

12 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MAT-
TERS OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE**

- (i) Reported death of a number of persons in Delhi for want of shelter during the present cold wave.

Shrimati Lakshmikanthamma (Khammam): I call the attention of the Minister of Works and Housing to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported death of a number of persons in Delhi for want of shelter during the present cold wave."

The Minister of Works and Housing (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): In February 1964, a question was asked in the Lok Sabha regarding deaths of shelterless people who died as a result of exposure to cold in the capital during December 1963 and January 1964. While replying to this Question, I gave an assurance that I would discuss the matter with the representatives of the Delhi Municipal Corporation, the New Delhi Municipal Committee, the Delhi Administration, and the Bharat Sewak Samaj and see what could be done in the matter.

After having a discussion with the representatives of the above bodies, I appointed a Committee to go into the whole question. The Committee recommended that night shelters should be provided for 5000 persons and that provision for larger numbers may be made later if it was found that this was necessary.

In December 1963, the total number of shelters provided by the Delhi Municipal Corporation and the Bharat Sewak Samaj was 17, with accommodation for about 2000 persons. Since then 11 more shelters have been provided by the Delhi Municipal Corporation which can accommodate another 2657 persons. Three more

shelters capable of accommodating 860 persons will be provided in the next few days. Thus accommodation will now be available for 5517 persons.

About 10 days ago, the Delhi Municipal Corporation carried out a survey of persons sleeping in the open. It was found that about 4100 persons were sleeping on pavements etc. Another 1100 were in the night shelters. Thus, the total number of persons without shelter was about 5200. Arrangements to provide accommodation for this number have already been made.

The Delhi Municipal Corporation has reported that on the night between the 13th and 14th December 1964, the number of persons who made use of the night shelters was about 1500 only. Thus a substantial portion of the available accommodation remained unutilised. According to the Corporation, this has been the position even on other days.

Accompanied by the Deputy Mayor, I personally visited some of the shelters on the night of the 14th December. I found that even the centrally located shelters near about the Town Hall were not being fully utilised. The Corporation authorities told me that while the accommodation arrangements were sufficient there was a shortage of blankets. They requested for a grant of Rs. one lakh for the purchase of 5000 blankets. This has been sanctioned. The Prime Minister has also been pleased to give a grant of Rs. 10,000 for the purchase of 500 blankets.

It would thus be observed that Government have taken all possible steps to relieve the distress of the shelterless persons in the Capital.

Shrimati Lakshmikanthamma: May I know whether the survey parties have persuaded these pavement dwellers that they should go to the night shelters or otherwise they may die of cold and may I also know whether

[Shrimati Lakshmikanthamma]

these night shelters are in the centrally located places or they are in different parts away from their working places? Has the survey party also surveyed who the pavement dwellers are, whether they are beggars or casual labourers, and is it because they cannot go such a long distance that they have not been able to go to these night shelters?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As I have said in my statement, some of these night shelters are situated within the close vicinity of the Town Hall, and there is also accommodation available inside it. The shelters are there. Provision has also been made for durrees and blankets. And if the people do not go there, in fact nobody can force them.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam (Banda): One of the reasons for the lack of proper attendance at these shelters by the pavement dwellers is that they do not know where the shelters are. Some organisation should be set up to persuade these people to go to the shelters to sleep there.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I do not subscribe to the view point expressed by the hon. lady Member. As far as I have been able to ascertain both from the Bharat Sewak Samaj and the Corporation, they have made all possible arrangements and they give every possible facility in these shelters. And if people will not go there, neither the Bharat Sewak Samaj.....

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): What about the other part of the hon. Member's question? Were they informed about it?

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: How do they know about them?

Mr. Speaker: The question is whether really the Minister is satisfied that those pavement dwellers know that there are shelters for them, and if really that information has reached

them whether the Minister has any information as to the grounds for their refusing to go there and utilise those shelters and remain the whole night exposed.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: When I visited these shelters, there were a number of people occupying those shelters. And I talked to them. And I found from them that quite a number of them had been using those shelters over a number of years; they have been coming there very frequently, and they take a particular place. What I have been told is that some of the people who are living in certain places do not want to leave these places, because once they leave them the danger is that they will never get back these places, somebody else will take charge of them.

I may say for the further information of the House that in the very Town Hall, in the portico of the Corporation building, there is one man sitting there. He has been sitting there for a number of years. According to the Deputy Mayor, though accommodation is available in a covered shelter in the Hall itself, that man will not leave that place.

As far as the Corporation and the Bharat Sewak Samaj are concerned they are doing everything possible. As far as Government is concerned, if any more money is needed, whether to provide more shelters or to provide blankets and all that, there is no difficulty. But today we have accommodation available.

Shri Ranga: The question put by the hon. Member was whether any steps are being taken to make it known to all these pavement dwellers—new people may be coming, and strangers may be coming—that there are such shelters and that accommodation is being given to them.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: It is a good suggestion.

Mr. Speaker: What the Minister says may be true in some of the cases. But ordinarily one cannot believe that all those that stay out do so purposefully and that they do not want to go there. There might be some who really do not know that the shelters are available. Therefore, the Members' desire is that some efforts should be made in order to give them this information so that they might avail of it.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The suggestion that has been made is a very useful one. I shall pass it on both to the Bharat Sewak Samaj and the Corporation and see that information is given to the newcomers who come to Delhi that accommodation is available in the night shelters and that they can be looked after there, and see that the suggestion is implemented.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): After hearing the hon. Minister and hearing about the arrangements which he says have been done by the Bharat Sewak Samaj and the Government, it appears that people want to die shelterless. As it is a sad commentary on our planning, I would like to know what specific arrangement has been made to provide shelter to the shelterless, not only in Delhi but in all cities where lakhs of rupees are being spent on slum-clearance schemes....

An Hon. Member: Why not villages also?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: The money is given by the Centre.

Mr. Speaker: He should confine himself to Delhi at this moment.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: According to the hon. Minister, about 6,000 men are shelterless, whereas according to the survey conducted by the *Statesman* the number was 8,000. I want to know what specific arrangements have been made to provide shelter to the shelterless, so that they may not die of cold as 13 people have died already?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am not disputing the statement made by the

Statesman. But after all there is an organisation or a corporation fully representative of the people....

Shri S. M. Banerjee: They are mis-using them. They are selling the blankets. The blankets given to them have been sold in the market. It has already come out in the newspapers.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: After all, there is a corporation here which is elected and fully representative of the people of Delhi. They have had a proper survey made, and according to their survey, the number of persons who are shelterless is round about 5,000 as I have already mentioned.

I want to assure the House on one point that if the members are of the opinion that more accommodation is required, whether in the shape of shelters and accommodation or otherwise, Government shall see that necessary arrangements are made through the Corporation and the Bharat Sewak Samaj, because these are the two organisations through which we are functioning in Delhi.

Shri P. C. Borooah (Sibsagar): In spite of the availability of accommodation in the shelters, it has been known that quite a number of pavement-dwellers have not thought it useful to sleep there but in the open, and all persuasion by the Bharat Sewak Samaj and the Corporation etc. have failed. May I know what the reaction of Government is to the suggestion for penalising all those who sleep in the open? (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: This question has not been relished by Members that they should be penalised.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirapalli): It is too much.

Shri P. C. Borooah: I wanted to know the reaction of Government.

श्री किशन पटनायक (स बलपुर) : जब कि कपड़े और मकान के अभाव में ऐसी मौतें होती हैं, तो क्या सरकार में इतना विवेक है कि वह ऐसी घटनाओं के बाद राष्ट्र से और ख़ास कर गरीब जनता से माफी मांगे ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : इसका जवाब मैं क्या दे सकता हूँ ?

श्री किशन पटनायक : जवाब क्या है ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह मोचेंगे ।

श्री किशन पटनायक : मोचने की क्या बात है ? यह तो दृष्टिकोण की बात है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : क्या वह अभी माफी मांग लें ?

श्री किशन पटनायक : यह तो दृष्टिकोण की बात है ।

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): In the course of his statement, the hon. Minister has said that an amount of Rs. 1 lakh has been sanctioned, and the Prime Minister has also made an offer of a paltry sum of money or something like that to buy warm blankets for the shelterless people. In the context of that, may I know whether this amount was sanctioned to buy these blankets, after 13 people died in the capital or whether Government are aware that even when these blankets were bought they were sold in the blackmarket and they did not reach those people?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: When I visited these shelters during the night before the last, accompanied by the Deputy Mayor and the officials of the Municipal Corporation, the people there told me that the accommodation was adequate, and I saw that it was adequate to an extent. One of the complaints that they made to me was that they were faced with the difficulty of shortage of blankets,

and they asked me for 5,000 blankets. I approached the Finance Minister yesterday, and immediately had this amount sanctioned, and we have made that money available to the Delhi Municipal Corporation. All this happened within one day, and that was yesterday.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): Is it not a fact that these night shelters are being administered in the most bureaucratic manner, and if so, will the Government of India turn them over to some social welfare agency and entrust the work to social welfare agencies including the Bharat Sewak Samaj?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: There is no question of any bureaucratic manner. These shelters have been set up by the Corporation, and *daris* have been provided and blankets are given; *chowkidars* are provided. As I have already mentioned in my statement, no one has been refused permission. If permission was refused or there were people to pick and choose from, then only there would be any question of something being done in a bureaucratic manner; but no one has been refused permission.

श्री रामेश्वर टांटिया (मीकर) : क्या यह सही है कि दिल्ली में, जहाँ कि हम संसद-सदस्य और मंत्री सब गम कमरों में बैठ कर जनता की भलाई का विचार करते हैं, जन-संख्या के अनुपात से शीत में सबसे ज्यादा मृत्युएँ हुई हैं ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : मृत्युएँ तो तमाम हिन्दुस्तान में हो रही हैं । जो अखबारों में निकलता है, उससे नज़र आता है कि कोल्ड वेव से काफी मृत्युएँ हो रही हैं । मुझे उससे काफी दुख होता है, लेकिन मैं यहाँ कर सकता हूँ कि इन्तज़ाम करें, जगह बनाऊँ, ब्लैकट्स दूँ । अगर कोई आदमी न आये, तो मैं मजबूर नहीं कर सकता ।

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy (Kurnool): My name is also there.

Mr. Speaker: If her name is there, she would be called.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy: Apart from the accommodation being inadequate, which the Minister has accepted by saying that it is 5,000 and not 8,000, not disputing the figure of 5,000, as against 8,000, I believe some of the people are not able to occupy these because the Bharat Sevak Samaj charges about 15 paise. I would also like to know who is responsible for not building the night shelters in New Delhi after the Planning Commission had given a sanction of Rs. 5 lakhs to build such shelters? Are they going to build such shelters only after we have dozen or two dozen deaths?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As to the Bharat Sevak Samaj charging 15 paise, that is not my information. But I have seen newspaper reports to the effect that they charge 10 paise.....

Shri Ranga: Why?

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy: They should not charge even one paisa.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: They are getting lakhs from Government and are misusing it.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The hon. Member may not unnecessarily get agitated. I am just answering the question.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: You take it away from the Bharat Sevak Samaj.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy: When this matter was reported, he should have ascertained the facts.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The Bharat Sevak Samaj is charging 10 paise, according to my information.

An Hon. Member: Why?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Let me answer. They have to engage some staff and all that.

Shri Ranga: It is a social service organisation.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Let me give the reply. If it is the feeling of the House that even this 10 paise should not be charged.....

Several Hon. Members: Yes, yes.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna:.... I shall take up the matter with the Bharat Sevak Samaj.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy: The second part of my question, as to who is responsible for not building sufficient night shelters, may also be answered. He did not answer it.

Mr. Speaker: What shall I do if ladies also get aggressive?

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy: I apologise. But he must answer that part of the question.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: When notice of this was given by Shri Banerjee, I got in touch with the Chairman of the NDMC. He was, unfortunately, not well. So I had a talk with the senior vice-president, Sardar Mohan Singh. According to him, there is hardly any problem of pavement dwellers in New Delhi. If need be, he is prepared to take action in this regard.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hosangabad): I am sure you will agree that these deaths by cold, like deaths by water, are becoming a hardy annual sad and tragic, in the capital. Is it not a fact that a Government which in the very capital of the country, right under their noses and their eyes, have demonstrated their inability to provide adequate shelter—even a modicum of shelter—to the people, besides their inability to feed and clothe the people, have forfeited their right to govern? This being so, how could they inspire confidence in the people that they will defend them against Pakistan and China?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As regards Pakistan and China, the Defence Minister can answer the question.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: No, no; the first part.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As regards the confidence of the people, results of bye-elections are pretty clear.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Look to Bihar. Answer the first part.

Mr. Speaker: The first part only need be answered.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: What is the first part?

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Is it not a fact that a Government, which in the very capital of the country, right under the noses and eyes of the Ministers, senior and junior, big and small, has demonstrated its inability to provide a modicum of shelter to the people besides the inability to feed and clothe them has forfeited its right to govern?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I entirely dispute the assertions made by the hon. Member. I have stated in my statement that shelters have been provided, sufficient accommodation has been provided.

Shri Ranga: Government owes a duty to this House and to the country and they should at least express their regret to the country for this failure.

श्री यशपाल सिंह (कैराना) : क्या सरकार के खयाल में कभी यह बात आई है कि जब दिल्ली शहर में बड़ी बड़ी बिल्डिंग बनती हैं तो हजारों शैल्टरलैस लोग यहां आ जाते हैं और दिन में ईंट पत्थर का काम करते हैं और रात को सड़कों पर पड़ कर सोते रहते हैं ? गांधी जी ने कहा था बड़े शहरों में मकान बनाने बिल्कुल बन्द किये जायें और देहातों में मकान बनें । क्या सरकार ने इस बात पर सोचा है कि दिल्ली का बढ़ती हुई आबादी को देखते हुए नए मकान बनाने बिल्कुल बन्द कर दिए जायें और देहातों में मकान बनाये जायें ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : और नये मकान बनने बन्द कर दिये गये और शैल्टर न दिया गया तो हालत और भी खराब हो जाएगी और काम नहीं चल सकेगा ।

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: On a point of order. I very humbly want to submit....

An Hon. Member: Ladies also!

Mr. Speaker: If he were in my position, he would behave in the same way. If he has discovered my weakness, why should he expose me? What is the point of order.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: A great injustice has been done to the Bharat Sevak Samaj because of some misunderstanding. The Bharat Sevak Samaj charges ten paise and gives that to the dwellers in the form of a book, pencil and slate.

An Hon. Member: That is propaganda.

Mr. Speaker: It is not a point of order.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: The Minister did not have this information, that is why I am trying to make it clear that our dwellers are permanent ones. There is not a single Bharat Sevak Samaj centre which has a vacant seat.

Shri Sivamurthi Swamy (Koppal): May I know whether it has been brought to the notice of Government that these beggars and shelters persons are charged ten paise according to the rules, but that the chowkidars

or other attendants there demand more than 25 paise and sometimes 50 paise per day? Only recently, within this week, they have taken 10 paise; they are charging more than 25 paise, that is why everybody is not going there.

Mr. Speaker: There are suspicions raised by Members. The Minister might kindly look into that.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: No, Sir. I will answer this. As far as shelters provided by the Corporation are concerned, there are no charges.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: But they are empty.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Is she holding a brief for the Bharat Sevak Samaj? Let her come out and say so plainly.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Out of the 5,000 shelters we have provided, more than 4,500 have been put up by the Corporation and only about 500 are being provided by the Bharat Sevak Samaj. When I visited the shelters day before yesterday, I talked to these unfortunate people who are living in these shelters and I made enquiries from them whether they had any difficulties, any handicaps, whether they were being charged anything at all. The replies were in the negative. Nothing is charged from them in any form.

Shri Ranga: Let him accept your suggestion.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, he should further look into the matter.

श्री मौर्य (अलीगढ़) : महात्मा गांधी तथा श्रद्धेय नेहरू जी जब फुटपाथ पर सोते हुए लोगों को देखते थे तो उनके दिल को बहुत दुख होता था। उनकी याद में राजघाट और शान्ति वन का निर्माण हो रहा है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या इसमें इस तरह की भी कोई योजना है कि फुटपाथ पर सोने वालों के लिए वहाँ शैल्टर हाउसिस बनाये जायें, उनकी देखरेख भारत

सेवक समाज या अन्य कोई प्राइवेट संस्था न करे बल्कि सरकार स्वयं करे ताकि यह जो दस बारह पैसे चार्ज करने का झंझट है यह पैदा न हो और ये जो संस्थायें बंट दिलाने का कार्य करती हैं, वह भी बन्द हो सके ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : राजघाट और शान्तिवन एक प्लान के मुताबिक बन रहे हैं, उनका डिवेलपमेंट हो रहा है। वहाँ हमारा कोई शैल्टर बनाने का विचार नहीं है। अगर शैल्टर बनाने के लिए जगह की जरूरत हो तो वह ली जा सकती है, दिल्ली में काफी जगह हम एक्वायर कर सकते हैं। लेकिन हमारे दिल में शान्तिवन और राजघाट के लिए एक खास इज्जत है, प्यार है और हम उनको मुताबिक स्थान समझते हैं।

श्री काशी राम गुप्त (अलवर) : १४ दिसम्बर को मंत्री महोदय स्वयं उन स्थानों को देखने के लिए गए थे तो क्या उन्होंने बाहर जो कई दिन से लोग पड़े थे उनकी संख्या को जानने की कोशिश की और जो मर गये उनके बारे में जानने की कोशिश की थी या नहीं की थी ? वे विश्रामगृहों में जाया करते थे या नहीं जाया करते थे ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : मैं बाहर नहीं घूमा हूँ। शैल्टर बग़ा देखे जहाँ लोग पड़े थे। उनसे बात की और मालूम किया। हमारा फर्ज यह है कि हम लोगों के लिए जगह मुहैया करें। हमारे पास कोई कानून नहीं है कि हम लोगों को मजबूर करके शैल्टर के अन्दर ले जायें।

श्री काशी राम गुप्त : क्या जो मारे गये हैं उनके बारे में जानकारी ली है कि वे विश्रामगृहों में कभी गये हैं या नहीं गये हैं ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह कमेटी ने की है।

श्री जगदेव सिंह सिद्धान्ती (अजमेर) : मंत्रिमंडल के सदस्य जिन जिन भवनों में

[श्री जगदेव सिंह सिद्धान्ती]

रहते हैं क्या वे यह साहस करेंगे कि अपने-अपने
 भवनों के अन्दर निराश्रित लोगों के लिए कुछ
 आश्रय देने का प्रबन्ध करें ?

Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West): From the answers in the statement it is obvious that the Bharat Sevak Samaj has been, though not a complete failure, very ineffective and if so, why does the Government not enlist the service of any other agency?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am sorry if I have created that impression in the mind of the hon. Member. Bharat Sevak Samaj is doing very good work and there is no cause for any complaint.

श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री (बिजनौर) :
 आज के समाचारपत्रों में यह है कि आवास
 और निर्माण मंत्री स्वयं एक दिन रात्रि को
 उन सभी की दुर्दशा देखने के लिये गये थे जो
 सड़कों पर पड़े थे। मेरा अनुमान है
 कि उनको देखने के बाद उनके हृदय में
 दया भी अवश्य उत्पन्न हुई होगी। मैं उनसे
 यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि उन सारी परिस्थितियों
 को ध्यान में रखते हुए भारत सेवक समाज और
 गवर्नमेंट के अतिरिक्त भी जो कुछ वालेंटरी
 ऑर्गेनाइजेशन हैं इस प्रकार की दिल्ली में,
 क्या उन्होंने उन से भी कुछ सम्पर्क किया है
 कि इसके समाधान में वे भी कुछ सहायक
 हो सकती हैं ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : जहाँ तक वालेंटरी
 ऑर्गेनाइजेशन का सम्बन्ध है, भारत सेवक
 समाज तो काम कर रही है। कार्पोरेशन भी
 काम कर रही है। अगर कोई और वालेंटरी
 ऑर्गेनाइजेशन इस मामले में दिलचस्पी
 लेना चाहती है तो मैं उसे वह लिखे मैं देखने
 के लिए तैयार हूँ।

Shrimati Lakshmikanthamma: Sir, on a point of clarification. Because of the human lives, I want to ask whether

Government will issue instructions to see that people are not driven from public places.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot allow any more questions. There is another calling attention notice about the Delhi Milk Supply and it will be taken up at 5 O'clock. (*Interruptions.*) There is no half an hour discussion. Now, papers to be laid on the Table.

12.27 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

WAGE BOARD FOR ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES EXCLUDING STEEL PLANTS

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Shri R. K. Malviya) on behalf of Shri D. Sanjivayya: I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Government Resolution No. WB-4(3)/64 dated the 12th December, 1964, regarding setting up of Wage Board for the Engineering Industries excluding the Steel Plants. [*Placed in Library. See No. LT-3632/64.*]

ANNUAL REPORTS AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS ETC. OF FERTILISER CORPORATION OF INDIA, AND THE INDIAN DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS LTD., NEW DELHI

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals (Shri Alagesan): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers:—

(i) (a) Annual Report of the Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi, for the year 1963-64, along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, under subsection (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956.

(b) Review by the Government on the working of the above