

12.28½ hrs.

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA

Secretary: Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary of Rajya Sabha:—

"In accordance with the provisions of rule 97 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to enclose a copy of the Drugs (Amendment) Bill, 1962, which has been passed by the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 19th April, 1962"

12.28¾ hrs.

DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL

AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA—LAID ON THE TABLE

Secretary: Sir, I lay on the Table of the House the Drugs (Amendment) Bill, 1962, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

12.29 hrs.

RE: ALLOTMENT OF SEATS

Mr. Speaker: Now the House shall take up the General Discussion on the Railway Budget Shri Saraf.

Shri Thimmaiah (Kolar): Sir, I want to make a submission. The allotment of seats does not seem to have been done on a rational basis. Some of us who used to sit here . . .

Mr. Speaker: This cannot be decided here. He can come to my Chamber.

Shri Thimmaiah: Sir, you should kindly do something in the matter.

Mr. Speaker: He can see me in my Chamber if he has to put anything to me, but for his guidance I might say that so far as our Secretariat is concerned, we have reserved a block for hon. Members who belong to the

Congress Part. If they have any complaint, that is their internal affairs.

12:28¾ hrs.

STATEMENT RE: RAILWAY ACCIDENT NEAR DHANBAD

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): Sir, with your permission I would like to make a statement on a serious accident

Shri Shyam Lal Saraf (Jammu and Kashmir): Sir, we have heard the hon Railway Minister . . .

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister of Railways wants to make a statement on a serious accident that has occurred

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: Sir, with profound regret I have to inform the House about a level crossing accident which occurred last evening in which a number of lives were lost.

At about 18.45 hours on 23-4-62, when the shunting engine at Dhanbad goods yard was drawing a goods train in order to marshall it, the coupling of the seventh wagon from the rear end broke and the seven wagons to roll down from Dhanbad yard in the direction of Kusunda by the Up line towards the Level Crossing Gate at Naya Bazar Level Crossing which at that time was open for road traffic. Just at that time, a bus loaded with passengers and a truck happened to be crossing the railway track. The first wagon at the Kusunda end dashed into the road vehicles and dragged them to a distance of about 20 yards from the Gate.

As a result of the accident, 7 persons died on the spot. Another 39 were injured and were sent to the various hospitals in Dhanbad. Out of these 9 expired in the hospitals later. One person was discharged

[Shri S. V. Ramaswamy]

after first aid and the remaining 29 are still in the hospitals.

A 75-ton crane and an Accident Relief Train along with medical personnel were rushed to the site immediately after the accident. The Divisional Superintendent, Dhanbad and other senior local railway officers reached the site immediately and supervised the relief arrangements. The Chief Medical Officer of Eastern Railway also proceeded from Calcutta and has since visited the injured in the hospitals. The General Manager, Eastern Railway, is on his way.

Both Up and Down tracks were cleared at 5.35 hrs. this morning.

The railway track from Dhanbad to Kusunda is on a down gradient and to prevent loose vehicles from rolling into the section, a slip siding has been provided at the Kusunda end of the Dhanbad yard. The points on the slip siding are normally set for the slip siding. On 23-4-62 some time before the wagons started rolling towards the Level Crossing an up coal pilot had started from Dhanbad towards Kusunda, necessitating setting of the points for the Main Line. The Cabin staff, on realising that the wagons had rolled down made an effort to alert the gateman on duty at the Level Crossing Gate so that it could be closed against road traffic, but before the gateman could do so the wagons had collided with the road vehicles.

A senior officers' enquiry has been instituted to enquire into the cause of the accident.

Shri Daji (Indore): Sir, only one point of information.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: There are so many.

Shri Daji: Is the hon. Minister aware that the newspaper reports put the deaths at thirty? Is the reported

statement of only nine deaths an under-estimation and an under-statement, or is the press report wrong?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister has given the latest information that he has got.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I said that seven died on the spot and nine died later in the hospital.

Shri Daji: The papers put it at thirty.

Mr. Speaker: The information that he has with him, the hon. Minister has given

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): I want to know whether there was a Gateman there, and when the wagons rolled down I do not know whether he got information immediately, because the bus just passed and the papers say that the gates were open. That is one thing.

The second thing is whether compensation will be given to those who have died, that is to their families, by the Railways.

Mr. Speaker: It will be too early to say whether compensation would be given. Let the enquiry be made.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Sir, you will kindly protect me. *Ad hoc* compensation is always given in such cases.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any proposal to give *ad interim* compensation?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: Sir, as you were pleased to observe, it is too early to say that.

Shri Priya Gupta (Katihar): May I know what type of level crossing gate this was, whether it was Class A, Class B or Class C Gate? It has to be decided by the District Magistrate according to the traffic that passes over the level crossing. Secondly, what were the roster duty hours

of the Gate-man posted there, whether it was eight hours' continuous, twelve hours intermittent or twenty-four hours or excluded? Thirdly, of what type was the locomotive, whether it was steam locomotive or diesel locomotive? I also want to know if the gradient is, according to the I.R.S. standard, allowed to continue under the conditions of the engines being hooked to this, and because it is a gradient whether all the safety measures were adopted, and whether the steam vacuum was correctly tested and hooked. And lastly, we want a judicial enquiry, not a senior officers' enquiry.

Mr. Speaker: These things will be known during the enquiry.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirapalli): May I know whether that gate had a phone or a calling bell to inform the Gate-man that a wagon was rolling down? If there had been a phone, this accident could have been avoided. In such gradients such bells are provided. I want to know whether it was there at this particular gate.

Mr. Speaker: These are facts that will be known when the enquiry is made, not at this moment.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): About the gates and other things the hon. Member can reply.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Minister can give some information as to whether the gates were open, whether the gateman was there, as to when he received the information—because Members are anxious to know about these—if he has more information than what he has given, he might give it.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I shall collect some more information.

Mr. Speaker: That is exactly what I said. (*Interruption*). The hon. Member cannot go on indefinitely. We shall go to the next item now.

12-35 hrs.

RAILWAY BUDGET—GENERAL
DISCUSSION—contd.

Shri Sham Lal Saraf (Jammu and Kashmir): Sir, after the Minister of Railways delivered his Budget speech, a number of speeches have been made in this House—and I have heard most of them—by Members coming from different parts of the country. As far as I am concerned, I will try to place a dispassionate view with regard to the matters that have been brought before the House in the speeches that have been delivered. As far as my State is concerned, Jammu and Kashmir, we have no railway, at the moment, there and naturally, therefore, my attempt will be to place an unbiassed view of the matters which, I think, are very important for us to know. What our feelings are about them, and secondly what improvements are really necessary as far as the running of railways in the country are concerned.

A suggestion has been made here that a Commission of enquiry be set up in order to go into the working of the Railways. Though the suggestion has come from speakers from different parties, I personally feel that that the way this suggestion has come is more of a negative nature rather than of a positive one. I personally feel that an enquiry is necessary. I will explain how that enquiry is to be made. As far as transport in general is concerned, in our country, we have the railways, we have shipping, we have roads, we have navigable rivers, as they also carry some of the goods and passenger traffic, and also we have air transport as well. Keeping that in view and looking into the working of the Railways for the last at least 10 years, as I find from the statements, from the figures and from the literature that has been distributed here the other day and also from what one could know from