

the case of petroleum and a refinery and the petro-chemical industries, we find suddenly, though it is very much in hinterland, a policy was taken not to have this refinery in West Bengal or nearabout Calcutta to get the facilities of the Calcutta port, the Barauni refinery project was sanctioned. Not only that, the North Western Refinery in Mathura has also been sanctioned though it has no facilities of port etc. But, ultimately, on account of the efforts of West Bengal leaders, the Government of India have now agreed to have the Haldia Petro-Chemical complex along with these. But, what was the policy in those years, in that period, immediately after 1960-61 and later on? Assam, the source of crude oil had to suffer for it and they had to strike to have a refinery sanctioned, but in the case of Maharashtra these things are not considered.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member's time is up.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : Please give me a few more minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have already taken 16 minutes.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : So, even the Planning Commission's recommendation, made from time to time they have never considered. The Government of India have never considered as to what will be the position of West Bengal if proper facilities for expansion of the existing industries are not given while the same facilities are given in some other States. They never considered that. Not only this is the case in regard to refineries and petro-chemical complex. Same is the case with regard to cement industry. Dr. B.C. Roy in 1953-54-55-56, in all those years, tried his level best to get at least a cement factory in Purulia, a very backward region. It has got certain limestone. The Government of India did not hear. Ultimately what happened was that when with help of a private firm, Dr. B.C. Roy just made a proposal that if the public sector is not coming forward to have a cement factory at Purulia, the private firm should be allowed; it was said that the

limestone found in that part is not of a superior quality. Dr. Roy said that if it is of inferior quality, certain incentives should be given. It has been increased in the case of the other areas.

Take the case of the Travancore Cement. Take the case of Saurashtra Cement, Pandian Cement, Madras Cement, etc. These freight substitutions or certain concessions in the case of their pricing policy has been announced but in the case of Purulia it was not done.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has taken 17 minutes. He may continue his speech next time.

17.22 hrs.

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION

GRANT OF PENSIONS TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS

MR. CHAIRMAN : We take up the Half-an-hour discussion now. Prof. Samar Guha has to initiate the discussion. Half-an-hour discussion means thirty minutes he has to be as brief as possible in his opening remarks. Members who ask questions may require 10 minutes and the Minister may require 10 minutes.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have got freedom, although a divided freedom, but unfortunately, the freedom-fighters were long left out of their role of honour and their services were not recognised.

Though very belated, the decision of the Government to give honour to them, to give them honorarium, to give pension to them has been hailed not only by the freedom fighters but by the people at large. The freedom-fighters still feel that the decision taken by the Government was half-hearted and they have not recognised all those who have contributed their mite and their best to the freedom of our country.

It is known to the country, it is accepted by all, that Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Azad Hind Foj played a most decisive role in the last phases of our freedom stru

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ggle. It is not only their saga of martyrdom but also their sacrifices and exploits that created the condition inside India after the war that compelled the British Government to quit India. Netaji in his last broadcast from Singapore on the 15th August, 1945, made a prophesy that there will be a i.e. post-war revolution inside India and that "India will be free before long". His prophesy was absolutely correct. When our leaders came out of the jail, and when the INA trials were going on, it is the heroic legends of Netaji that created a stir all over the country, the whole outlook of the people was changed, the mood of the people also reached a stage of explosive rebellion, I should say. The situation was so developing. I do not want to dwell on it very much. I only want to remind you of it because we forget these things. What did Mahatma Gandhi say at that time? He said after seeing the effect of the legends of heroic exploits of Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj:

"The hypnotism of INA cast its spell on us" Then, again, I would remind you of what Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the authoritative historian of the Indian National Congress of those days said. In an article in the *Times of India* of Bombay at that time, he said:—

"For the moment, the INA officers overshadowed the names of the national leaders. It looked as though the INA eclipsed the Indian National Congress and its exploits of war and violence threw into obscurity the victories of non-violence at home."

Not only a mood of rebellion was created among the people of India, but for the first time, the legends of NETAJI and the INA had knocked out the loyalty of the Indian Army to the British Crown. The Indian Army fraternised with the people and the Army and the people together created a situation which was described by Mr. Attlee in the following words; when he was piloting the Indian Independence Bill, when Mr. Churchill asked him 'Why did you agree to quit'?, Mr. Attlee said:

"We were sitting at the top of volcano". That volcano was created by Netaji and his INA legends.

I would like to quote from a secret letter that was sent by Gen. Auchinleck, the C-in-C of the British Government to the Viceroy and also to Mr. Attlee at that time; after having an opinion poll among the Indian officers when the situation was turning bad, regarding the INA and Netaji he sent secret or confidential circular to the Indian officers. In 1939, there were 339 Indian officers in the British Army, but in 1946, this number rose to 7604 Indian officers. It was a startling revelation that out of those 7604 Indian officers, 7224 officers gave their opinion that the INA men were patriots and they should be released forthwith. As soon as this report was received he immediately sent to curiers, one to the Viceroy and the other to Mr. Attlee, saying that 95 per cent of the Indian officers had said that the INA men were patriots and they should be released. In his letter, Gen. Auchinleck had said as follows. I would like to quote him. He said:—

"The INA affairs should have led to chaos in the country at large and probably to mutiny and dissension in the Army culminating if its dissolution."

Then, Lt. Gen. Tuker who was in charge of the Eastern Command said:

"The INA affair was threatening to tumble down the whole edifice of the Indian Army".

I am quoting all this just to remind you of the heroic exploits of the INA and the legends of Netaji. For, we seem to have forgotten the contribution of INA and the contribution of Netaji. Sir, you will be ashamed to know that not a single INA officer has been included in the list of persons to whom *Tamra-patras* would be offered.

I would again remind you that Netaji had infused nationalism in the minds of so many Muslim officers, so many Christian officers and so many Sikh officers and so

many Hindu officers also. They created, as I have already said, a saga of martyrdom and military exploits. Many of them are still alive. I would just name a few of them; their names are as follows: Col. S.A. Malik; he was the first man to raise the banner of Indian freedom at Moivang in Imphal, area. Many of the INA were forced to go to Pakistan. Then, we have Col. R.M. Arshad, then we have Col. Ehsan Qadir, Deputy Leader of the Azad Hind Dal, then Col. Habib-ur-Rehman, Deputy Chief of Staff, then Major Alvi (who is still in India), then Maj. Abid Hassan, who was the lone associate of Netaji during the three months of the perilous journey from Kiel to Singapore then we have Col. Mehboob Ahmed, then Lt. Rizvi then, Co. C. J. Stracy I think he is a Christian there are others whose names also I can mention such as Col. Pritam Singh, Col. Gulzara Singh, Shri Debnath Das, Shri Ananda Mohan Sahaga, Dr. Raju; Lt. Gen. Dr. Kasliwal and so many others are also there. The Government have considered none of them to be fit to be called a freedom fighter and offered *Tamrapatra*. Thousands of them have undergone martyrdom. Many of them were hanged in the Presidency Jail, in the Lahore Jail and in the Delhi jail. But the Government has not given any recognition to their sacrifices. What will happen to their families? Have these freedom fighters not contributed to the attainment of the freedom of the country? In fact, their role was decisive. They dealt the last decisive blow to British Imperialism in India. But in the 25 years of our national freedom, we have ignored these brilliant patriots, revolutionaries, who sacrificed and staked everything of theirs, dedicated everything of theirs, for the cause of national freedom. I want that the Government should recognise them as freedom fighters. They should also be entitled to pension and to national honour by offering *tamrapatra*.

Then we have forgotten the RIN ratings. Out of 90 naval units at that time, 78, in Karachi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Visa-

khapatnam, Rangoon, Singapore, Aden and Andamans, all revolted against the British in the name of Netaji and INA. They raised the flag of freedom. But these naval ratings have not been recognised as freedom fighters.

Recently one of their leaders, Shri B.S. Dutt, has said that the report of the Inquiry Commission that was instituted has not been published. Nobody now remembers them, these freedom fighters whom the British called mutineers. Therefore, I urge that these INA heroes and freedom fighters of the RIN should also be included for according honours and giving benefits by the Government.

Many of us are getting innumerable letters. The Government have accepted that these freedom fighters will be given pension. But how to produce the jail-going certificate? I know in West Bengal, all documents have been destroyed. No documents are available. What will happen? They have said that some MPs or ex-MPs or ex-MLAs who were with them in jail should certify. How many of them are in the fortunate position of having been in jail with these legislators or ex-legislators. So how to get certificates? I want that the Government should devise some means so that they could get these certificates, so that they are recognised as freedom fighters and entitled to honorarium.

I have another request to make. I know 75,000 applications have come. But I want that a certain priority should be accorded to old freedom fighters and also those who are sick and ailing and those who have no employment, who are in a wretched condition. There should be a certain priority in selection and they should quickly get the pension due to them. This has to be done.

Then there is the case of Shri Roque Santana Fernandes in Goa. He languished

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for 9 years in Portuguese jails. His name was not in the list of freedom fighters presented to the Goa Assembly. He was a member of the Assembly. He was suspended from the Assembly for saying so. This matter should also be looked into.

Many of the freedom fighters are not getting their documents. They are trying to. So receipt of pension applications should not be stopped. It should be a continuous process.

As regards the award of *tamra-patra*, in West Bengal they have selected only 90. What will happen about others? Out of the 238 Andamans prisoners, 210 belonged to Bengal. In Bengal, there are freedom fighters who have suffered for more than 10 years. Their number will be more than several thousand.

The number of those who were in jail for 15 to 25 years also exceeds 1,000. What will happen to them? Only 90 have been selected. I think that at least in the case of those who have suffered imprisonment for 15 years, all of them should be given the honour to receive the *Tamra-patra*.

Lastly, I want to mention one thing. A letter has been addressed to the freedom-fighters, saying, "You so and so, have to attend this, go there and receive this" and so on. What type of letter is this? Is it a '*thanedar*' issuing some kind of summons to somebody to appear in a court or something like that? Is it consistent with the honour of the freedom fighters and national dignity of the country? I want the Government to see that the officers who are responsible for issuing this kind of letter to our freedom-fighters should be taken to task.

In conclusion, I should like to say, as I started, that we have achieved freedom and the freedom-fighters should have their place in roll of honour for our national

history and also for posterity to cherish their memory.

SHRI S. C. SAMANTA (Tamluk) : I am thankful to the Government for bringing this pension scheme at least for the freedom-fighters. But the beginning, and the procedure that has been followed is not so good as it should have been. First, the Government declared that those persons who suffered six months' imprisonment may apply. They applied, but who will testify it? The State Government said that the jail and police authorities and the court authorities will do so, but the records were not available. Now, the Government has brought this thing, namely, the MLAs and MPs are to testify and recommend. (*Interruptions*). The real persons who suffered much will not be selected for this pension. Personally, as a humble Congress worker, I had my associations with lakhs of people. In 1942, the national government was established in the district of Midnapore. So, being one of the workers, I had contacts and I had the acquaintance with lakhs of workers. About 50,000 of them have died, and the other 50,000 are living. How can they contact me now? I know some of them surely, but how am I to recommend them? These things should be thought of. What is being done in the case of West Bengal, I do not know. A Committee was formed under the chairmanship of the Minister, Mr. Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee, but Mr. Mukherjee gave a statement that he is not going to do anything about the pensions. So, I would like to know what is being done there, and how the final selection will be made and who will make the selection; whether the officials will do it or any committee or any such body will do it.

Requests are coming to me from so many people. What am I to do? Persons who are selected up to the 15th August

will be given pension, and other cases will be considered. But the anomaly that I have pointed out, namely, the MPs and MLA coming in, is there. How will that be settled? I fix the responsibility on the Government to find out and to correct what the sufferer had written in his application about his incarceration. I referred to the national Government. I have some records from which I can give some details.

श्री मूक जय्य डाय्या (पारी) : सभापति महोदय, जिन लोगों ने जेल के सीखियों में दस दस साल काटे हों, और दस दस साल देस से बाहर रहे हों उन के नाम सरकार के पास न आयें और वे कलेक्टर की मेहरबानी पर जिन्या रहे, यह कहां तक बर्दास्त किया जा सकता है? गोष्ठा के पत्र "नवजीवन" में यह प्रकाशित हुआ है :

"The omission of the name of Mr. Santana Fernandes M. L. A. in the list of freedom fighters by the Government is an unpatriotic act."

मैं सारे नाम नहीं पढ़ना चाहता हूँ। मुझे ऐसे लोगों के नाम मालूम हैं, दस 2 साल जेल में रहे ह। मेरे दोस्त, श्री पुष्पोत्तम काकोडकर, दस साल तक पार्थवीज जल में रहे। मेरे मित्र, श्री स्वामीनाथन, चार दफा जेल में गये। मगर उन के नाम फ्रीडम फाइटर की लिस्ट में नहीं हैं सरकार की ओर से कहा गया है कि जहां तक ताम्रपत्र देने का प्रश्न है, जो फ्रीडम फ़ाइटर्स एम० पी० बन गये हैं, उन को बाद में बुलाया जायेगा। क्या एम० पी० होना कोई बिसम्बलिकिशन है? क्या एम० पी० बनने के कारण ये लोग फ्रीडम फाइटर नहीं रहे हैं? चूकि श्री दयानन्द बान्दोडकर ने ऐसे बहुत से लोगों के नाम लिस्ट में नहीं दिये, जो बरसों तक पार्थवीज जेलों में रहे, इस लिये श्री एन० एम० कार्पेंटर ने लिख दिया कि मैं प्राय के इन्विटेशन को स्वीकार नहीं करता हूँ।

मुझे बताया गया है कि मामनीय सब्बा श्री गोष्ठा गई थी और उन के हाथ में चोट लगी थी,

जिस का निदान अभी तक है। मगर कोई फ्रीडम फाइटर एम० पी० बन जाये, तो उस को ताम्रपत्र देने में क्या एतराज है? मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो स्वतन्त्रता सेनानी जेलों में गये और जिन्होंने कुर्बानियां दीं, अपने देस का सम्मान और शौर्य बढ़ाने के लिये उन का धावर करना चाहिये।

SHRI P. NARASIMHA REDDY (Chittoor) : I would draw the attention of the Minister to all the aspects of the freedom fighters pension scheme so that the shortcomings might be rectified. A total period of six months imprisonment is stipulated. I suggest that part of the sentence which is imposed on the freedom fighter in lieu of fine which he had not paid and which fine had been subsequently recovered from the freedom fighter by confiscating his property should also be computed for the purpose of eligibility of pension.

Secondly, as many hon. Members have said it was arbitrary and illogical to say that six months imprisonment is the minimum period. The only test to be applied is the condition of the freedom fighter. In poor, deserving cases, whatever the period of sentence it should be given. Whatever the period of sentence if he is in difficulties and deserves this financial help it should be given. These are old people, all past 60 years of age and they may not survive along to receive this pension. His dependents must be made eligible to receive this pension.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : In Balia, a government was formed by Chitta Pandey and the governments functioned for quite some time. In Patri the late lamented Nana Patil founded the Patri Sarkar. Shri Sarjoo Pandey was convicted for 42 years, but he was released after 4 years. There are people who took part in the RIN Mutiny and hoisted the tricolour on the Navy ships. I do not find the names of these people in the list. In Balia, only

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10 names have been mentioned. The entire people of Balia revolted against British imperialism. In Ghazipur, only three names are there. In Tamil Nadu, 200 people were detained and were under trial for nearly 2 years. But thanks to the people's movement outside, they were ultimately released. Their names are not found.

Last but not the least come the Members of Parliament. I do not want that they should be given any pension, but men like Shri Sarjoo Pandey and Shri Jarkhand Rao and many others on that side also who suffered for the sake of the country—they were not under the umbrella of either Shrimati Indira Gandhi or Shri S. A. Dange—those who really fought should be given *Tamra Patra*.

When we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of our independence, what was happened to our suggestion to have a statue of Bhagat Singh, who threw a bomb in the Central Assembly? He was the first man to challenge the British imperialists by throwing a bomb and there should a statue either here or outside. I request the Minister to consider these suggestions.

श्रीमती सहोबरा बाई राय (सागर) :- सभापति महोदय, मैं मध्य प्रदेश के सागर जिले से आती हूँ। हमारे सागर जिले में बहुत से लोगों ने सन् 42 में झंडा उठाया था। मैंने भी झंडा उठाया था। मैं जेल में रही, जंगल कानून तोड़ा, मैंने प्राण लगाई, पुल बगैरह तोड़े और 1946 में नोआखाली भी रही हिन्दू मुस्लिम झगड़े में महात्मा जी के साथ। 1955 में गोवा गई और मैंने अपने प्राणों की भी बाजी लगाई। आप देख लें अभी भी मैं लूली हूँ एक हाथ से हमने प्राण पत जी-कहा। पत जी ने कहा कि एम पीज के लिये नहीं है। तो एम पीज के लिये उन के लिये नहीं है जिन्होंने काम नहीं किया, लेकिन जिन्होंने काम किया है उन के लिये तो होना चाहिये। उन को तो यह वात्र पत्र मिलना चाहिये। हमारे सागर जिले में लोग पूछेंगे आप ने अपना बड़ा काम किया, केन्द्र ने क्या किया आप

के साथ? इसलिये मैं कोई एतराज नहीं करता हूँ। लेकिन उस लिस्ट में हमें भी लेना चाहिये।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI K. C. PANT) : Sir, I find that perhaps there is a certain amount of confusion with regard to the two schemes—pension and *Tamra Patras*. These are two different schemes. This half-hour discussion is primarily related to the pension scheme. But *Tamra Patra* scheme has also come up for discussion. If you will permit me, Sir, I will go into that also to the extent necessary to clarify some of the points that have been raised.

18 hrs.

Mr. Guha began by saying that the pension scheme is to do honour to the freedom fighters. The intention of the pension scheme is really not to do honour to them. The intention of the *Tamrapatra* is to honour the freedom fighters, regardless of their income, regardless of the other factors. The pension scheme is to help those who may be in economic difficulties now. This difference has to be appreciated. Members of Parliament, Ministers and Chief Ministers, if they are eligible, will receive *Tamrapatra*. But in this convention which we have organised in Delhi on the 15th of August we have invited a selected number of people from the States, only 1,100 or 1,200 people. The question is whether out of these 1,200 the majority should have been Members of Parliament, Ministers and Chief Ministers or whether it would have been better to give recognition to those who have not received any recognition at all in all these years, who are now living quite lives in obscurity, who feel they have been forgotten after all that has been done by them. We felt that it should be their day, it should be their occasion, and that is why on this occasion, on the 15th when the Prime Minister distributes the *Tamrapatra*, we have asked the States to be carefu

to send names of those who are not in office. I hope the House will agree with this criterion.

But this does not mean that the others will be denied their due. There is no doubt about it that this is their due. Just now Shrimati Sahodrabai Rai spoke with feeling, I have the great regard for her. She is a brave woman. The way in which she functioned during the liberation struggle of Goa and the leadership she displayed is still vivid in my mind. We all have our respect for her. But we are now considering particularly only those who are not in office. Therefore, this has been done. Others also will be receiving *Tamarapatra*.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : You may consider the case of Sardar Karnail Singh.

SHRI K. C. PANT : The case of everyone who is eligible will be considered. Others will be getting *Tamarapatra* in the course of the year when functions would be organised in the States, for which we have laid down a time-table. If you see the calendar of events that we have prepared for the 25th Anniversary of freedom, one of the items there clearly states that on such and such dates *Tamarapatra* would be distributed in the States.

SHRI P. R. SHENOY (Udipi) : In the total period of six months will you include the period of under-trial, detention, externment and internment? Then, will you award *Tamarapatra* for those persons who have lost property or lost jobs?

SHRI K. C. PANT : I have made this scheme very clear. I have explained it to the press and through the press I hope everybody would come to know it. The categories which my hon. friend mentioned are covered. We are including those who were under-trials the period for which under-trials for computing the period of six months. Similarly, we are considering

those who were underground for more than six months, if they can adduce some kind of proof. Similarly, we are including detention over six months.

श्री इत्हाक सम्मती (प्रमरोहा) : जिन्होंने पेशावर में गोली चलाने से इन्कार किया और बम्बई में समन्दरो बगावत की, उन के बारे में क्या क्या है ?

[شری اسحاق سمبلی (امروہہ) : جنہوں نے پشاور میں گولی چلانے سے انکار کیا اور بمبئی میں سمندری بغاوت کی ان کے بارے میں کیا خیال ہے]

श्री कृष्ण चन्द्र पन्त : दोनों शामिल हैं। प्रारंभिक एन० की बात शायद गुहा साहब ने कही थी।

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore) : In their case six months would not apply.

SHRI K. C. PANT : We have to see how it works out. About INA also some people were in jails on the mainland. I will come to I. N. A. presently. There were a number of externment and internment cases in Bengal. We are covering them also. I am not going into details. We are covering broad categories. I am merely saying that we have liberalised the scheme. We have accepted most of the suggestions that have flowed in and those categories which were not covered earlier have now been covered. I have already indicated in this House and outside how we have enlarged the ambit of the scheme.

So far as the *tamra patra* scheme is concerned, this is the broad scheme of distribution of *tamra patras*. On the 15th August, about 1000 to 1200 persons will receive *tamra patras* in Delhi and others in respective states over the year.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN (Madurai) : Would you consider the desirability of awarding *tamra patras* to Members of Parliament in a small function arranged here itself?

SHRI K. C. PANT : It is for you to consider whether that would be desirable. There are both sides to it.

AN HON. MEMBER : Whether the names left out will be covered?

SHRI K. C. PANT : About the names left out of the general list of *tamra patras*, certainly, the whole year is before us and we will include them.

Some people have referred to the method of selection and they have criticised particularly the Goa Government for their selection. I would like to make it clear that we have gone through the State Governments and we have asked the State Governments to prepare the list. We had invited all the parties to help it. We could not go through the parties. We had gone through the State Governments. That is the only agency through which we could have gone. But wherever any Member of Parliament or even a friend outside has brought to our notice that some people have been left out, that some people who should not have been included have come in, we have not been rigid and we have tried to accommodate those individual view also. We have tried to enlarge the list wherever we could. In fact, from the original figure of 1000, we have increased the number to 1200 so that in case anybody came with some deserving names which were left out, we could include them.

This is not an occasion where we want to be rigid. We must know about it. We have tried to the best of our ability to include deserving names. But I cannot say every name has been included. I do not think it is possible to include every name. My hon. friend, Shri Banerjee, rightly said about Balia. What is 10 people? One could think of hundreds of people who are deserving people. Shri Samar Guha said how can there be 90 people from Bengal. If you want to have 1000 or 1200 people, you cannot send 500 people from U. P. or 500 people from Bengal. (*Interruption*). There were some provinces where in the freedom struggle a very large number of person

participated. Their stories of heroism and sacrifices are a part of history now. Today, we remember them with gratitude, with deep respect, with all possible consideration for all that they have done. Today, our freedom is on account of what they have done.

In choosing a certain number, we have to select people from each State and we have to give a sense of participation to all the States. In fact, I have tried to select people from NEFA, from Nagaland, if necessary by relaxing the conditions that were applied to the rest of the country so that a few persons could come from that area, so that the whole country will have a sense of participation in *tamra patra* distribution. It is a symbolic occasion ; it is a great occasion. It is symbolic of our entire freedom struggle and of all those who participated in it. It is there that we are doing honour to them. So much for *Tamrapatras*.

The pension scheme is not covered by this at all. The pension scheme is a different scheme. Persons have applied to the State Governments, persons have applied to the Centre ; we are processing their applications independently. It has nothing to do with *Tamrapatras*. In those cases there is no limit. There is no question of the State Government selecting somebody or not selecting somebody. They have no choice in the matter. All those who are eligible will get pension. It is only a question of being eligible and the eligibility has been defined very carefully. There is no question of District Magistrate or anybody else being able to dictate to us who gets pension or who does not get the pension.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : What about statue of Bhagat Singh?

SHRI K. C. PANT : That does not arise out of this at all.

AN HON. MEMBER : No time limit here.

SHRI K. C. PANT : There is no time limit. Those who apply before 15th August will get their pension from 15th August. If their applications are processed later and sanctions are given later, then they will get retrospectively from 15th August. So, it is not meant that applications will not be entertained if they came after 15th August.

AN HON. MEMBER : Is the list open for correction?

SHRI K. C. PANT : Yes ; that is what I am saying.

With regard to INA personnel, the contribution of the INA personnel, the history of the INA, the place of Netaji in our freedom struggle—these are certainly well known and certainly all of us in this House, wherever we may sit, we are deeply aware of the contributions of these brave men to our freedom struggle and of the leadership and inspiration which Netaji provided to it.

The main point which my hon. friend, Mr. Samar Guha, made was that Government should recognise them as freedom fighters. As a matter of fact, Government have recognised them as freedom fighters—and not only now, but I find that in the year 1961, 23 May, 1961, a letter was issued in which it was stated:

“...it has been decided that participation in the activities of the INA movement has been held by the Government of India to be at par with participation in the national movement of India. In view of this ex-INA personnel are treated as freedom fighters so far as the Government of India is concerned and are thus eligible for relief in the matter of employment to public service, financial assistance, educational concessions to their children, etc., as admissible to political

sufferers. The State Governments were also requested that ex-INA personnel in the States may be treated at par with other freedom fighters for grant of service, etc., concessions sanctioned by the State Government for freedom fighters in their areas.”

As regards pension, 'it is stipulated that ex-INA personnel will also be eligible provided they fulfilled the other conditions. So, there is no question of not treating them as freedom fighters.

Now comes the question of certificates to which many hon. members referred. When this matter was first discussed in this House. .

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : As freedom fighters, are they getting pension also? The difficulty is that they do not come under the rule of six-months' jail....

SHRI K.C. PANT : They would have to be eligible.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: You have to change the rule if you want to include the INA personnel as freedom fighters. Otherwise, how is it possible for them to get the benefit?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The scheme refers to imprisonment in mainland jails. The INA personnel were imprisoned in Singapore and other places.

SHRI K.C. PANT : I will tell you frankly our difficulty. While we have not yet closed the door on consideration of those who were imprisoned outside—because I realise that that is the obvious difficulty in regard to INA people our difficulty has been that it is very difficult to get any records of any kind from them.

It is almost impossible. All the records have been destroyed.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : It is not impossible. Huge files are there of the INA in the Defence Ministry.

SHRI K. C. PANT : I can assure my hon. friend that we have not closed the door. I am not saying that we will not consider whatever suggestions he makes. But, as at present, this is the difficulty which is being encountered. We have discussed this matter and, therefore, we said that those whose evidence we can get here, we will certainly get it. I will consider your suggestions. If you can give concrete suggestions which will enable us to verify that in fact all these people are INA men, I can consider them.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : At least one thing you can do. A few thousands of them died in the field. Some of them were hanged. They may be included in the list of martyrs. It may be made clear.

SHRI K. C. PANT : There again, it is quite clear if it can be established that they died fighting against the British. At that stage almost all kinds of people were fighting in the war. Many fought for the British. Many fought against the British. The mere fact of death in that area is not enough. (*Interruptions*) So, they will have to establish that that they died fighting the British. In that case, we are certainly prepared to consider them, consider their widows or the next of kin as provided for to others in this scheme.

Now, regarding certificates, when I first announced the scheme in the House, at that time, we said we would require jail records. Several hon. friends and freedom fighters later on represented to us that it will not be easy to get jail records. So, we considered this matter. I consulted various friends and we decided that in view of this fact, we will liberalise this in two directions (1) We will accept the State

Government's certificate without insisting on jail certificates. If the State Government can satisfy themselves that a certain person is a freedom fighter, we will not have a second check, we will accept that as final. Then, there were difficulties in the State Government getting certain records which were destroyed in the meantime. So, we said that if any MLA or MP who has been in jail with the person concerned, certifies, his certificate also we shall accept. Then, the difficulty arose that some hon. friends said that many amongst the present MPs and MLAs were not in jail. Therefore, this is not a satisfactory arrangement. So, we included ex-MLAs and MPs so that the older people who were in jail could certify.

I would like to ask my hon. friend if we could have done more. We have tried in every way possible way consistent with the need for some verification, to make this as easy for the Freedom fighters as possible. The other point is regarding priority being given to old and ailing persons. I would request him to consider the problem in a realistic way there are 75,000 applications. These are being processed on the basis of first come, first processed. If we do it on the basis of age or on the basis of poverty, if we sift the whole lot, we would only be delaying the whole matter. 75,000 applications will take a long time to sift. After all, what is the criterion of poverty? Somebody gets Rs. 100; somebody else gets Rs. 150; there are persons whose annual income is less than Rs. 5,000. So, it is all a matter of relativity. It is a matter of degree. If we go about first with the task of establishing the relative poverty among the applicants, would it be worthwhile? It will take very long to do that and in the meantime we could process many cases.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : There are persons of 70 years age, 80 years age etc.

They will die. My request is for those old members...

SHRI K. C. PANT : I quite understand his sentiment I am not at all brushing it aside. I am explaining to him the practical aspects. Do we draw a line at 70 or 75 or 80? What is the criteria of old age? Can we say those who are above 75 should be granted these pensions? There may be persons who are younger who have many more liabilities. Younger people also die sometimes. So, it is a question of whether it is worthwhile to change this health system of whoever has applied first will be considered first. This is all that I would like to submit to my hon. friend. (*Interruption.*) Those involved in the R.I.N. mutiny will be eligible. That is what I said about the Garhwal mutiny also.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : These 1200 people, according to the Minister, who are to get *Tamarapatra* Certificates should also be given the passes for 3 months or 2 months to go round and see the country. They cannot travel because of money. We have got passes without sacrificing anything. They should be given a pass to see the country for which they sacrificed.

SHRI K. C. PANT : Shri Guha mentioned some letter having been issued which was not well-worded, to the *Tamarapatra* recipients. I don't know if any such letter was issued. I take his word for it. I will issue a letter to all the *Tamarapatra* recipients myself which they will receive on their arrival, so that there is no such feeling at all.

Shri Samanta for whom I have very deep regard, mentioned some points. He is a symbol of many things that happened during the freedom struggle. He is a symbol for all of us and we draw inspiration from him, by his presence in the

House. He referred to the selection of the people who will receive pension. I explained to him nobody is going to select, they are free to apply. There is no question of selection there; if they are eligible, they will get their pension. He referred to Committee under Shri Ajoy Mukherjee. That is for the *Tamarapatra* recipients for the function on the 15th of August. It has nothing to do with the pension or with the other *Tamarapatra* recipients. That is for a limited purpose. I may tell him that of the applications that we have received, which we have processed, there are very few which we have rejected... We have been accepting most of them. We are accepting the affidavits; we are accepting the certificates; so the scope for rejection is very very limited.

SHRI BIREN DUTTA (Tripura West) : Why were the jail documents required to be produced by the applicants in the case of Tripura?

SHRI K. C. PANT : As I said, we first began with that, saying such certificates should be produced. Later on, we liberalised this thing. Originally the idea was only to accept the jail certificates.

SHRI S. C. SAMANTA : About affidavits, in the beginning you told them to give affidavits, to know how much income he has got, how many dependents he has got. Now, if an M.P. or M.L.A. recommends now, will he have to make the affidavit also? If so, no cash should be involved in it.

SHRI K. C. PANT : These are two different matters. The M.P. who had been in jail with somebody can certify that he was in jail with him. But no MP can certify without making a very thorough enquiry what income he has got, how many children he has got and such other details. That he cannot possibly certify unless he happens to be a very close family friend

[SHRI K. C. PANT]

or confident. Therefore, only the affidavit can satisfy the criterion of income etc. But the other thing can certainly be forwarded by the person who was in jail with him. He asked whether we will accept his testimonial. Certainly we will accept his testimonial if he knows that he has suffered like this. Even in regard to jail records, we have written to the States asking them to extend all possible help and to write to the district authorities, to the district magistrates, who should take it their responsibility to see that anybody who comes looking for jail records, it assisted in getting hold of such jail records.

So far as Shri P Narasimha Reddy's questions are concerned, I have already covered all of them except about the dependents. As regards the dependents, I can tell him that the dependents are also covered by the scheme. In addition to the original list of dependents, we have now brought in the fathers and the widowers

of the freedom-fighters also, because we got some representations; so, fathers and widowers are also now covered along with the others, those who are eligible, these dependents will also get according to the scheme. Suppose a freedom-fighter dies, then his children or those who are eligible under the scheme can apply, because we shall not know otherwise, they can apply again.

I think I have covered all the points that have been raised. I would only request the House to consider the spirit in which we are moving in the matter and to encourage us, because I think we deserve some encouragement, in regard to the attitude that we have adopted with respect to freedom-fighters.

18.26 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, August 14, 1972/ Sravana 23, 1894 (Saka).