimination is intended. Sometimes it happens so, and I shall certainly look into the question, but there is no such intention at all. In the order of priority, if one question is admitted, the other questions—according to the tabling of the question—come next. Now that you have brought forward this point, I shall look into both these instances. Sometimes it happens that a particular matter is only a State matter. When the question comes in, the impression is—I myself have had to dispose of such questions—that this is a State matter and so it will be better to be looked into by the State concerned. But a number of questions come in at the same time; when I realise that notwithstanding the fact that they relate to a State matter, if hon. Members are interested, their attention could be drawn to it. That is how one of these questions might have been admitted at a later stage though the earlier ones had been rejected. That is how it happens, and I shall certainly see to it that there is no discrimination. It is never the intention.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: May I point out that it is not only as far as question are concerned, but in other matters also, there is discrimination. Now, two

committees were formed here. One was the Anti-corruption Committee and the other was the Central Advisory Board for the Railways. Whereas on the floor of the House it was said that all parties are taken in the committees, on these two committees—especially the Railway Advisory Board—there was nobody from this side. We do not mind if a declaration was not made on the floor of the House that all parties will be represented, but so far as the questions and this matter are concerned, there is reason for us to believe that even in questions and other things there is a discrimination. I only want to point out that not only as far as questions are concerned but in the case of the committees also, there is discrimination. Another question was put on the floor of this House—it was also about a Committee where it was said that it represented all sections of the House, whereas it did not. So, Sir, as far as these questions and the appointment of these committees are concerned, there is a discrimination—we believe there is. We want to know whether there is any discrimination and, if so, what is the reason for this discrimination.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I can only speak on behalf of Parliament and the Parliament Secretariat with which I am concerned. So far as admissibility of questions is concerned, I have already explained how particular questions which, at the outset, may not appear to be demanding so much serious notice, but which later on, after report and other things, appear to be serious, are, for the latter reason, allowed. So far as committees are concerned I am not aware of any committee appointed by Parliament in which such a thing as referred to by Mr. Gopalan has occurred. If this had been said about the Government, certainly the Government would take note of this. I am not responsible for any committee.

Shri S. S. More: I am not one of those Members who ask frequent questions. But as a matter of fact, when

I submitted two questions, short notice questions, about affairs in Kashmir and the intervention of foreigners there, I was informed that the questions were disallowed. May I know, Sir, the procedure by which we can agitate this matter. Very recently, burning topics, scandals, have been going on. Whispering campaigns are going on abroad. How can we raise these questions on the floor of the House so as to get precise and correct information from Government? When these questions are asked in the interest of Government, they are unfortunately disallowed. How can we raise these important questions urgently on the floor of the House?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Parliament has been sitting since the third August. Now, we are on the 15th September—about one and a half months thereafter. That short notice question was tabled 25 days ago. A short notice question may or may not be accepted. It is open to the Minister to say: "I want more time." The hon. Member had sufficient time to table a 'long notice' question in which case I could certainly have admitted that question. But hon. Members need not depend upon the Ministers' convenience for other questions. They will be answered in due course. But in the case mentioned by Mr. More, I do not think it was pursued.

Now, so far as the practice is concerned, if a question is not allowed, there are a number of ways in which it could be brought to light. Resolutions and other things can be moved relating to that question. I am not able to say what exactly ought to be done. Naturally, if any question is found to be very necessary to be answered, the hon. Member concerned always writes to me or tells me. If it appertains to a matter on which the Minister is not able to gather information, then, on account of that, that question may not be allowed. It is not as if the hon. Member is without a remedy. But at the time of receipt of a particular question, the Minister might have thought

that, in the public interest, it was not necessary to answer that particular question. We cannot force a Minister to accept short notice questions. Hon. Members may know that though I might find no objection in a question put by an hon. Member, the hon. Minister may not like to have it answered for want of time and for various other reasons also. Under the circumstances, there need not be any fear. No apprehension need be entertained. If sufficient opportunities are not given to any hon. Member, he might always come to me; if that hon. Member does not want to come to me, he may write to me. I shall certainly look into this matter.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy: May I invite your attention to a particular matter? The hon. Prime Minister had given his consent to answer a short notice question. I came to you and conveyed the same information to you, and you were pleased to say that you will allow the question. But till now, it has not come up on the floor of the House. May I know why?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I do not know whether he has got a written letter from the hon. Minister. I am unable to say. But it is a very difficult affair sometimes. Hon. Members may feel that when they have a talk with the Minister, the Minister will be able to answer the question. They come away with that impression, and the Minister has another impression. In between, I got into trouble. I will proceed to the next subject—Short Notice Question.

Short Notice Questions and Answers

STOPPAGE OF PUBLICATION OF THREE CALCUTTA DAILIES

I. Shri M. L. Dwivedi: Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether any tribunal has been appointed to deal with the matter arising out of the sudden stoppage of publication of three Calcutta dailies, namely 'Times of India', 'Nav Bharat Times' and 'Satyug' with effect from