

Commission *inter alia* on new lines in backward areas”

प्रध्यक्ष महोदय : मि० डागा :

श्री शिवकुमार सिंह ठाकुर : प्रध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे संरक्षण चाहिए ।

प्रध्यक्ष महोदय : आपने संरक्षण का उपयुक्त इस्तेमाल नहीं किया । मि० डागा ।

श्री मूल चन्द डागा : प्रध्यक्ष महोदय, दुर्भाग्य की बात यह है कि राजस्थान से कभी कोई रेलवे मिनिस्टर नहीं बना जिसका मतलब यह है कि पांच पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं में कुल खर्च का केवल 5.7 प्रतिशत राजस्थान को मिला ।

मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि कभी माननीय सदस्य ने जो प्वाइण्ट आउट किया, क्या उसका आपने सर्वे करवाया है और उन पर कुल कितनी धनराशि खर्च होगी, यह आप बतलाने की कृपा करें ।

श्री मल्लिकार्जुन : मान्यवर, इसमें दुर्भाग्य की कोई बात नहीं है, भविष्य में रेलवे मिनिस्टर राजस्थान से भी हो सकते हैं ।

Less Wages paid to Indians by British Shipowners

*462. SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:

SHRI N. E. HORO:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been brought to his notice that the British shipowners have been systematically employing Indian ratings as cheap labours;

(b) whether Government are aware of a New Statesman article (London) disclosing recently that legally sanctioned racial discrimination by British Shipowners has deprived Indian sea-

farers of more than 200 million pound sterling wages over the last four and a half-years; and

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) Indian seamen including those employed by British shipowners are registered with Seamen's employment Offices at Bombay and Calcutta, under the Directorate General of Shipping. They are engaged from a common pool on Indian Articles of Agreement and their wages are settled by the National Maritime Board (NMB). It is, therefore, not correct to say that Indian ratings are employed by British shipowners as cheap labour.

(b) Yes, Sir. It is understood that the figure of 200 million represents the differential in wages of all non-European seamen and not of Indian seamen only.

(c) The wage terms and service conditions of all Indian foreign-going ratings (seamen), whether serving on Indian flag vessels or foreign flag vessels, are decided by National Maritime Board. This is a bipartite machinery comprising representatives of Indian seamen and shipowners. British shipowners are also associated with the Board since about 6,000 Indian seamen are employed on British flag vessels. The question of any racial discrimination against Indian seamen does not arise because they are based in India with entirely different standards of living and covered by N.M.B. agreement.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, have you heard the reply carefully? Since the Indians are accustomed to have a low calorie diet of 2200 calories per day, they should not have a diet of 3500 calories per day! That is the sum and substance of the reply. This is one of the worst conspiracies which has been revealed by New Statesman in Britain that the British shipowners,

the Indian Government and the Indian shipowners and other interests join hands to see that the Indian seafarers are exploited for all times to come. They have been exploited all along and they must continue to be exploited!

"New Delhi's opposition to wage equality is said to be due to fear that it would cause reverberations through the rest of the Indian economy."

The hon. Minister's reply has confirmed what is stated in the *New Statesman*.

"An Indian seafarer gets a weekly wage of 13.15 pound compared with 64 pound for the British counterpart. The Indian works the longer week (four hours extra) and spends more time at sea—often 9 months without leave."

Has the hon. Minister read this article in the *New Statesman* which was published roughly on 10th November in Britain? Then it says:

"In its evidence to 'ENDS' the Government of India was reported to have opposed wage equality also on the ground that Indian ratings might no longer be used."

If this is true, what action does he propose to take to end this discrimination. This is a sort of racial discrimination which in Europe means non-whites. Therefore, are we going to encourage this?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far as this matter is concerned, I want to make it very clear that this is a matter between the seamen's union and the ship-owners to decide about wages. There is the National Maritime Board which decide wages not only for the seamen working on Indian ships but also for the seamen working on other foreign ships. They decide once in two years. They have decided that the Indian seamen should get so much per month and according to that they

are getting. Now, it is only a matter between the seamen's union and the ship-owners. So far as this matter is concerned, Government do not come into the picture. It is not correct to allege that Government is a party to this. Government is not at all a party to this. We will be very happy if seamen are prepared to accept the wages that the British ship-owners are giving to their counterparts. We have absolutely no objection at all. But so far as the wages are concerned, it is true that whatever wages the British seaman are getting, the Indian seamen are not getting the same. But the Indian seamen's union have said that they do not want to get the same wages as the British seamen are getting. They have got their own difficulties. The Indian seamen's union and the shipowners have opposed the wage equalisation for the following reasons:

1. It will result in building up pressures for corresponding enhancement in the wages of Indian seamen employed on Indian vessels. This demand cannot be met. As Indian seamen employed both on Indian and British flag vessels are drawn from a common pool, it will create two distinct wage levels for the same categories of employees and result in serious tensions. As Indian living conditions have no relevance to the living conditions in UP, payment of an exceptionally high wage to Indian seamen employed on UK vessels will distort out wage structure.

2. The wage equalisation will be used to ultimately throw out of employment nearly 6000 Indian seamen working on British flag vessels, as this level of wage will rob the arrangement of its attraction in favour of the Indian seamen.

For these two reasons, the seamen's union feel that they should not accept the wages that their counterparts are getting.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I must thank the hon. Minister that he has

[Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu]

confirmed my apprehension that the Government of India and the ship-owners, the capitalists, are one with the British ship-owners and the British Government. (Interruption) Trade unions will never oppose increase in wages. May I know whether he is aware of the fact that Mr. Sam Mc Cluskie, Assistant General Secretary of the National Union of Seamen of Britain has said "the Indian Government told us the British rate would make the Indian rating as well paid as a "brain surgeon". One international transport workers federation official recalled a wage dispute in a British port involving an Indian crew, where the Indian High Commissioner rang to ask why they are stopping his chaps from getting higher wages. This has appeared in the *Ntw Statesman*. I would ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that the Labour Government in Britain had taken steps to equalise the remuneration of the coloured seafarers with the white seafarers, but with the advent of the Conservative Government, headed by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher the whole thing has been shelved. If that is so, what proposals has he to see that there is no discrimination in remuneration on grounds of the colour of the skin?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I have made it clear that this is a matter between the seamen's union and the ship-owners. So far as the UK Government is concerned, I agree with the hon. Member that it has taken a stand that there should be a wage equalisation and that there should be no discrimination. So far as we are concerned, the hon. Member is repeatedly saying that we are a party to this. I emphatically repudiate this allegation. So far as the Government of India is concerned, we have absolutely nothing to do with this problem.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: It is a silence of conspiracy.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: This is a problem between Seamen's union and the ship-owners. If the seamen's union are not prepared to accept higher wages, I have no power to force the seamen's union to accept higher wages. If they say "we do not want higher wages", then what can we do?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I had also asked whether the Indian High Commissioner had telephoned the National Seamen's Union in Britain. The hon. Minister cannot answer that question without consulting Shri Narasimha Rao. If he wants, he can ask for notice.

SHRI N. E. HORO: In the Government reply it is very clearly stated that there is discrimination in the wage structure and other service conditions. But the Minister has repeatedly stated that it is a matter between the seamen and the ship-owners. But this is a question which should be our concern because if there is discrimination between non-European and European seamen, it calls for rationalisation. After hearing the views which have been expressed here, I would like to know from the Minister the intentions of the Government and whether they will take up this matter with the appropriate authorities so that equalisation of pay is restored between Europeans and non-Europeans.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I have already made it very clear and I have only to repeat the same thing. The Government of India do not come into the picture at all. The Government of India have no power to force the seamen's union. If the seamen's union are not prepared to accept higher wages, what can I do.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that sometime back the British ship-owners offered to pay equal wages to the Indian seamen but the Government of India intervened and said "if you take that

money, you have to deposit the differential with the Government of India; if you do not do that, you would not be registered; we will not allow your registration". That is how you have made a misleading and wrong statement in the House.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I am very sorry that the hon. Member is not fully informed. At no stage have we said that we are against this equalisation of wage.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: This has appeared in the *Statesman*.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The hon. Member is going by whatever has appeared in the *Statesman*. The position is that the Indian ship-owners and the seamen have adopted a common approach; it has nothing to do with the Government of India. They have evolved a common approach. The Government of UK have adopted the policy of equalisation of wage. Their approach is that the National Maritime Wage Board rate would be payable to the Indian seamen, who are employed on Indian or foreign vessels and any differentiation between the NMT wage rate and the higher rate on foreign flags would be funded to the Indian Seamen's Welfare Fund. It is the decision of the seamen, viz., Forward Seamen's. It is not ours.

SHRI M. M. LAWRENCE: Sir, here the Minister said that trade unions have agreed with the Maritime Board. My question is: (a) Is it not a fact that only one section of the workers are represented in this Maritime Board? (b) Is it not a fact that an organisation which represents the seamen, viz., Forward Seamen's Union, have repeatedly requested the Government to end this discrimination?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: When I say, Seamen's Union, I say the recognised Seamen's Union. I do not know how many unions are here. If they are not recognised, I cannot take cognizance of them.

Vector Control Research Centre,
Pondicherry

*463. **SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:** Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) nature of activities carried on by the Vector Control Research Centre, Pondicherry;

(b) what are the antecedents of the present head of this centre;

(c) whether it has been alleged that funds of the Vector Central Research Centre have been diverted only for the development of Biological agents:

(d) whether it has also been alleged that biological agents like *Serraia Marceena* is being intensively studied and all the results of the experiments are supplied to foreign agents without the knowledge of the Government of India; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) to (d). A statement containing the required information is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(e) The question does not arise.

Statement

(a) The Vector Control Research Centre, Pondicherry is engaged in research on control of Vectors of malaria and filariasis with the objective of finding an effective method of controlling them.

(b) The present head of the Centre has been with the Indian Council of Medical Research since 1953. He has been associated with the Virus Research Centre of the Council from 1953 to 1970, with the ICMR/WHO Research Unit on Genetic Control of Mosquitoes from June, 1970 to June,