

17.04 hrs.

***REHABILITATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN WEST BENGAL**

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Barackpore): Mr. Chairman, I want to raise a discussion on the points arising out of the answer given on the 27th April, 1962 to Starred Question No. 262 regarding rehabilitation of displaced persons on West Bengal.

This discussion has arisen at a very appropriate time because, you know, the situation in Pakistan and the sufferings of the minority community has reached a breaking point. I would like to divide this question into two parts: the question of succour to the new migrants and the second will be the problem of the old migrants.

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): Sir, on a point of order. I have no objection to the hon. Member referring to the new migrants but if I may draw your attention to the question which was tabled and the answer given as also the notes supplied by the hon. Member herself, there is no mention about the new migrants at all. I will request her that she should confine herself only to the residuary problem as it is in the State of West Bengal today.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: My question was a general question regarding the rehabilitation of refugees in West Bengal. The question is also whether funds have been allocated for refugee rehabilitation. That itself is a very general question,—whether funds are made available for refugee rehabilitation, of those refugees who are coming in as a result of the squeezing out policy of Pakistan. That point has to be taken up in a general way.

My second question was whether it is a fact that the State Government does not agree to the suggestion to wind up the Union Rehabilitation Ministry. Naturally, the consequences of this have to be seen. The last question was, whether the assessment of the residual problem has been completed. Therefore, I plead that I have got a right to raise this question of succour to new migrants. In every debate on refugees and refugee rehabilitation, this question of new migrants and the policy regarding them have been raised and answers have been given by the hon. Minister himself. Therefore, the question of fresh migrants and the policy regarding further migrants—both these things—have to be taken up.

Mr. Chairman: The question has to be precise and definite.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: It is very definite.

Mr. Chairman: If it is not precise, of course, the half-an-hour discussion cannot be carried on.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: It is very precise, for the precise reason that

Mr. Chairman: I regret I do not agree. She may confine her points to that part which is relevant and brief.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I do not know what you are ruling out. The point is that the question of refugees of West Bengal.

Mr. Chairman: I am sorry, she cannot refer to all those things.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Then, I will ask you humbly, what you are ruling out. The refugees who are coming in today number about three to four thousand, they have been squeezed out of East Pakistan as a result of the Rajshahi riots. Shall we discuss it or shall we not discuss it?

Mr. Chairman: That is the refugee problem but the hon. Member's point must be precise.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Then what can we say here? (*Interruption*)

Shri H. P. Chatterjee (Nabadwip): This is evading responsibility.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta Central): It is the business of the Rehabilitation Minister, when a matter like this is discussed on a special motion, to come prepared to answer any points which are raised. It is not his business to evade the subject of this discussion.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: May I submit that I am not evading anything at all? This question was raised in Parliament and I replied to it fully. My only regret is that the hon. Member who has raised this question today—I am not referring to Shri H. N. Mukerjee—was not even present in the House that day. I may submit for your information the points that have been raised. Firstly, "vague, dilatory statement regarding the refugee problem," etc. The reply was given a year ago, when the question was being discussed. This question of new migrants has arisen only very recently. Then the question is about the completion of assessment in the eastern zone. There was a clear assessment of the residual problem, and that was made one year ago, and there was the question of the closure of the Branch Secretariat in Calcutta.

I repeat that I have no objection to it. I am not evading the issue. But, if it is your ruling that we should also discuss the question of new migrants, I have no objection. (*Interruptions*) I am not yielding. I have made a clear statement before the House. I would submit that today the discussion is to be confined only to the question arising out of my replies that were given by me on that particular day.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: On a point of order, Sir, I submit that refugees

are refugees. There is no mention that we should discuss the question of refugees who have come in only up to a particular time and so on. Those who are still coming are also refugees, and their question must also be taken up. There is nothing for which the hon. Minister should take objection. Where is the reason for him to say that they are not refugees? They are also refugees. So, rehabilitation of refugees means the rehabilitation also of the refugees who have now come.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: I beg of you to remember the responsibility of this Parliament. The country at large knows that the people who are now being squeezed out of Pakistan are refugees, whether you call them refugees or not. So, if the Government takes this kind of legalistic attitude in order to blur out discussion and action to follow the discussion, we ought to know where we stand.

Shri Priya Gupta (Katihar): On a point of clarification. I want to know whether the words "rehabilitation" and "refugees" have been deleted from the pages of the dictionary. If they are there—they are there—and if they have got a meaning, they have got a permanent meaning all the time. The refugees are part of the nation, and when they become refugees, they can be rehabilitated all the time, according to the circumstances which are created. If the circumstances change in East Pakistan, causing a fresh refugee-flow into India, as per the agreement and as per the commitment, which is a national commitment, the refugees must be given some protection. In the case of the refugees, the hon. Minister must not feel that because the Ministry has been wound up the entire question is wound up! This problem is present in the country. Because it was a big problem—a bigger quantum—a separate Minister was there, and the problem has been looked after by him. He should not deny it. My point, by way of explanation, is that the problem of refugees can arise at

[Shri Priya Gupta]

any time—even today, tomorrow or the day after. It will not come by notice. Any time, according to the circumstances outside India, it will come. The circumstances will cause the refugees to come in. It is a correct thing that the refugees must be given fresh relaxation of certificates and the students must be given relaxation for admission to the universities. That cannot be denied by the Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Every question has to be precise and definite. If a question requires some further explanation and some further addition, that question is not precise and definite.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: This is not a question; this is a discussion.

Mr. Chairman: This can arise only in respect of questions which are precise and definite, to which a precise answer has not been given. If a precise answer has been already given, there can be no discussion which can arise on that point.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: This is a very precise question. Today the West Bengal Chief Minister himself has written on this point, viz., one of the points which has arisen out of the rehabilitation of refugees in West Bengal is the question of new migrants.

Shri Priya Gupta: I want a clarification of the word 'precise'. Does it refer to the number of words? The idea remaining the same, it can be expressed in 100 words or 10 words.

Mr. Chairman: 'Precise' means precise in language, which can convey only one idea.

Shri Priya Gupta: According to my knowledge of the language the idea is the same.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: Before you give your ruling, may I point out that the residuary problem grows and you cannot have a discussion on

a growing problem? What is the residuary problem? This is a growing problem. If more refugees come, you cannot say that the residuary problem was finished in 1949 or 1959 or 1961. This is growing.

Mr. Chairman: It can be discussed in other ways at other times. It cannot be discussed in a half-hour discussion. (*Interruptions*).

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: This is a very specific question. By raising this point, the Minister has shown his unsympathetic attitude to this whole question of the squeezing out of refugees.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: He says he is himself a refugee. He is a *kala-pahar*, I say. Having become a Minister, he is disowning the refugees.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: As my friend, the hon. Minister has always been wanting us to understand, in the eastern region, there is always an indefinite population of refugees and a constant influx coming into West Bengal. Actually, they have been coming at times in trickles or sometimes in big floods. This is one of the special problems in the East. We have had the Berubari refugees. We did not know what to do with them. Now we have these refugees of Rajshahi who have come. So, this is definitely a part of the question of the residuary problem of rehabilitation of refugees.

I want to raise the question of the Darjeeling meeting in 1957, which laid down a policy regarding this question of deadline for refugee rehabilitation. Therefore, it is a specific question. There are two types of refugees—those who are recognised by Government and those who are not recognised by Government. I want to raise both points. Are you ruling that refugees are only those that are recognised by Government or are you recognising the question of refugees who are refugees, but

who are not recognised by the Government?

Mr. Chairman: I am only going by the wording of the question and nothing more.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: There is no bar in the question.

Mr. Chairman: It is not my business to include other things.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Please tell me on which point it is to be barred. For 15 minutes we have been discussing whether this can be discussed. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Priya Gupta: Are we to go to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom? To whom are we to go?

Mr. Chairman: That is for you to find out.

Shri Sinhasan Singh (Gorakhpur): The objection raised by the Minister is not tenable. The half-hour discussion was admitted because of certain vague replies given by the Minister. Once having admitted this problem to be discussed, it is open to the hon. Member to refer to the whole refugee problem. The wording here is: "rehabilitation of refugees". Only the word "refugees" is there. The hon. Minister could have raised an objection earlier and not admitted this discussion at all. Once you have admitted it, I think Members should be allowed to say whether proper rehabilitation is going on or not and he has to reply to the points raised.

Mr. Chairman: The problem of refugees has been there from 1948. I do not think the problem of all the refugees can be covered under this discussion.

श्री प्रिय गुप्त : माननीय मंत्री जरा धीरे से जवाब दें ।

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : मैं बहुत धीरे में बोलता हूँ । माननीय सदस्य नये हैं । मैं बूढ़ा हूँ ।

May I submit, Sir, that we had an eight-hour discussion on the Demands for Grants relating to this Ministry in this very House and during that period we covered the entire ground about the refugees who are there, the new ones that are coming and the policies of the Government as adumbrated and which I stated on the floor of this House with regard to the new migrants. What I was trying to submit before the House was—I am not shirking or evading the issue; I made a statement before and I am prepared to make a statement again—that if we are to take the question into consideration which I answered, the replies that I gave and the points that arise from those replies, though no supplementaries were asked on that day because the question was never reached, we have to deal with the refugees who are in the State of West Bengal and who have been there. About them the residueary problem was discussed more than a year ago, which the hon. Member says has been vague and I have not been very specific. But if it is the intention of the House that they should also refer to the new migrants I have no objection.

Shri Priya Gupta: Does not he feel himself?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I still hold and maintain that this question is specific, the reply was specific and the points arising out of the reply have nothing to do with the new migrants who are coming.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Why does he bring in new migrants?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: If it is the wish of the House that the question of new migrants should also be raised, I have no objection.

Shri Priya Gupta: That is all right.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Sir, it is now 5.20 and I hope you will take this into account.

An Hon. Member: No.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Sir, those hon. Members who are not willing to stay can always leave. Sir, the whole country is looking at this House. When today we are discussing the residuary problem of the refugees in West Bengal, we have to include those refugees who have come in during the last few days because of the terror in Rajshahi. We have got to take them into consideration. They are refugees. There are refugees who are refugees alright but Government refers to recognise them and there are refugees who are recognised as such by the Government. There are these two categories.

Now, we cannot put the entire burden on these unfortunate people by denying them help. Are they responsible for what is happening, for the squeezing out policy of Pakistan and are we going to wreak vengeance on those refugees who are coming across or are we going to help them? Our Government has not been able to implement the Liaquat Ali-Nehru Agreement by which there was to be free coming and going between the two countries of East Pakistan and West Bengal. After that, we find today that the borders are being closed and repression is taking place. Thousands, not hundreds as the Prime Minister said, of refugees have come over the border, there to four thousand is the figures, I think, that I read today. They have come over to Malda from Rajshahi and Nachole area. They are the Santhals, agricultural labourers who are the most oppressed and suppressed. The situation in Pakistan is such that people are not able to stay there. It is not only a question when there are riots, but even normally under Ayub-shahi they are being squeezed out. Our Government has said in December 1957, that for future fresh migrants should not be entitled to receive relief or rehabilitation assistance. The first thing that they have to do is to get migration certificates. The Union

Board President in Pakistan or whoever is the appropriate authority of the village should certify that the intending migrant has paid his entire dues. He will never get it from the local Union Board President. Then he will have to go to Dacca and apply for a migration certificate. Then only, if they so will and our Government also agrees, migration certificates are issued. The hon. Minister has quoted the speech which he made here during the budget debate. Regarding the Beru Bari refugees he said:

"We must be very sure that they have proper migration certificates."

That is the main point he has underlined. I say that in the situation in Pakistan, as it is at present, it is not possible for the refugees to bring proper migration certificates. We have to understand that it is the refugees on whose almost ruin and poverty we have built this edifice of free India, and that is why many of our friends on the other side, who call themselves refugees, are Ministers. Are we not going to do something to alleviate the sufferings of those refugees who are crossing into our territory every day? This is one of the points on which I would like to ask the hon. Minister for a categorical answer.

When we discussed the residuary problem I believe a question was asked whether Government is prepared to render the refugees all help. In this connection, I want to state that the statement which the Prime Minister made the other day has created very bad feelings, at least in our part of the country, where it is felt that his answer has been unsympathetic to the refugees who have undergone terrible sufferings in East Pakistan and who are crossing over to the Indian side. I would like the Prime Minister to make it quite clear that the people of India welcome them, and that is why they come to India, crossing over the borders, because of the squeezing

policy of Pakistan. We have to give them every succour and help, because that is the pledge that we made to them in 1947 when we accepted the partition of the country.

When we are giving thousands and thousands, almost lakhs, of rupees to the Tibetan refugees, why not give some help to these poor refugees from East Pakistan? Go and see **where** the Tibetan refugees are living in Manali and other places and how. They are lazy people who do not do any work and yet lakhs of rupees are given to them, whereas we refuse to give succour and help to our own refugees, our own Kith and Kin. I am sure this House would be one with me in saying that those who are today under the iron heel of Ayub Khan and his dictatorial rule will have to given every succour. I ask that this Government may make a statement that migration certificates need not be insisted upon from them to get help and rehabilitation benefits. Now, in migration certificates they have to sign that they will not get a penny of help or rehabilitation benefit and unless they do that certificates are not signed. Why? If we have got our freedom, if we have got our Government, if we have got our Ministers, it is because of their sacrifice. Why should we ask them to sign such a demeaning thing? This is a point which I want to emphasize again and again.

Only the other day I was reading reports of people who have come across with babies in their arms, with no belongings of their own, sometimes almost crawling to cross the border, and when they come here we do not give them any assistance. The West Bengal Government is already cringing to the Central Government to give it permission to extend the benefits of rehabilitation to those refugees. That is why I say this is one of the important points we have to discuss as far as the East Pakistan refugees are concerned. We have not received even a single penny

as compensation in the East as the West Pakistan brothers have received. We have not grudged that because we have always been told that the East Pakistan border is an open border where we can come and go. We know only too well that we cannot come and go. We have seen only recently how our refugees brothers and sisters have been short down dead. If that is the situation, may I ask the Government, why insist that the refugees must bring their migration certificates, they must be signed, failing which they will not get any rehabilitation benefits? This is one of the most important points which I want to raise in this discussion, which could not be covered in the earlier discussion on the Demand for grants relating to this Ministry. Therefore, this is one point.

An Hon. Member: Your time is up

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Those hon. Members who feel rather apathetic to hear that thousands of our brothers, sisters and mothers are suffering, they can certainly go out.

I now come to another important matter which, the hon. Minister has stated, as a matter of the old refugees. One year ago—he has not mentioned it in his budget speech this year—he has assured us in this House when he was replying to the debate by saying that they have asked the West Bengal Government to assess the problem and let them have the details. He also said that they are asking the West Bengal Government for a little more information and added:

“I propose to discuss the problem about the partially rehabilitated refugees in West Bengal with the Chief Minister. I want to go to them because I have to prove my *bona fides* to this House.”

Then he said:

“I wish to assure this House that in the next month or two I will be

[Shrimati Renu Chakravartty]

in a position to finalise the residuary problem in West Bengal, after consultation at the highest level in West Bengal, that is, the Chief Minister of West Bengal."

Now, after one full year, what is it that he replies to me? He tells us that the final assessment in respect of West Bengal has not been made so far. Why has it not been made? You have closed down the Union Rehabilitation Ministry's office in Calcutta. You have wound up the Ministry here and have put a cell under the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply. Now you tell us that the final assessment in respect of West Bengal has not been made so far? No adequate answer has been given in the Budget debate. I have gone through the Budget debate. An adequate answer has not been given to this.

If we are to take this question about the residuary problem of those who have been here from 1948, 1949, 1950 and onwards, I would like to say that the main question still remains completely unreserved. As far as the West Bengal Government is concerned, I find that they have stated that about 70 per cent of the refugees have remained un-rehabilitated. Our hon. Minister has not accepted this position, but I can say that this is the reality. Only 10 or 20 per cent have really been fully rehabilitated, the rest have not been rehabilitated.

Let me take up one by one the question of the bulk of those who have been in the camps. Regarding the camp refugees, actually the camp refugees have just been eliminated on paper. The camps have been closed down. They have been given a bad name by saying that they do not want to work and that they only want doles; so, they closed down the camps. What happened after the camps were closed down? Two months' notice was given. Doles were stopped. Were they beggars

wanting doles? No, Sir, They did not go to Dandakaranya. They were told, "Either you go to Dandakaranya or you do not get anything at all." I came to the hon. Minister and told him that there were many who were partially rehabilitated and they did not want to be uprooted again and sent to Dandakaranya; so, why did we not help them? He said, "Yes I will have the matter looked into and assessed."

There was the question of those who were agriculturists. There was a question of those who were the non-agriculturists. As far as the agriculturists were concerned, they all had to go to Dandakaranya. What happened to those who did not go? The camps were closed down and we were told that there were no more people in the camps. Even today, right in those very areas, around those camps and inside those barracks people are staying. They are staying because they have been partially rehabilitated. They are half-starved but in spite of it, they are trying to live. The urge for life is there. They could have lived a little better if a little more help would have been forthcoming from the Government.

About the *bainanama* scheme the hon. Minister told this House, "I have not left a single *bainanama* scheme unattended. But have they made any effort for finding out from camp to camp as to how many *bainanamas* have been made, how many have been submitted to the officers and how many have been able to get their loans and lands? No, Sir, no such assessment has been made. Again and again we have sent copies of individual cases but nothing much has been done. If only the *bainanama* scheme could have been kept open, you would have found in spite of the propaganda about the saturation point having been reached in West Bengal, so many of our refugees would have been rehabilitated. There is so much red tape and corruption in this whole gumut of Government machinery

that it has not been possible for us to get these *bainanama* schemes to yield results.

As far as the non-agriculturists are concerned, what is happening? They are not entitled to go to Dandakaranya, but now we find that even their doles have been stopped. Camps have been completely eliminated and closed down. There are no more house-building loans, contributory house-building loans and land purchase loans. All these have been stopped. Yet, when we say that these are the cases of 1947 and 1948, we are told that these will be attended to as the residuary problem. But what is the extent of this residuary problem? When we ask them to lay a copy of it on the Table of the House they say that the residuary problem has not been assessed. Then how and on what basis did you close down the camps in which they lived and refuse them succor?

There is the question of the squatters' colonies. Out of 137 squatters' colonies, 102 have been recognised fully and ten partially. I am told in answer to a question of mine that development work has started in 27. It is unparliamentary to use the word 'lie', therefore I say that this is an absolutely incorrect statement. It is something that I cannot understand as to how such an answer could be given. One of the largest number of squatters' colonies are in my constituency and I know that not in a single one has there been development work. I was looking at one of the charts which have been sent from West Bengal over here. Money has been taken from the Central Government and in the areas, do you know, not an inch of mud has been thrown and not a road has been constructed. Yet, we are told that this is used in development!

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member's time is up.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Sir, you have given me only ten minutes.

On the question of squatters' colonies I say it is very necessary for a proper assessment to be made. In the Estimates Committee we asked that the Central Rehabilitation Ministry is not only a money-distributing machinery but they have to see that what they give is actually being expended, and yet such a machinery has not been drawn up. And we are now told, "What can we do? We can only function by getting the reports, and act as a post office, from the West Bengal Government". Regarding squatters' colonies, I think it is high time that we know the plotting of the household areas, what is the scheme, how many roads have been built, and how many legal documents have been given to the refugees. We are told that documents have been given. Do you know, Sir, that these are not legal documents at all? This is only a way to cheat the people. The whole question of squatters' colonies should have been assessed.

There are others who have come after the deadline of 1950 in those squatters' colonies; they are all in eligible, although they are *bona fide* refugees; but because they set up their colonies after the deadline of 1950 they cannot be rehabilitated and regularised. They have received no loans. In squatters' colonies you cannot get any loan; you cannot get a house-building loan or any other loan.

Let me come to the question of Muslim migrants. That question was raised during the debate. I want to say that there has been no assessment of this question.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member may please remember that this whole discussion is only for half an hour.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What am I to do? I have spoken only for twelve minutes.

Mr. Chairman: I have given the hon. Member five minutes more. The Minister has to reply.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I have spoken only for twelve minutes.

Mr. Chairman: Fifteen.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: If this is the attitude of the House it is better that we tell the refugees that we are not interested in them.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Is this Parliament? Is this the largest democracy?

Mr. Chairman: There is democracy.

I will give the hon. Member three more minutes.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I will take only three more minutes because I find that Members, specially some from other States, in the opposite side feel that they can bring about emotional integration in this manner!

Some Hon. Members: Not at all.

Mr. Chairman: Please go on.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: On this question of Muslim houses an answer has been given by the hon. Minister, and I presume it has been sent from the West Bengal Government. I do not know. The total number of Muslim houses still in occupation of displaced persons is 159—that is the answer. I have submitted to Government details of two small areas in my constituency: one, Alambazar where 18 houses are in possession of refugees, and another which I have got now with me, which is in Panihati area where 38 Muslim houses are in possession of refugees. Now look at the position. The refugee families are living there. They are supposed to get alternative accommodation. They are not getting alternative accommodation near their places of work. Now, as regards the others who are Muslims, their houses are being auctioned because the taxes have not been paid. And we have had to rush about, trying to stop the auctioning of these houses. Now, I tell you, Sir, this 159 is totally

incorrect. If you take Howrah, if you take Kankinarrah if you take Kamarhati, if you take Alambazar, if you take Panihati, even in this small area—leaving aside Murshidabad and Nadia—you will have more than thousands of such occupied Muslim houses. This has never been assessed. This cannot be looked into, we are told. Why then do you say that the problem is over?

There is a question of two types of refugees occupying these houses: those who fall under the Evacuee Property Act, and those who fall under the civil courts. They are both refugees. Are they not eligible for rehabilitation? These matters have not been decided. Yet they are *bona fide* refugees. Up to this day they have not received a penny in the form of loans or any rehabilitation benefits.

I will now come to the question of loans, and I have done. On the question of loans there was a lot of debate over here. I want to say one thing. Nobody raised this point. As far as the West Pakistan displaced persons are concerned, I find that general remission has been sanctioned for non-claimants and small loanees of the west. I congratulate the Minister for having done that. I want him to do it in the case of the East Pakistan refugees. Is it wrong? We find that realisation of loans in the west is 57.55 per cent against 2.56 in the case of the East Pakistan refugees. Why? In the Estimates Committee, we knew why. Because, a very large portion of that 57.55 per cent was book adjustment against claims. We in the East have not got one penny as claims. Even my hon. friend the Minister had a one lakh claim. Here are people who have left everything in East Pakistan. They have not got anything. Historically there may be reasons for that. But least we can demand, we in the east, who have not received a penny in compensation, can demand that at least the question of loans must be looked into more sympathetically. We are told that the West Bengal Government has been asked to look in-

to this question. Up till today, we do not know what is happening. Distress warrants are being issued. This is a point that I want the hon. Minister to look into.

Three points I want the hon. Minister to answer. First, assessment of the problem: whether he has assessed the problem. Now that the West Bengal Government has failed, the Central Government has failed to live up to what they had promised in this House, since a detailed assessment has not been possible, I want them to constitute a committee with the help of all. Do not make it an executive machinery. Make it a public thing. Let everybody come; let them give evidence so that we can assess the problem. I want that we make a full statement regarding the fact that anybody who comes out of East Pakistan squeezed by Ayubshahi will have full help, succour and rehabilitation benefits, that we delete from the migration certificate the clause that he will not ask for any rehabilitation benefits. I specially ask what is the policy of the Government regarding the partially rehabilitated. Will they be rehabilitated? Will they get help? If they want to go to Dandakaranya, will they be permitted to do so? I do not want that this policy matter should be left to this Ministry alone. It should be taken up by the Prime Minister himself. Let him tell the country what is his opinion and what he is going to do about these refugees, who have been forced out of East Pakistan. We in India promised them that, after Independence, even after Partition, if any evil befalls them, we shall stand by them, we shall give them help and succour. Let us not go against that pledge.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: I have got a wire just now and I want to tell the House, which will be fully sympathetic—not unsympathetic at all. In the Maldá border, over 1,000 refugees have already come. Of them, six are dead. Over 1,000 had come a few days back. Now, it may be more. Relief measures

are needed immediately. I want to ask the hon. Minister not regarding relief measures alone. I want to ask whether Dandakaranya will be open for these new migrants who are coming, whether any decision has been taken. The West Bengal Government has already requested the Central Government to send the new migrants to Dandakaranya. I do hope that some decision will be taken. I agree that the residue problem cannot be given because the residue problem is still there and people are coming. What was wanted was the residue problem up to a certain date. The West Bengal Government, so far as I know, has got that problem. I do not want to reiterate some of the things that the hon. Member said. Some of them are true. In other things, she may have a little bit exaggerated. Substantially, they are correct; in substance, they are true.

Shri Priya Gupta: There should be relaxation in respect of education to the students, in admission in colleges and universities.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: May I know whether it is a fact that during the Partition a solemn promise was given to minorities in East Pakistan that if they were insecure or in danger, they would be given shelter in India and if so, what the Government proposes to do now when we find that they are being squeezed out of Pakistan?

Shri Indarajit Gupta (Calcutta South West): According to the latest report available, the amount which is being sanctioned as relief for these new migrants is Rs. 2.50 for a period of a fortnight per head. This works out to 18 naya paise or 3 annas a day. I would like to know how long it is proposed to continue this, whether the hon. Minister has given his approval to this sort of inhuman mockery, I would call it, to people who are in this helpless plight.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The question that was asked by the hon.

[Shri Mehr Chand Khanna]

Member Shrimati Renu Chakravartty on the 27th April, 1962 reads as under:

"Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

- (a) whether funds under different heads have been made available to the West Bengal Government for refugee rehabilitation;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the State Government does not agree to the suggestion implied in the decision to wind up the Union Rehabilitation Ministry that the East Pakistan refugee problem has been solved;
- (c) whether the assessment of the residual problem in rehabilitation of refugees in Eastern region has been completed; and
- (d) if so, whether a copy of the assessment report will be laid on the Table?"

I answered this question fully on that day. Actually, the question had not come up in the House, and no supplementary questions were asked, but this very question came up during the eight-hour debate on the Demands of my Ministry, from one direction and the other, and I answered it fully.

The debate went on for three days. I think it opened on a Thursday, and we adjourned at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, and then we again met on Monday morning, when I replied to the debate. To my ill-luck the hon. questioner, who is so much worried and interested in the unfortunate people who have come from East Pakistan was not present in the House on all those three days:

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: What is this insinuation? (*Interruptions*).

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: May I proceed? The hon. Member was not present on all those three days, and if

she had been, possibly, she would have learnt from the remarks that I made that most of these matters had been fully covered.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I have read every sentence of your speech on this matter.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: But I have no hesitation in going over that ground once again.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: The hon. Minister may answer this question why the assessment is not there.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I never interrupted my hon. friend even for a second when she spoke. Now, let her please allow me to go on.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: The hon. Minister is making only personal references. That is the difficulty. Let him just answer the questions raised.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As regards West Bengal, up till the end of the last financial year, we have spent a sum of Rs. 124 crores on the rehabilitation of displaced persons who have come from East Pakistan. Again, for the year 1962-63, for which the Budget has only recently been passed, I stated in reply to a question that a sum of Rs. 461.98 lakhs has been provided for. One thing is obviously clear that this process of rehabilitation is continuing; when we make a provision of nearly Rs. 5 crores in the Budget, it is implied that this work is being continued. That is point No. 1. The second point is that the money that we provide for the Dandakaranya project is not included in this Budget. For that, I believe—I am talking from memory—we have made a provision of about Rs. 7 crores for the year 1962-63.

Thirdly, I had stated in the House that there is sort of impression which has been created, very unfortunately for us, from some interested quarters, I do not know why, that the Rehabilitation Department has been closed.

I had read out in detail the letter that I had written to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. B. C. Roy, long before 10th April, 1962 when the new Government was formed, that there shall be a continuity of the rehabilitation work and that the old policy directives shall be followed. I would only read out three or four lines from that letter . . .

Shri Priya Gupta: It is relevant only to you and not to us.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna:..so that the House might appreciate the real position. I wrote to Dr. B. C. Roy on the 26th March, 1962 as follows. I am reading out only the last paragraph of that letter; which reads thus:

"My object in writing to you in such detail is to assure you that there would be no interruption in the continuity of the work of the Ministry and we are anxious that the continuity of policy and direction in regard to the completion of residuary work of the Ministry should be maintained".

So, there should be no apprehension in any quarter that the work of rehabilitation of the displaced persons from East Pakistan who have come either into West Bengal or into Tripura or into Assam is being suspended; that work is being continued. That is the first point that I would like to urge in this connection.

The second point is that Shrimati Renu Chakravartty has said that I have closed my office in Calcutta; that, I believe, needs a little explanation. That is a statement of fact. Nearly eight years ago when I was appointed Minister, I shifted my headquarters from Delhi to Calcutta and I stayed there all the time.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya (Serampore): Old story.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: But today the position is this, that the Minister is the same—I remain the Minister of Rehabilitation..

Shri Indrajit Gupta: The problem is the same.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna:..My Deputy Minister, Shri Naskar, remains the same, my Secretary remains the same....

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: Only additional jobs are there.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: My Ministry remains the same, except that there are now two departments of this Ministry; one is 'Rehabilitation' and other is 'Works'. So I want to set at rest any misapprehension or misconception that has been conveyed . . . , or is being deliberately conveyed, that we are shirking responsibility.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty made a very unfortunate remark. That was this. While addressing some Members sitting on this side of the House—I believe she was rather emotional!—she said: 'You do not appear to be interested in the rehabilitation of the unfortunate people from East Pakistan....'

An Hon. Member: A very true statement.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: If she had then been present here, she would have realised that more Members spoke from this side of the House for those unfortunate people than from the other side (*Interruptions*).

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: We were not given opportunity to speak.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: You said that the refugees by nature are habitual defaulters. That showed your mentality. Do not hide it. (*Interruptions*). We have seen your mentality.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The hon. Member is, in one way, fortunate, because he cannot hear what I say whereas I can hear what he says.

We have got as much sympathy for them as anybody else. If we did not

[Shri Mehr Chand Khanna]

have sympathy for these unfortunate people, should we have spent Rs. 125 crores? Would we be making another allocation of Rs. 12 crores? Would we be taking lands from Madhya Pradesh and Orissa and taking displaced persons from East Pakistan to Dandakaranya? (*Interruptions*).

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Why don't you come to the point?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Till six months ago, the hon. Member herself opposed violently the Dandakaranya scheme. She did not want a single Bengali to go from West Bengal to Dandakaranya. 'The scheme is bad, the scheme must be truncated, the scheme is no good....

Shri Priya Gupta: This is all wrong, *malā fide* propaganda. Do not say wrong things (*Interruptions*).

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I still maintain that Shrimati Renu Chakravartty was at one time not well disposed towards the Dandakaranya scheme.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Why?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am glad she has changed her view. I am glad that she is wedded to the scheme, she wants the people from East Pakistan to go to Dandakaranya.. (*Interruptions*).

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: See his mentality.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What about the Rajshahi refugees? Come to the point.

Shri Prabhat Kar: You reconstituted the Dandakaranya Authority because you were bungling at that time.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am coming to the Rajshahi refugees. Why are you getting excited.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: It is not your own money. It is the nation's money. We partitioned the country. Do not

forget that. What is this 'money, money'?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Shrimati Renu Chakravartty made another unfortunate remark. That is in reference to the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. She may be quite justified in saying that Pakistan has not honoured the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. They have not honoured the word of their own late Prime Minister. But I make bold to say that we have honoured the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. Every word has been honoured.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: No, no. You have also closed the border (*Interruptions*).

Shri Dasaratha Deb: You have not kept your word. How can you say like that?

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Don't talk like a child. We know you.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Yes, you know.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Being a refugee, you are an enemy of the refugees, I know.

Shri Deshpande (Nasik): Sir, I want to raise a point of order.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Sir, I crave your protection. I should be allowed to proceed.

Mr. Chairman: Order, order.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: That is what I say, he is acting like that.

Mr. Chairman: Such feelings have to be suppressed. They are not to be expressed. He must remember that.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am speaking about the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. There were two aspects of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact. One was we should invite those Muslims who had gone from West Bengal, Assam and Tripura to Pakistan. We invited them back, and I assert that, barring a

couple of lakhs, nearly 15 lakhs who went to Pakistan, all of them, came back. We restored them their holdings by and large, we gave them large grants, and we saw that they were rehabilitated. The story on the other side may be very unfortunate, and I said the other day, and I repeat, that while 25 lakh Hindus had come from East Pakistan at the time the Nehru-Liaquat Pact was arrived at, another 17 lakhs came till about 1957, making a total of 42 lakhs, but I should not be blamed for that.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What about the migration certificates you are forcing upon the Hindu refugees want to come away?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Again I feel that the hon. lady Member blows hot and cold in the same breath. She accuses Pakistan where the Hindus who are coming from East Pakistan are concerned, but when we start talking about the Tibetan refugees, her attitude is entirely different. My Government treats a refugee as a refugee. Whether they come from Tibet or East Pakistan, if they are refugees, they shall receive the same humane treatment.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What about the Rajshahi refugees?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am glad that she has spoken a little bluntly about Pakistan today. Up till now my friends opposite have never talked in these clear terms. She used the words that these unfortunate people were being squeezed out of Pakistan. I used those words myself in this very House the other day. I feel it is very unfortunate.

Shri J. B. Singh (Ghosi): Be proud of that.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: You need not be proud, of it, but I can tell you one thing. It is most unfortunate that even after 15 years of the partition, even after 15 years of the setting up of India and Pakistan, the minorities in Pakistan feel insecure today,

and they have to come out, while on the other hand the picture is that we are blamed that Muslims are coming from Pakistan and we are giving them shelter in Tripura and Assam.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What about the migration certificates for the Hindus?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am coming to that.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: You are beating about the bush. This is that way of avoiding things.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am not avoiding anything. I am replying to the points one by one.

Mr. Chairman: He has another five minutes now.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Very well. I will take another five minutes.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: And save yourself.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As far as the refugee problem is concerned, I leave it at that. I only wish to tell the House, as I have said before, that money is being provided for rehabilitation of the partially rehabilitated, but as I said in the House the other day, a partially rehabilitated can either be rehabilitated in West Bengal or in Dandakaranya. We pay the money hundred per cent. It is entirely for the Government of West Bengal to decide whether they would like these people to be rehabilitated in West Bengal, then, can provide the funds, but if they want these people to be taken to Dandakaranya—and I do hope I will have the co-operation of my friends sitting opposite—we will make arrangements for them in Dandakaranya.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Where is the assessment report?

Shri Dasaratha Deb: What about the new refugees?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Five minutes more, poor man.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: Let me talk about these unfortunate people who are now coming out of East Pakistan. I feel very sorry for them,....

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Sorry?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna:...because I know that 15 years ago when we had to come, we came under very difficult and tragic circumstances. It is past history today, but having lived in Pakistan, if a man has to leave his home after 15 years, it must be very hard and cruel on him. So, I feel that they deserve every possible sympathy and consideration.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What about the migration certificates?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am not going to leave any point out.

Don't do your hands like this. You only do it here I know. Better do it there. I know what you do there.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Yes. I have been 30 years in the Congress, more than 30 years. Rs. 60 crores were wasted on maintaining these camps in West Bengal.....(Interruptions.)

An Hon. Member: It was because of your bad management.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am talking about these unfortunate refugees and I made a very long statement in the House the other day.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: You waste all the money and put the blame on us!

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I beg to submit that in the statement, I made it clear in the House the position in regard to those people who are now coming from East Pakistan. Now you have to consider one or two facts or factors. One is whether we shall accept only those who come out on migration certificates or whether we should even accept those who come out without any migration certificates.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: When will you decide? They are already here.

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: Let us see how good you are (Interruptions.)..

Shri Raghunath Singh: Sir, such a senior Member is interrupting like this and is putting a bad example before young men in this House.

Shri Deshpande: I want to know whether this sort of exhibition of hot temper and the attempt to use the poor refugee problem for political purpose is proper and in order?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What is the political purpose? We want that something should be given to the refugees.

Shri Deshpande: Sir, on a point of order. They want to raise points but they do not want to listen to reason and argument (Interruptions.)

Mr. Chairman: Order, order. He may be allowed to proceed.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: If I am allowed to speak three minutes more, I shall state my point of view. I was saying that there is an open border between India and Pakistan—I believe about 700-800 miles. If anybody comes across it would be a question for the Government to consider in consultation with the Government of West Bengal whether each and every person who crosses from East Pakistan into India through an open border is to be accepted as a migrant or as a displaced person....

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: That is our question to you.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna:.....and is to be provided rehabilitation benefit. The other is the case of those who come on migration certificates; hard cases and eligible cases among them should be helped. There are certain conditions attached to the migrations certificates which are being issued today. If there is some difficulty in the procedure, it can be looked into.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: When?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The difficulties can be removed and possibly a more liberal attitude can be taken.

In regard to the issue of migration certificates, I again place before the House. It has to be considered whether it would be desirable or whether we may agree to this aspect of the matter that anyone who comes from East Pakistan or says he has come from East Pakistan without any migration certificate should apply for rehabilitation assistance. Secondly, impliedly Shrimati Renu Chakravartty has accepted one thing that there is not much room in West Bengal for these unfortunate people.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I never said it.... (*Interruptions.*)

Shri H. P. Chatterjee: The Santhals who have come over here—none of them have got any migration certificate.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: If you do not want to listen to me, I will sit down; it is already one hour.

Previously the position was, that was the view of the West Bengal Government that there were no lands in West Bengal.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: We have never accepted that position.

18 hrs.

Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj (Wardha): You can provide in West Bengal for those refugees who could be rehabilitated there.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: It has been suggested that they should be taken to Dandakaranya.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: They will never go.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: With a view to take them to Dandakaranya the main thing that has to be taken into consideration is we have to consult the Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. When we started taking the refugees from the camps in West Bengal to Dandakaranya, a decision was taken at the level of the Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal and of the

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Central Government, because the lands are to be provided by the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

The second point is this. There is not enough time, and you have already been indulgent to me. We want to look into the human aspect of this problem. We have every sympathy for these unfortunate people.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Why are you paying only Rs. 2.15? Please answer my question about relief? (*Interruptions.*)

Sri Mehr Chand Khanna: This thing will not suit you—what I am going to say before the House! What I am saying is this. Dr. B. C. Roy has written to me in this connection. I have also talked to him at about 3.30, an hour or two before the debate started. I am also meeting the Prime Minister, and I have got an appointment with him. We are going to have a decision with regard to the refugees within a day or two. Dr. B. C. Roy has told me that about 3,000 persons have come in from Rajshahi to Malda. They are living in very difficult conditions in Malda. The monsoon has set in. Whatever action has to be taken in regard to their relief or rehabilitation, this action has to be expedited. I wish to tell the House that I am looking into this matter. I have discussed it also with the Chief Minister of West Bengal and I am going to see the Prime Minister of India tomorrow. If need be, I shall also go to Calcutta and look into this problem on the spot.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: The reply is very unsatisfactory. (*Interruptions.*)

Mr. Chairman: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

18.02 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, June 21, 1962/Jyaistha 31, 1884 (Saka).