

*Stoppage of work
by Hooghly Pilots*

(b) whether any representation has been received for expediting the construction; and

(c) if so, when the construction will start and when will it be completed?

The Minister of Labour in the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Shri Hathi): (a) There has been some delay mainly due to the fact that the necessary plot of land has not yet been transferred by the Colliery Co.

(b) Yes.

(c) Construction will start as soon as land is made available by the Colliery Co. It will be completed within six months from the date of commencement.

Housing Scheme for State Government Employees

1362. Shri Maheswar Naik: Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have formulated a scheme under which State Governments are given grants for housing their employees on rental basis;

(b) how this scheme differs from low and middle income group housing schemes;

(c) what are the details of the grants given to different States last year; and

(d) whether the Union Government have ascertained the progress made thereunder in each of the recipient States?

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): (a) Yes.

(b) While the main purpose of the Low and Middle Income Group Housing Schemes is to enable the members of the general public to build and own their houses, the Scheme mentioned in part (a) of the question is designed for the sole purpose of providing houses on rent to the State Government employees.

(c) and (d). A statement showing the loan assistance given to the State

Governments and the progress achieved is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 56].

12 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: STOPPAGE OF WORK BY HOOGLHY PILOTS

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): Sir, I beg to make the following statement:—

The situation created by the withdrawal of their services by 40 of the Hooghly Pilots at the Port of Calcutta has now lasted a fortnight and movement of shipping is taking place only on a reduced scale from the 3rd May, 1962. The position at the close of the day on the 15th instant, i.e., yesterday, was that, during the period of 13 days from 3rd instant, 20 ships had sailed from the port and 22 ships had arrived, while 12 vessels were waiting at Sandheads and 31 vessels at the port for want of pilots. It is estimated that in normal circumstances 52 vessels would have sailed out of the port and 51 vessels would have arrived during this period of 13 days, as against 20 and 22 respectively.

The Calcutta Port Commissioner and Government are expediting arrangements by which the movement of ships to and from the port of Calcutta can be stepped up, the backlog cleared and movement of shipping restored to normal as early as possible. These arrangements include measures like using on an *ad hoc* basis the services of retired Hooghly pilots, qualified Master Mariners from other marine services of the port of Calcutta or elsewhere, naval personnel etc., some of whom after a course of training, can undertake pilotage duties at the port of Calcutta. Up to the 15th instant, the Port Commissioners had been able to secure the services of twenty such officers in addition to the 8 officers of the Hooghly Pilot Service, i.e. a total of 28 against the total strength of 46 pilots in the service. These measures will take some time to implement and some inconvenience to the public, particularly to trade and shipping inter-

[Shri Raj Bahadur]

ests, which Government regret, is unavoidable.

I also wish to take this opportunity to make a correction in a statement made by me in this House on the 12th instant. I said that out of the 40 pilots who had resigned hardly two or three belonged to the pre-1948 period. The number should be 11 and not two or three. I regret the mistake.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta South West): With reference to the statement of the 12th, to which the hon. Minister has just now referred, may I ask him whether it is not a fact that the meeting of the 15th and 16th March 1948—to which he referred that day and told the House that the final terms of settlement were worked out there and accepted by the pilots—was actually a meeting to discuss the terms and conditions of the British pilots who were being given a separate set of terms and conditions on the basis of contracts and that the two Indians, whose names were mentioned by him that day, were the only two Indians present as observers out of twelve pilots of whom the other ten were all British?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The Minutes of the meeting, with Shri Sukthankar, of the 15th and 16th March 1948 clearly state that the meeting was attended by the British and Indian pilots and discussed problems relating to all the Bengal Pilot Services and there was no question of any distinction between European and Indian pilots as such, with the exception that there were different sets of terms and conditions for different categories of pilots. There are four categories of pilots: Firstly, the Secretary of State's service pilots who were recruited before 1927. The second category was those who were recruited before 1927 but by the Governor-General in Council. The third category was those who were recruited between 1927 and July 1931. The fourth category was those who were recruited after 1931. There were different sets of terms and conditions regarding the emoluments and pen-

sions. They were discussed there and a copy of these terms was given to the pilots on the 15th. They again met on the 16th. They discussed and individually the pilots signed to signify their agreement regarding terms and conditions on behalf of the Europeans individually and on behalf of the Indians Mr. Pavri signed, because he held the office of an office-bearer in their association.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajpur): Is it not a fact that had the demand of the pilots association for an increase in their salary been granted, it would have amounted annually to an expenditure between Rs. 35,000 and 40,000 whereas the daily loss to the country is more than Rs. 40,000? I hope I have made this clear that the total emoluments that would have been due to them had their demand for increase.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is clear.

Shri Nath Pai: If it is so, in view of the fact that there is a complete stand-still on the Hooghly and the daily number of ships sailing is not 3 but 10 according to the statistics which are available, may I know what steps the Government are taking to initiate a kind of an honourable settlement acceptable to both the parties?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Firstly, I would like to say that there is no stand-still in the movement of shipping. In fact, even in this period, as against 52 and 50 normal movements of ships coming in and going out, we have maintained 20 and 22 which comes to about 40 per cent. However, that is one aspect of the matter.

About the question of financial implications, that is not the crux of the matter. The crux of the matter is whether we can grant to one particular marine service out of the six marine services a scale of salary or emoluments or allowances, which may not sound fair to others, who are doing more or less similar work or some other type of work in other fields of marine service. That is the whole question. In this case it, has unfortunately been so. The amount

may be small. But, the question is that, the Assistant Harbour rates down that in the Hooghly pilot service, the top most man, is getting a total emolument of about Rs. 2700 as against Rs. 2200 received by the topmost officer among the Assistant Harbour Masters. According to them there is already a difference of Rs. 500. The pilots say that the night fees that they earn should not be taken into account in the total of their emoluments and there should be a comparison between the basic salaries. That is the whole dispute. If we try to please the pilots, we are definitely bound to offend the Assistant Harbour Masters, who are likely to protest. In this case, unfortunately, one man's food is another man's poison.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): In view of the fact that as far as I understand the demands of the Hooghly pilots boil down to one thing at present—simply one thing—that is absorption as they were given an assurance long back of the Hooghly pilots under the Government of India—that is the request that stands—instead of trying to solve the situation or problem seriously, I am afraid the Government are trying to upset the situation by mobilising the services of....

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Members are making statements and giving arguments. I only thought I would allow two or three questions.

Shri Hem Barua: May I put it in the question form?

Mr. Speaker: Does he require my permission for a second time? I have been requesting that it should be brief.

Shri Hem Barua: I shall put it in the question form. Whether it is a fact that instead of trying to solve the situation or problem seriously, the Government are only trying to upset the situation by mobilising the services of British pilots and also the services of naval personnel?

Mr. Speaker: It is not a question. It is only giving an opinion.

Shri Hem Barua: It is a question, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: Not in my opinion.

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri (Berhampur): May I know what is standing in the way of the Government taking up the whole question of these Assistant Harbour Masters, Hooghly pilots and all the concerned services and put it on a sound footing instead of prolonging this crisis?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It was first taken up through the Lokur Committee, a Judge of the High Court. Again, because they were not satisfied with his findings, it was given to another Judge of the High Court, Shri Guha Roy. Then, they made certain representations even against this report which were examined by a Special committee. There is no question of prestige. We are taking it up most seriously. It is not fair to say that we are not taking the question seriously. The point is, it is a difficult situation. We cannot say that what Shri Hem Barua says is correct.

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): In view of the congestion already created owing to the non-movement of ships, and its effect on the trade and commerce of the whole of the Calcutta Port, may I know whether Government, instead of simply saying that they are trying to put in one or two ships every day, have any proposal to negotiate with these pilots and settle the matter, because the delay is causing a great hardship to commerce and industry?

Shri Raj Bahadur: In reply to the half-an-hour discussion the other day, I made it clear that the question of increase in emoluments for the Hooghly Pilots as also the question of bringing forward legislation to undo the Act of the then Constituent Assembly (Legislative), were difficult questions. Apart from these, if there is any other thing, we are always prepared to discuss and negotiate; we shall be glad to meet them and discuss and find a solution, if there are any legitimate grievances.