

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND SUPPLY (SHRI CHOWDHARY RAM SEWAK): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [*Placed in Library. See No. LT--1672/69*]

(b) and (c). It has been the endeavour of the Government to reduce import of cotton. The quantum of cotton to be imported during 1969-70 has been determined on the basis of estimated requirements and expected availability of indigenous cotton.

Stay in Strike in Ordnance Factory at Tiruchirapalli

3520. SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :
SHRI NAMBIAR :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a complete stay in strike in Ordnance Factory, Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu) ;

(b) if so, whether the employees have gone on strike as a protest against removal of eight employees ; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to have a negotiated settlement ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI L. N. MISHRA) : (a) No, Sir. However, some workers went on tool down strike in the factory for two days from 22.7.69. The workers resumed work on 24.7.69.

(b) Yes, Sir. The workers had gone on strike as a protest against the removal of 8 employees who were convicted by the court on criminal charge.

(c) Does not arise.

12.10 hrs

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported dispute between the staff and the administration of the National Library, Calcutta

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta North East) : Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Education to the following

matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :—

The reported dispute between the staff and the administration of the National Library, Calcutta.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES (DR. V. K. R. V. RAO) : The National Library Employees Association has been agitating and holding demonstrations intermittently since 14th July, 1969 against 4 of the 5 appointments made on 23rd June, 1969 to Class III and Class IV posts. The 5 appointments made were : one Junior Technical Assistant, two Sorters, one Guard, and one Farash. The Librarian, as the competent appointing authority, made these appointments on the unanimous recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee, made at its meeting held on 30th May, 1969.

The 4 appointments objected to were :

(1) Guard, on the ground that he had not been sponsored by the Employment Exchange for the post ;

(2) and (3) Two Sorters, on the ground that although vacancies existed from an earlier date, their appointments were made effective only from 23rd June, 1969, i.e. the date when the orders were issued ; and

(4) One Junior Technical Assistant, on the ground that he was not eligible for consideration due to insufficient "length" of service, late receipt of application, and not being senior-most among the departmental candidates.

On the 22nd July, 1969, the Librarian cancelled the appointment of the Guard subject to further consideration of the case in the light of the objection raised by the Association. Later on that day he also convened a meeting of the Office Council set up under the Joint Consultative Machinery to thrash out the grievances of the Association. Following these discussions, the Librarian revised his order of the 23rd June, 1969 in respect of numbers (2) and (3) above and made their appointments effective from 25th March, 1969. In respect of the fourth person, who was appointed as Junior Technical Assistant, the Librarian, however, did not agree to revise his orders as the person concerned had been unanimously selected by the Departmental Promotion Committee for the post as the

best candidate on merit. Further, appointment to the post was required to be made by direct recruitment and not by promotion on the basis of the length of service in the Library. As regards late receipt of application, it was explained that at the time the notice was issued, the candidate was on leave and immediately on return from leave, he submitted his application.

On the 5th August, 1969, certain posters were put up by the Association in the Library premises in contravention of the orders issued by the Librarian on 22nd December, 1967 prohibiting display of such posters. On the Association refusing to remove the posters, the Librarian had these posters removed, upon which the employees staged a massive demonstration in front of his room and shouted slogans. Apprehending that the demonstration might get violent and cause damage to the public property and injury to the public servants on duty, he sought police assistance. The police arrived in response to this request and stood by. The Librarian asked the police to go back when the employees gave him an assurance that they would stop the demonstration. Accordingly, the police withdrew from the premises of the Library. However, the employees continued their demonstration for about half an hour or so thereafter and again demonstrated in the evening on that day. They also held demonstrations on the 6th and 7th August, 1969, but have since withdrawn the agitation and there have been no demonstrations since the 8th August, 1969.

The Ministry of Education and Youth Services is deputing a senior officer from the Ministry of Labour to enquire into the strained relations among the members of the staff, which is seriously affecting the working of the Library, and to submit his report as early as possible.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE : Sir, in view of the national library which is a key academic and cultural institution of national importance having fallen on evil days which led to the Government having to appoint a reviewing committee which has recently reported to the Government, may I know why the statement of the Minister does not really take note of the fact that it is not only a recent dispute but that the relations between the librarian and the staff have been terribly strained over a length of time and

things proceeded to such an extremity that the librarian went so far as to call in the police and violate the sanctity of a place like the national library, a thing which has never happened before? In view of all this happening, and in view also of the fact that the Reviewing Committee which has recently reported, has asked for a librarian to be appointed who would have the qualifications of an academic as well as technical character (which do not seem to be possessed by the present librarian), may I know, why it is that Government is sending only an officer of the Labour Ministry and not make an investigation to be held at a higher level regarding the deterioration of the personnel relations and why Government is not announcing the appointment of somebody else taking over the direction of the national library which obviously is not in very capable hands at the moment?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : The hon. Member has raised a large number of questions. I am surprised at this, because he has been a Member of the Reviewing Committee. The report on the National Library has been received by the Government only a few days ago. Now, this statement did not make a reference to all the previous disputes and so on. The hon. Member himself has pointed out about the Librarian calling in the police. I pointed out that this particular dispute was for the appointment of four fellows. In the case of three, satisfactory reply has been given and in the case of the fourth there was some difference. And I do not want to go into the details of the demonstration, the posters and so on. On the question as to why a new librarian has not been appointed etc. surely the hon. Member who is a very senior Member of this House knows very well that this report has just now been received by the Government and it is not possible for the Government to take a decision so quickly on such an important report, without a careful examination of its conclusions and recommendations. As to the question, why it is that I have not sent a high judicial officer, there is no doubt that the Reviewing Committee made a suggestion that in view of the strained staff relations in the National Library between the librarian and the staff and particularly in the top levels of the administration of the library, an officer with high judicial

[Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao]

experience should be appointed to go into the whole question. Now, in the meanwhile, came this question of the police coming in there, there being demonstrations and so on. First of all, Government has to take a decision to accept the recommendation. And secondly, you cannot get a judicial officer on the spur of the moment satisfying all these qualifications. And then, he should be ready to go and conduct an enquiry in the matter. In the meanwhile, may be, in my unwisdom, I thought that if I could induce the Chief Labour Commissioner, with the approval of my colleague, to go to Calcutta, spend four or five days and inquire into the matter, and let me know what action should be taken, it will be helpful in this matter.

I think the hon. Member is aware of it.

श्री अब्दुल रानी दार (गुडगांव) : बह
पंजाबी है । उनको निकालना चाहते हैं ।
झगड़ा तो इस बात का है ।

{ شہزی عبدالغنی ڈار (گڑگناویہ) - وہ پنجابی ہیں اس کو
نیکالنا چاہتے ہیں۔ جبکہ اس بات کا ہے۔ }

SHRIMATI ILA PALCHOUDHURI (Krishnagar) : The National Library is one of our most valuable national assets. May I know whether Government have got any information that not merely were there demonstrations by the staff in respect of their various grievances but some bombs were supposed to be planted in the library in order to blow up the place? Have Government got any information about this? Will they investigate this in all depth?

These demonstrations have occurred after a length of time. The employees have been putting forward certain grievances which they have been feeling regarding the canteen and regarding some other things. Has that been consistently looked into? Have the smaller difficulties at least been rectified? If they have not been rectified, they should be rectified as soon as possible.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : Government have no information about the planting or alleged planting of a bomb in the Library. But since the hon. Member has now made a statement in the House, I shall make

inquiries to find out if a bomb was planted or was intended to be planted, if I can get information on that from the Library.

SHRIMATI ILA PALCHOUDHURI : Bombs have been planted in picture-houses in Calcutta.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I am not talking of the picture-houses. I am talking of the National Library.

Regarding the second question, after the Chief Labour Commissioner goes to Calcutta, makes inquiries and comes back, if any grievances of the kind that the hon. Member has mentioned remain unrectified, we shall see that action is taken to remedy the situation.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU (Diamond Harbour) : Because of the Librarian's going back on assurances, the employees took a decision to demonstrate peacefully and in a disciplined manner. In West Bengal you saw recently how the jute strike was conducted in a disciplined manner and there was no question of violence or indiscipline. Further, they had been doing demonstration during the recess and outside the gate and also after office hours. They hung some poster-boards in the office canteen. The hon. Minister has misled the House by saying that posters were put up on the library premises on the walls. No; they were not posters but poster-boards which were hung on the staff canteen which is considered to be staff property for the purpose of use and utilisation. The police was called because the Librarian was planning to do a large-scale suspension and terrorisation of the employees. That was the whole object. This Librarian, Mr. Kalia is a person who was picked up by the UPSC although he did not fulfil all the requisite qualifications, because he was a protected person and a friend of the former Education Secretary, Mr. Prem Kirpal. That was why he was chosen and given that coveted job.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : It should come to Delhi now.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : This matter had been raised on the floor of the

House regarding the appointment of Mr. Kalia. He was a person considered unfit for the job. In spite of that, he was given that job. Could the Education Minister tell us what has happened during his regime? Many precious books have been stolen and lost. We do not know what his responsibility is in that regard. A reviewing committee was constituted in the month of May, 1968 which was asked to submit a report within three months, that is, by August, 1968. It is now one year and three months. Why is it that the report has not been submitted? If the report has since been submitted, what are its findings? What action do Government propose to take on the report and if not, the reasons therefor? Will this report be made public and made available to Members of Parliament.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has already said something about the report.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: I do not want to enter into a controversy with the hon. Member regarding the peaceful or non-peaceful character of the demonstration which was held. It is a matter of interpretation. But it may be of interest to know—I am sure my hon. friend will not approve of it—that one of the posters, according to my information, shows a person.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU: They were not posters but poster-boards.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: Let the hon. Member hear my answer. I was referring to posters. I hope the hon. Member will not approve of this poster, and I am sure he would not approve of it; one of the posters showed a person cutting the throat of another person belonging to a particular language group with a razor and blood dripping on the map of India. I think the Librarian had some reason to object to the display of these posters whether in the canteen or in any other part of the Library. I am sure, knowing the patriotic sentiments of the hon. Member that he will not approve of these posters.

Regarding the report of the Reviewing Committee, I have already said that the report has just been received. Government will examine the report and after they have

examined it they will come to their own conclusion.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU: According to the terms of reference, the report should have been submitted in the month of August, 1968. Will the hon. Minister tell us why the committee sat over it for one year and three months?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: I do not know how I would be in a position to explain why a committee has taken more time to submit its report than it was expected to do. But an hon. Member of this House, and a very distinguished person who belongs to another wing of the same party to which my hon. friend belongs, was a member of that committee and it may be that he may be in a position to give an explanation why so much time was taken in submitting this report.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU: Are Government going to remove this Librarian who is not qualified?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister made a statement. Then, the hon. Member asked a question or clarification. He gave a counter-statement; after the counter-statement, he is still asking questions again. There is no end to it at that rate. He could have asked for any clarification. He need not have asked why the report was not submitted and so on.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU: It is a question affecting hundreds of employees.

MR. SPEAKER: But there should be some reasonable latitude.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU: We are only performing our duty here.

MR. SPEAKER: On his suggestion I had brought this up. But I did not know that he would make such a longer counter-statement.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA (Kaliabor): I do not know why the hon. Minister is so much worried about posters in Calcutta. Calcutta happens to be the city of posters and all types of posters are there and even violent posters are there but

[Shri Bedabrata Barua]

the consequences are not that violent. I do not know whether there were not posters in the canteen before hand.

I would like to know whether there was real provocation for calling in the police. I would also like to know whether there has been any uniform legislation regarding regulation in these matters so far as libraries are concerned, because the universities do have certain regulations regarding the calling in of the police etc. They have a certain academic freedom etc. I would like to know whether a similar thing is there in the library also, and whether the standing instructions relate to the display of posters in the canteen ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I want to assure hon. Members that I was not particularly worried about these posters. The point was that the Librarian issued an order that posters of an undesirable character should not be put up in any part of the library premises. But those posters were put up and they were removed under his orders. Then, the employees demonstrated. Whether the posters were of a nature which would lead to violence or not is something on which I have no special information.

श्री प्रकाशबीर शास्त्री (हापुड़) : पोस्टर के अन्दर क्या है। उसकी भाषा कौसी है, उसके अन्दर क्या लिखा है, यह तो बतलाइये।

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I do not know. I have already given the information that I have. One poster showed a picture of one person—I do not know how they showed from the picture about the language group—belonging to one language group cutting the throat of the person of another language group with a razor and blood dripping on the map of India. I have not seen the poster myself but this is the information that I have got.

Regarding the police being called in, according to my information, the Librarian had to call the police in because they had prevented him from coming out of his room. I do not know the technical meaning of the term 'gherao', but I think it was something like that. I am also informed that the police came in but they did not do anything; I am told they had no instructions

to do anything. They waited there and when the employees said that they would not demonstrate, the police went back.

Regarding the rules for calling in the police and so on, I am still to find out from the hon. Member what those regulations are that exist in the universities under which police could be called or could not be called. To the best of my information, normally the vice-chancellors do not call the police into the campus until they feel that there is danger to life or to property. I presume the same thing must also be applied to the national libraries.

12.30 hrs.

RE : POINT OF PRIVILEGE

श्री मधु लिमये (मुंगेर) अध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरे विशेषाधिकार के प्रश्न का क्या हुआ है। चार दिन हो गये हैं, मैं इन्तजार कर रहा हूँ। वह श्री एस० के० पाटिल और श्री निजलिंगप्पा के बारे में था।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : पाटिल साहब एक अानरे-बल मॅम्बर हैं इस हाउस के। उनको लिखा गया था। उनका जवाब अभी मिला है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि उनका जवाब अच्छी तरह देख लूँ। कहीं ऐसा न हो कि जल्दी में मैं ऐसी बैसे रूलिंग दे दूँ।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : He should have written to you; instead, he has issued a press statement.

श्री मधु लिमये : कल रलिये।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपका भी लम्बा चौड़ा है. उनका भी है...

श्री स० मो० बनर्जी : निचोड़ निकाल लीजिये।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : निचोड़ तो यह है मुझे थोड़ा सा और पूछना पड़ेगा। मैं देख लूँ क्या