

organ of the Chinese Communist Party expressing "surprise and regret" at P. M.'s reported statement, but as the Prime Minister has herself subsequently clarified, her remarks had not been accurately carried by the Press.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It has been the consistent position of the Government of India that the Sino-Indian boundary has support in tradition and custom, as well as in the exercise of administrative jurisdiction, and has, in most parts, the sanction of specific international agreements.

Personnel with knowledge of Local Language

1343. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government need the services of the railway employees, such as Ticket Collectors, Station Masters, Booking Clerks, etc., having knowledge of the local language in the States where that local language is predominantly prevalent; and

(b) if so, whether the Railway Service Commissions keep in view this thing while making recruitment of such personnel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b). Recruitment to posts such as Ticket Collectors, Station Masters, Booking Clerks, etc. is made through Railway Service Commissions on zonal railway basis. Each railway zone, however, traverses two or more States. The Railway Service Commissions advertise vacancies in these categories in the newspapers commonly read in the area concerned to attract local candidates. Therefore, it is the local candidates who get selected in the Railway service in large numbers.

Also, the Railway Service Commissions at Allahabad, Bombay and

Muzaffarpur, which are located in Hindi speaking areas, allow option to candidates to take the written test in Hindi or English.

Holding Non-aligned Conference to defuse Afghan situation

1344. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN:
SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any meeting between Indian leaders and Yugoslavia leaders to hold non-aligned countries conference to defuse the Afghan crisis; and

(b) if so, the outcome of that meeting?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b). In the course of official talks held between the Yugoslav and the Indian Foreign Ministers during the visit of the former to India, a reference was made to the situation in Afghanistan but no concrete proposals were discussed related to the holding of a conference of non-aligned countries.

Railway Workers Lowest Paid

1345. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the railway workers are the lowest paid workers amongst organised sector of industries;

(b) whether workers doing comparable or lesser jobs in other industries get much more than railwaymen; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to stop discontentment growing among railwaymen?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) to (c). Wages of Railway workers, as of other Central Government employees, are fixed from time to time based on the recommendations of the Pay Commissions appointed by the Government taking into account the relevant factors like the duties and responsibilities attached to various categories of posts and recruitment qualifications, the state of finances of the Government etc. Having regard to this basic position comparisons as between the wages of the Railway and other Central Government employees and those outside the Government, including public sector, are not apt. It may, however, be stated that the lowest starting wage of Rs. 185/- recommended by the Third Pay Commission for a whole time Central Government employee, was revised upwards to Rs. 196/p.m. from 1-1-1973.

Robbery in Gomati Express

1346. **SHRI K. LAKKAPPA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gomati Express has been looted by robbers recently;

(b) if so, the extent of loss of life and property of commuters;

(c) whether no armed guard is provided in the trains to save the life and property of commuters;

(d) if so, whether Government will consider attaching armed guards to all the trains on permanent basis; and

(e) what other steps Government propose to take to reduce robberies, thefts, etc. in the running trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes.

(b) There was no loss of life. Property stolen was worth about Rs. 1½ lakhs.

(c) and (d). Armed/unarmed guards are provided by the Government Railway Police functioning under the State Governments in affected trains over vulnerable sections.

(e) Policing being a State subject, the responsibility of ensuring the safety of passengers and their belongings rests with Government Railway Police functioning under the State Governments. The Railways, on their part, maintain close liaison with State Police authorities at all levels and render necessary assistance whenever required. The Railway Protection Force is meant for the protection of Railway property. However, as a further measure about 2,000 Railway Protection Force personnel have been deployed to escort passenger trains to deter criminals and instil confidence among the travelling public. In all 353 trains are under exclusive escort by Railway Protection Force, 314 jointly escorted by Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police and 519 by Government Railway Police exclusively. Vestibuled doors are locked between 2200 hrs. and 0600 hrs. TTEs/Attendants/Conductors have instructions to remain vigilant to prevent entry of unauthorised persons.

12.00 hrs.

MR. SPEAKER: Papers to be laid on the Table. Shri Patnaik. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): Sir, we have given an Adjournment Motion notice about Police firing on onion growers... (*Interruptions*). Are you taking it up? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please, order! Please listen to me. I have only admitted a Calling Attention motion for tomorrow about the onions... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: We have given an Adjournment Motion for that. I want to know whether you will consider it. (*Interruptions*).