

Question. In this very House, during the days of Provisional Parliament, in 1950, Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai gave a promise regarding Calicut airport. It is 35 long years now. In 1980, in this very House, they said that the construction of this airport for which we have been agitating for long would commence. It did commence and it was to be completed in 1982 and open for traffic. But we are in the year of grace of 1985 and still I find that there is hardly any work going on there. This is an area of the highest traffic density. Most of the passengers originating in Cochin or Mangalore or Coimbatore come from this airport because of the Gulf traffic. May I, therefore, know from the Prime Minister what exactly are the difficulties and when it would be finally commissioned ?

[*Translation*]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, previously, the proposed airport was intended only to receive avro-services but later on it was decided that Boeing services should also be operated from this airport and now the work is being done in two phases. The work which is going on in phase one will be completed by June-July and thereafter by December, '87 it will started.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : What exactly are the difficulties ?

[*Translation*]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT : The area is rocky and filling-work is going on.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : That has been filled up. I request the hon. Minister to visit the place.

MR. SPEAKER : After doing away with the difficulty, they are processing it.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Everybody knows that the promise of Calicut airport goes back to 1950.

MR. SPEAKER : That has already been answered.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Now the work is moving in a very slow pace. I want

to know from the hon. Minister whether Vayudoot services can be made from Madras and Mangalore to Calicut. What we are asking for is only a small air strip for the people of Kerala. It is only a temporary arrangement.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT : No such proposal is under consideration.

[*English*]

Dr. K.G. ADIYODI : There was an assurance that the Calicut airport would be ready by 1985, but the assurance was shifted to 1987. But now the work has been stopped due to paucity of funds. Will the Government take urgent action in this regard ?

[*Translation*]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT : I assure the hon. Member that there is no paucity of funds. Rs. 39.20 lakhs were spent in 1982-83, Rs. 137.50 lakhs were spent in 1983-84 and Rs. 1 crore are likely to be spent in 1984-85. This has been included in the Seventh Plan. We are providing all the required funds. There will not be any delay even for a single day due to paucity of funds.

[*English*]

Uniformity in retirement age of State Government and Central Government Employees

*103. PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to bring uniformity in the retirement age of the State Government and the Central Government employees; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND CULTURE (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) : (a) and (b). No such proposal is under consideration of the Government. As 'State Public Services' are included in the List

II—State List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, the conditions of service, including age of retirement, of State Government employees are the concern of the respective State Governments.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : As the hon. Minister has pointed out, it is true that the question of the retirement age of State Government employees is the concern of the State Governments. Some State Governments retire their employees at 55, some others at 56 and the Central Government at 58 years of age. In some states, the State Government reduced the retirement age of their employees to 55 as in Andhra Pradesh and again increased it to 58. This sort of uncertainty regarding the retirement age is causing great concern and anxiety for the Government employees.

When the civil servants are doing the same type of work in all the States, there is no justification for some State Governments to retire their employees at 55 years of age and for some others to retire at 58.

In view of this situation, it is advisable to have a national policy regarding retirement age of Government employees. I would like to know the reaction of the Government in this regard.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : At the moment, the retirement age of Government employees in the State Governments of Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala and Nagaland is 55 years. In Sikkim, it is 60 years. The rest of the States retire their employees at 58 years of age. The suggestion given by the hon. Member can best be examined. It is a suggestion for action which can be examined.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Will you agree with my advice ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : Yes.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Thank You.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : We can give it to the Sarkaria Commission for examination.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : For the last 37 years of independence, our longevity of life

has increased. Due to medical care and other facilities, our health also has improved. Again, the age of marriage used to be 18 years at the time of independence, but now hardly any one marries at that age and people marry after the age of 25 years or even more. Therefore, at the age of 58, the education of the children of the government employees is not complete, and naturally they are not quite prepared or ready for retirement from service at that age. I would like to know whether Government is prepared to examine this aspect and extend the age of retirement from 58 years to 60 or even more.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : The hon. Member is right. It was on the basis of the question of longevity and all that, the previous Pay Commissions had raised the age of retirement from 55 to 58. Now the Fourth Pay Commission is looking into it. It can be examined.

SHRI ANANDA GAJAPATI RAJU : Some time back, the hon. Prime Minister referred to the Sarkaria Commission. That Commission was appointed two years back and still it has not come up even with an interim report. So, if this issue of retirement age is given to the Sarkaria Commission, then I do not think we will be able to see any report in the next few years. That is one thing.

The second thing is this. In Andhra Pradesh we reduced the retirement age from 58 to 55 with a view to providing employment to younger people, to see that certain dynamic element was brought into administration. But still this issue was hanging fire for two years and it was not decided ultimately. What I would request the hon. Minister is this. If he puts the issue regarding retirement age in the Ninth Schedule, perhaps the State Government can bear more responsibilities and do their duties more effectively. Will the hon. Minister consider this ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : 'Conditions of service, also include age of retirement. As I have said earlier, the State civil services are the exclusive purview of State Governments where the Centre does not interfere at all. I do not know why for two years it was hanging fire in Andhra Pradesh and

they could not decide. For that, the Central Government cannot be held responsible. But the other suggestion can be examined.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Vyas. Do you want to propagate the cause of the elders ?

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, unemployment is the most acute problem of the country and many States are raising the retirement age from 55 years to 58 years and thereby they are making it all the more acute.

Secondly, persons below the age of 55 years have more vigour than the persons above 55 years of age and the Prime Minister wants efficient and clean administration. The Government of India has fixed retirement age at 58 years and many States have also raised retirement age to 58 years. So, with a view to involve youth in the administration I want to know whether Government will reduce the retirement age to 55 years so that the work is done with great vigour.

I would like to mention one more point. The civil servants are burdend with more responsibilities in the last years of their service, i.e., in 3 years between 55 and 58. And with a view to meet those responsibilities they pay most of their attention in accumulation of wealth. So it is quite necessary that retirement age should be fixed at 55 years. I want to know whether you propose to take steps in this respect ?

[*English*]

RROF. N.G. RANGA : I am still as active and as effective as my hon. friend and various other younger people here.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : It is very gratifying to note that the hon. Member is championing the cause of the youth in the services. But, as I said, the Fourth Pay Commission is looking into this aspect whether as far as the age of retirement is concerned, any change is necessary. Since there are divergent views among the hon. Members—one hon. Member has said that it should be revised while another hon. Member said that it should be increased—I think it is

better that we await the recommendations of the Fourth Pay Commission.

[*Translation*]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : I would only like to add that we want to ensure efficient and quick disposal of work. We will see that the efficiency of elders and vigour of the youth are combined in carrying out the work.

[*English*]

SHRI HAROOBHAI METHA : I support my friend. As we see on the one hand dead wood is sticking to the chair in the services and on the other, many young people are knocking at the doors for employment, there is a good case for the reduction of the age of retirement. My question is : will the Government look into the matter that there is a lot of divergence in the matter of conditions of service regarding pension and gratuity in the States and in the Centre and whether any attempt is being made to bring about uniformity in the matter of retirement benefits which can very well be done in consultation with the States.

MR. SPEAKER : I think the real solution lies in creating more avenues of employment—not alone in services. How far can you do that ?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : It is a suggestion which he will examine.

MR. SPEAKER : Next question—Mr. Piyush Tirki.... Not here.

Next question—Mr. Saifuddin Chowdhury.

Scandinavian Airlines System on Calcutta-Copenhagen Route

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*105 SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY :
SHRI AMAL DATTA :

Will be Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have refused to allow the Scandinavian Airlines System