

litterateur. He wrote several novels, stories and dramas, and also edited and published three Kannada weeklies.

Shri Shetty passed away at Mangalore on 15 August, 1987 at the age of 87 years.

We deeply mourn the loss of these friends, and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

The Members stood in silence for a short while.

[*English*]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Sir, if you look at the List of Business that has been circulated today, you will find that there are two bills for introduction, nine for consideration, two discussions under rule 193 and Private Members' Bills. I do not know how, physically, such an agenda is going to be accommodated. I do not know what the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are a professor of physics; you can do anything. With your cooperation and the cooperation of all other Members, we shall try..... (*Interruptions*)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: We can live in time, but not in space, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will see. After the Question Hour, we will see.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS

(S. BUTA SINGH): It only shows how much of the time of the House has been wasted on frivolous issues.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now Question 480.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Applications for Pension to Freedom Fighters from Tamil Nadu

*480. SHRI R. JEEVARATHINAM: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications received for grant of freedom fighters' pension duly recommended by Government of Tamil Nadu;

(b) out of which how many applications have been considered so far; and

(c) the number of applications still pending and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTA MANI PANIGRAHI): (a) to (c). No separate figures have been maintained about the number of applications recommended/not recommended by the Government of Tamil Nadu. However, 11925 applications had been received within the prescribed time limit from the State of Tamil Nadu. This includes delayed applications in which delay has been condoned. Pension has been sanctioned in 3850 cases upto 31.7.987, 2 cases are pending for want of verification report/clarification from the Government of Tamil Nadu and the remaining cases have not been found eligible for grant of pension under the provisions of

Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme.

[*Translation*]

*SHRI R. JEEVARATHINAM: Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Tamil Nadu Govt. has sent 11,925 applications. Out of these, 2850 applications have been disposed of favourably. 8000 applications are still pending. In 1980, a relaxation in the income-ceiling for eligibility for pension was announced. Many of the freedom fighters are not aware of this relaxation. Due publicity was not given in newspapers. Adequate publicity regarding this relaxation of the income-ceiling must be given freshly. A committee at the State Level must be constituted to review all the applications. Even after 40 years of independence, freedom fighters are yet to receive concessions due to them. Nobody knows whether they will be alive for 10 more years or not. Hon. Minister may review all the applications expeditiously.

[*English*]

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: There are many good suggestions that the hon. member has put before us. But I would like to place the facts before the House. It is not that all the 8000 applications are pending before the government. The total number of applications that were received was 11,925 by the Tamilnadu State Government. Out of them, we have sanctioned 3,850 on 31st July, 1987. Many hon. Members urged to clear the pending applications immediately. So a clearance drive was taken up in 1986. Because of want of evidence of sufferings and because they did not fulfill the prescribed eligibility conditions, these applications were rejected during the clearance drive. Therefore they are not pending with us. Then the Non-official Advisory Committee recommended and many eminent free-

dom fighters and their associations appealed to the Prime Minister for making provisions for appeal and review of the rejected cases in the drive. The government accepted that if genuine cases had been rejected without any detailed consideration then the scope of appeal should be there for review of such cases. So appeals were coming. I had replied that in case of Tamil Nadu only two cases were pending for want of verification. We have asked the Tamilnadu Government to have the verification for that and we will sanction them. Therefore, it is not correct to say that all the 8000 cases are pending.

Regarding raising of income ceiling, it has been sufficiently publicised. Even today if my hon. friend brings any instance to our notice. I will look into it; he has already brought before me some instances and we have sanctioned them. If any genuine cases come to our notice which were rejected because of income ceiling limit we will look into them. But that ceiling limit we have also removed. Therefore, they can again apply as they had applied in 1972 and in 1980. We can again consider them because most liberal considerations are being made so far as genuine freedom fighters are concerned

[*Translation*]

*SHRI R. JEEVARATHINAM: Sir, there are no sound reasons for rejecting 8000 applications. There are many freedom fighters who had undergone imprisonment for 1 or 2 months. Hon. Minister may constitute a committee, immediately call for necessary reports, review all the applications and come to a decision expeditiously.

Besides, wards of many freedom fighters remain unemployed. Hon. Minister may issue directives to employ their wards in public sector companies.

[English]

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: I hope I had clearly told my hon. friend when he met me that the Non-Official Advisory Committee is for our freedom fighters and there are persons like Shri Uma Shanker Dixit Shri Range and others. The guideline was fixed that a minimum imprisonment period should be six months and not three months. Again when the representations came from many women freedom fighters and even from SC & ST, we liberalised it; we said that so far as SC & ST and women freedom fighters were concerned, we could reduce it to only 3 months. But six months is the minimum suffering period.

The question of another committee being set up does not arise because already we are reviewing any application which is coming to us. The Government itself is reviewing. Therefore, there is no question of having another committee. We are referring them back to the State Government to seek their recommendations and we are most liberal in sanctioning. During the last eight to nine months we have sanctioned about 5,000 cases which have come to us, in appeal or review or because of delayed applications.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: The hon. Minister knows that my district of Medinipur is famous for freedom fighters. During the freedom struggle thousands and thousands have been jailed, several dozens hanged and many have been whipped and many of them were killed in police firings. There are a large number of cases of freedom fighters whose cases are still pending, with him. The Government of West Bengal had set up an Advisory Committee led by an eminent freedom fighter, Comrade Ganesh Ghosh. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Has he heard his name?

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: He knows. He knows very well.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: This is related to Tamil Nadu and those who have applied from there.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: I know, you are interested in Tamil Nadu.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is about applications from Tamil Nadu. It is a very specific question.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: This is about freedom fighters who have to get pension. Would you like to look into this matter, and especially about Medinipur district?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: If you allow me I will answer it. There is no difficulty.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I cannot enlarge the scope. There will be other questions.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: With you permission, I can answer Mr. Choubey. There are many cases pending from Medinipur and other places, and recently some of the cases have been sanctioned. Because there was some difficulty we are also suggesting that there should be another small committee of, eminent freedom fighters, two or three people, including Shri Uma Shankar Dikshit for considering W.B. cases. I hope that it will come very soon before the Prime Minister or the Cabinet. Once we have this small three-member committee we will call for all the information and if they recommend, because they know the cases also, we will sanction, as we have done in the case of other cases. Recently, the Prime Minister has sanctioned to form a committee for considering the cases of freedom fighters from sindh. This special committee will

assess us in considering the cases of about 100 freedom fighters from Sindh area.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Manoj Pandey. (*Interruptions*)

AN HON. MEMBER: He is Mr. Madan Pandey.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I thought you wanted to put a supplementary. You take your seat. I am asking Mr. Kolandaivelu. I will come to your question later.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: He is a freedom fighter in the party.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: I took part in the freedom struggle in Tamil Nadu.

The freedom fighters have sacrificed their lives and they have dedicated their lives to the country. Therefore, we have to take the freedom fighters into confidence, first of all. And I want to put one particular question to the hon. Minister. Whenever there is an application from a freedom fighter it is a genuine application. Then, why have 8000 applications been rejected and disposed of as if they were not eligible for the pension?

Secondly, we must take an on the spot decision with regard to the freedom fighters. Will the Government come forward to take on the spot decisions because in any part of the country, in one part or the other, they might have taken part in the freedom struggle. Why do you reject the applications? After all at the time of retirement they are getting some pension from the Government; that too because of the mercy of the hon. Prime Minister they are getting this pension. I congratulate and appreciate the Prime Minister for having celebrated the Fortieth Independence Day and the freedom fighters have also been given a place on the Independence Day.

Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government, particularly the Ministers, can use the discretionary power and take on the spot decision in order to dispose off these applications.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Sir, as I have said earlier, the sacrifices of our freedom fighters cannot be measured in terms of money or pension that we are giving. We always respect them and they are held in high esteem. It is because of our late Prime Minister Indiraji, who in 1972 decided that the freedom fighters be given pension because of their sufferings and the sufferings of their families. Therefore, this Scheme was introduced in 1972. Certain guidelines have been fixed by the Non-Official Advisory Body and they advise the Government so far as the policy decisions are concerned. They have decided the policy. There are five or six guidelines and these are sent to all the freedom fighters. If any one of them conforms to the guidelines, then there is no question of going to anywhere, simple it will come to us and we are sanctioning those applications. Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi has also evinced great interest in coming to the help and assistance of our freedom fighters.

So far, we have till today sanctioned 1,42,277 cases and during the last eight months, we have sanctioned about five thousand cases. Therefore, on the spot decision is not possible, because the applications have to be scrutinised and processed.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: What guidelines. They are freedom fighters and they are showing their imprisonment certificate. On the basis of that, you can dispose of their cases. Why do you take three or six months, by that time they might be dead.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRICHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: If the suggestion of the hon. Members is that we shall reduce the suffering period from six months to three months, as we have done in the case of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women freedom fighters and if they want that scheme to be extended generally to all freedom fighters, then we have to submit it before the Non-Official Advisory Body. We shall seek their advice and take a decision. We want to honour them, and we want to help them. That is what we are doing. We are doing all our best. We are spending about sixty crores of rupees and the way the amounts are sanctioned, it may increase further. We are doing all our best.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY: I want to know from the hon. Minister, when he was not the Minister, he had recommended that such and such a person is entitled for pension. Now, such cases are rejected. Whether the Home Ministry will attach sanctity to the recommendation of the Minister when he was not the Minister. This is my first question. My another question is about a matter of policy. Genuine freedom fighters, who did not opt initially for the Central pension and after ten years if they opt for it, whether they will be entitled to get the pension from the beginning or not.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: It has been made very clear that in the cases of those who first did not opt for central pension and later on opted for central pension, we are very liberal in conceding their cases and we are sanctioning them, if supportive evidence is there.

In this Fortieth Anniversary year of Independence, in the case of many eminent freedom fighters, who did not send any formal application, we are referring the matter to our hon. Prime Minister and we are perhaps going to sanction many of such cases,

because we did not want them to apply formally. (*Interruptions*)

Regarding the question which Mr. Mohanty has referred to, there are cases which some of the hon. Members also recommend. We take them and we consider them. Supposing, there is any difficulty in their reports or even in their suffering certificates we are seeing that as much as possible that kind of difficulty does not exist. We shall be very liberal in such cases.

(*Interruptions*)**

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please take your seats. Nothing will go on record.

[*Translation*]

Moscow Meet on Import and Export

*481. **SHRI MADAN PANDEY:** Will the Ministry of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any working group is going to Moscow to participate in a meeting to be held there in connection with import and export;

(b) if so, when the meeting is to be held; and

(c) the commodities whose import and export possibilities are to be discussed at the meeting?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSI): A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

The next meeting of the Working Group

** Not recorded.