

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): Without reading the parent Act, you cannot follow. No extracts are given here.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I would suggest to Mr. Mukerjee that I will look into this matter, and it will not be too late if this matter is taken up tomorrow.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: The point is we want some little information.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We will do so. I will give ample opportunity to all.

Would the Finance Minister like to take up his motion earlier?

The Minister of Finance (Shri C. D. Deshmukh): I would rather Shri Alagesan takes it up first. There are one or two matters I have got to attend to.

INDIAN MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Deputy-Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to enable effect to be given to an International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, signed in London on the tenth day of June, nineteen hundred and forty-eight, to amend the provisions of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923 relating to life-saving appliances, wireless and radio navigational aids and to other matters affected by the said Convention, be taken into consideration."

As indicated in the title, and as explained in the Statement of Objects and Reasons the primary object of the Bill is to effect such amendments in the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923, as are necessary to give effect to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1948. The subject matter of the Bill is highly technical and essentially of a non-controversial nature. I shall try to give the back-ground for this Bill and explain some of the salient features of the Safety Convention, 1948, in the language of the lay person.

At present, important matters relating to safety of ships and of those on board are governed by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1929. This Convention deals with the construction of ships, life-saving appliances and wireless equipment to be carried by them, safety of navigation and issue of Convention certificates of international validity.

This Convention was ratified by practically all the maritime countries including India. This Convention was given effect to by India by amending the Indian Merchant Shipping Act in the year 1933. After the conclusion of the last world war, the United Kingdom Government called a conference to review the 1929 Convention in the light of further experience gained, particularly during the last war, and the scientific progress made since the coming into force of the 1929 Convention. The Conference was held in London between the 23rd April and 10th June, 1948, and was attended by representatives from 30 States including India and the other Commonwealth countries. The new Convention, which was adopted by the conference, came into force on the 19th November, 1952. The Government of India have also ratified the new Convention along with 18 other countries and it applies to India from that date.

Since India achieved her independence, there has been considerable development in Indian shipping and our sea-going tonnage now stands at more than 4,00,000 G.R.T. as compared to only about 1,50,000 in 1946. Indian ships are now regularly plying on international trades and ships of practically all the important maritime countries of the world call at Indian ports. It is, therefore, not only desirable but also necessary, that Indian Merchant ships should be maintained, in regard to safety, at internationally accepted standards. The Indian National Steamship Owners' Association, which is the representative body of Indian Shipping companies, has been consulted and they are of the view that India should subscribe to the new Convention. For this reason, as well as the reason that Indian ships will not be subjected to control at foreign ports, and to ensure that Indian Certificates secure international recognition, it has been decided by the Government of India to ratify the 1948 Convention.

✓ Now, I should like to take the time of the House a little and indicate the salient features of the new Convention, i.e., the 1948 Convention and how it compares with the old Convention, i.e. the 1929 Convention. The new Convention broadly deals with the same subjects as were dealt with in the old Convention, but it is wider in scope and represents an advance over the old Convention. As in the case of the old Convention, the new Convention applies to ships engaged on international voyages, i.e. voyages from a port in a country to which the Convention applies to a port outside that country and vice versa. The

new Convention consists of 15 Articles and a number of Regulations are annexed to it which form an integral part of it. These Regulations are divided into six Chapters.

Chapter I contains General Provisions relating to Surveys and Issue of Certificates. Whereas the 1929 Convention applied to all passenger ships and cargo ships of 1,600 tons and above, the 1948 Convention applies to all passenger ships and cargo ships of 500 tons and above. Again, as regards these cargo ships, the 1948 Convention provides for the issue of a new Convention Certificate called Safety Equipment Certificate, and the cargo ships also are obliged to carry life-saving appliances which was not the case before.

Chapter II deals with construction of passenger ships and provides for certain standards for compartmentation of ships with a view to their retaining reserve buoyancy, if damaged. It also contains provisions for the fire protection in accommodation and service spaces and for the carriage of fire detection and extinction apparatus in passenger as well as cargo ships. It introduces stability regulations to ensure that a vessel shall be able to withstand the listing effects of damage. These provisions did not apply to cargo ships before. Another new feature of the 1948 Convention is that every new ship is required to carry on board such information in writing about the ship's stability as is necessary for the guidance of the Master in efficient handling of the ship.

Chapter III prescribes life-saving appliances and for the first time these provisions have been made applicable to cargo ships. Chapter IV deals with provisions regarding Radio telegraphy and Radio telephony and the nature of watches to be maintained on ships. The term 'Radio' has been uniformly used, whereas previously, both the terms, 'wireless' and 'radio', were used. One new feature is that cargo ships of 500 tons and above but less than 1,600 tons, are now required to carry either Radio telegraphy or Radio telephony at the option of the owners. Chapter V deals with general safety of navigation and provides for communication of dangers to navigation and for the issue of distress messages. Whereas passenger ships of 5,000 tons and above only were required to be provided with a direction finding apparatus previously, now all ships, passenger and cargo, of 1,600 tons and above are obliged to be fitted with it. The last chapter, i.e., Chapter VI provides for

the international regulation of the carriage of grain in bulk and to ensure that proper and reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the grain from shifting; similar provisions are also made for the carriage of dangerous goods and governments are authorised to issue Regulations governing their carriage.

There is one particular matter which is of special interest to India. The new Convention like the existing one has realised that it will be impracticable to enforce full compliance with the Convention requirements relating to construction and life-saving appliances in the case of passenger ships employed in the carriage of large number of unberthed passengers in special trades which include Indian deck passenger and pilgrim traffic. The Convention has, therefore, repeated the Articles providing for exemption of this class of ships from the full requirements of the Convention subject to certain conditions. One of the conditions is that steps shall be taken to formulate general rules in concert with the other Contracting Government directly interested in these trades. At present, the Indian deck passenger and pilgrim traffic trades are regulated by what is known as the Simla rules, 1931, which constitute an international agreement arrived at among countries interested in the unberthed passenger traffic. These rules were formulated at a Conference convened in Simla in 1931 in pursuance of the 1929 Convention and prescribe lower standards of construction and life-saving appliances in relation to ships carrying unberthed passengers. The Deck Passenger Committee, which was appointed by the Government in 1950 to examine the general question of improving the conditions of deck travel and safety standards in unberthed passenger ships, has suggested certain modifications to the Simla rules. India has agreed to take the initiative in convening the proposed conference and further necessary action in this matter is intended to be taken up as soon as possible now that the 1948 Convention has been ratified and has come into force.

As already stated, the object of the present Bill is to enable the Government of India to implement the relevant provisions of the Convention which was signed by the Indian Delegation on the 10th June, 1948. The Bill proposes minimum amendments to the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923, conferring powers on Government to enforce the provisions of the Convention. The provisions of the

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Bill generally apply to Indian ships and to foreign ships when in Indian waters. The subject matter is so technical that detailed arrangements have to be relegated to rules. The Bill provides for the rule-making powers and our technical officers are already preparing the necessary rules. In some respects, the powers sought go somewhat beyond those strictly required to implement the Convention, so as to enable the Government to apply the Convention standards to ships plying on our coastal trade wherever possible. For instance, although the provisions of the Convention relating to Life Saving Appliances apply for the first time to cargo ships, Indian coasting ships have always been required to carry Life Saving Appliances under the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923. It is, however, the intention when making the rules, to provide for lower standards, or for exemption from, or relaxation of, the Convention requirements consistent with the safety of ships, to avoid undue hardship to the operators of coastal ships.

I am afraid I have been boring the House with technical information. It cannot altogether be avoided in explaining the provisions of a Bill of this nature. Many of the clauses of the Bill are consequential to the ones introduced in conformity with the new Convention. By subscribing to this Convention which can be called a Charter for the Safety of Life and Property at Sea, we shall enable India to take her rightful place among the great maritime countries of the World. Though I called the Bill non-controversial at the beginning of my speech, this does not take away from the importance of it. I have every confidence that the House will accept the Bill.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to enable effect to be given to an International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, signed in London on the tenth day of June, nineteen hundred and forty-eight, to amend the provisions of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923 relating to life-saving appliances, wireless and radio navigational aids and to other matters affected by the said Convention, be taken into consideration."

Shri Nambiar (Mayuram): I have to state at the outset that due to the short notice given, we could not prepare in full the points which we wanted to present in this case, because

there was dislocation in the programme. That is my first difficulty.

Coming to the Bill, I say that we must follow this Convention which is intended to ensure safety of life at sea. And I would add that a comprehensive Bill should be brought forward, which will look into the needs of the whole industry as such including those of the workers employed in that industry. We know that about a lakh of workers is employed in this shipping industry today. But unfortunately the shipping industry in India is very weak compared with those of the other maritime countries of the world. We are still at the infant stage, and are called upon to compete with the foreign countries which are far advanced in the shipping industry.

Now, while promoting these new appliances and new methods, and while looking to the needs of the travellers, we must also see to the needs of the workers as well in the industry as a whole. For instance, the Seattle Convention had recommended many improvements on the conditions of the workers, such as wage increase, provision for overtime work, an improvement in the hours of working etc. But none of these questions has been taken up by the Government of India. They have taken up only the latest Safety Convention and want to bring in legislation to cover that aspect only, disregarding the original promise of a comprehensive Bill covering all aspects of the industry. When we are looking to the needs of the persons who are seamen, we must also look to the needs of the workers who are employed in this industry. It will be surprising to know that the *sekhanis* and other workers in the shipping industry are working for 84 hours a week. It might be said that this is all beyond the scope of the Bill...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member knows too well that this is all beyond the scope of the Bill. I allowed general remarks to the effect that the other portion relating to the conditions of service of the workmen ought to be taken on hand, and the hon. Member regrets that that has not been included, and a comprehensive Bill has not been brought forward. But to go further into the details of those things will be absolutely beyond the scope of the Bill.

Shri Nambiar: I was submitting this so that I may present to the House the present position and show how it requires a modification.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: But we are not going into the details of the other Convention. The remark on the improvement of the general conditions of the workers etc. is an important suggestion that was made in that Convention. So far, it was all right.

Shri Nambiar: But my point is the Government of India are accepting this Convention, and not the Seattle Convention which relates to workers.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We ought not to go into the details of the other Convention which is not before us.

Shri Nambiar: What I want to submit and drive home to the hon. Minister is that the condition of the workers is so horrible that they are working for about 84 hours a week, and so there is the need to bring in a legislation restricting their working hours to 44 hours a week, instead of 84 hours, and there are many other such aspects, into which I do not want to go now.

I would like to point out another thing with regard to the application of this Bill. The 1948 Convention for the safety of life at sea defines international voyage as.

“a voyage from a country to which the present Convention applies to a port outside such country, or conversely”.

That means a voyage from any port from India to any port outside India. Now in the case of a voyage from Karachi to Chittagong, which is a voyage from one port of Pakistan to another port of Pakistan, no safety appliances are required. But if the voyage is from Chittagong to Calcutta, then this Convention applies. What I am saying is this. I am for all sorts of safety measures, whether it is with regard to coastal shipping or between short distances or long distances. I want to see that the Indian shipping industry which is now in an infant state should develop. But in the case of ships plying between short distances, there should not be the hard application of these rules which will tell upon the industry as it is today. Therefore, what I want to point out is that these rules should not be literally applied to ships plying between port which are near each other. That is why I have quoted the instance of Chittagong as well as Calcutta. Whereas Chittagong and Karachi are considered to be places inside the same country and they do not require the application of these rules, it looks ridiculous that a voyage between Chittagong and Calcutta will not come under the same category and

will be considered to be an international voyage, meaning thereby that all these rules are to be strictly applied. Therefore, there are certain anomalies—lacunae—in the application of these rules. The Government should see that such lacunae are done away with and also see that the Indian shipping industry, which is in an infant stage, is helped and not teased in this way. But the Bill as it comes today will certainly injure the Indian shipping industry.

Another point I want to drive home is the treatment our Indian national shipping industry gets as compared with foreign shipping industries. We know that still there is that flag discrimination. This has been repeatedly pointed out by the Indian shipping industrialists. This discrimination means that they do not get proper berthing and other facilities when they go abroad whereas we give to the foreign ships which come to Indian ports all such facilities. This discrimination is continuing and the Indian shipping industrialists have repeatedly protested against this. But the Government do not take care of that. The Government, on the other hand, give all possible facilities to these foreign ships which come to Indian ports; whereas the Indian ships which go to the foreign ports are not given that proper consideration—particularly by United Kingdom and such other big countries. This point must also be considered by the Government and they must see that the Indian shipping industry is helped. Otherwise, by the application of these rules strictly, without looking into the needs of the shipping industry as a whole and without looking into the needs of the seamen as a whole in India we are not going to advance the cause of the industry nor of the workers. That is my contention.

Recently, you might have heard, Sir, in Calcutta they wanted to enforce a 'medical certificate' for every voyage that is to be undertaken by a seaman. There was a big strike in connection with that. It is true that the Government have temporarily relaxed this condition; but they have not yet restored the condition which was prevailing earlier. They said that the Seattle Convention recommended this medical examination. Disregarding all other aspects of the recommendations of the Seattle Convention, they have picked up only this particularly recommendation, that they can use it against the seamen in Calcutta. That was the position. This situation also requires reconsideration.

Then, there is the question of visa,

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visa for seamen. For instance, the seamen are asked to bring in with their visa a C.D.C. certificate. And there is a long queue in the Calcutta port. It is said that certain persons who have got a place in the queue in advance are offered a bribe of Rs. 2/- so that they get away from the line. These things are going on in Calcutta today. The Government keep their eyes shut to these facts.

These are the practical difficulties and grievances of the seamen as well as the industry as a whole, and the Government must come forward with a comprehensive legislation which alone will satisfy all the interests concerned; otherwise this sort of piecemeal legislation will not serve the purpose. This is all what I have to say.

Shri Damodara Menon (Kozhikode): I think this measure is something which must be supported by everybody because it brings our shipping in tune with international convention. I agree with Mr. Nambiar that we have not yet had sufficient time to study the full scope of this Bill. But as I was hearing the hon. Minister and going through some of the provisions contained in the Bill, I found section 28 which gives exemptions from the application of this Bill. I want the hon. Minister to explain why fishing vessels are exempt from the provisions of this Bill. It would be a bad thing if we do not take particular care to see that, as far as possible, every vessel that goes out into the sea is provided with a safety certificate and safety equipment which are in keeping with international convention. Now, there are big ocean-going steamships which confine their attention to fishing. Why should we exempt them from the application of the safety provisions contained in this Bill, which are in keeping with international convention? I can quite appreciate that countrycrafts are exempt from this provisions. But even there, I would like the hon. Minister to explain what safety provisions are now applied. We know that especially on the West coast we construct many countrycrafts and much of the trade is also carried on in countrycrafts. Some of these countrycrafts go to foreign ports also. I know that these countrycrafts from the Malabar coast, during fair weather seasons, go as far as Arabian ports. So I want to know what safety provision we have in regard to these countrycrafts.

Another point which my hon. friend, Mr. Nambiar, touched is regarding seamen—their conditions of service and all those things. Strictly, that does not come within the scope of this Bill, but I would like the hon. Minister to tell the House what steps Government propose to take to see that the conditions of service of these seamen are properly maintained. I know, in regard to the recruitment of seamen also much remains to be improved. We have in India many of our own ships which employ a number of foreigners as seamen. I want the hon. Minister to give me an idea of the number of foreigners who are employed as seamen in our vessels and what steps Government are going to take to see that only Indian nationals are employed as seamen in our own vessels at least.

Now, regarding recruitment, the persons who generally go to these vessels as seamen and who have also a natural inclination for the sea come from Cochin and the Malabar coast. The people there are sea-faring by nature. I find there is no recruitment centre for seamen in that coast and they have mostly to go either to Calcutta or to Bombay or Visakhapatnam to get themselves recruited. I want the hon. Minister to go into this question and see that the people of Malabar and also Travancore-Cochin, who are sea-faring by nature, are given ample opportunities to get themselves recruited as seamen. I would even request the hon. Minister to have a recruiting centre started at Cochin and, if possible, also a training centre, though that point does not come strictly within the scope of this Bill. I hope the hon. Minister will enlighten the House on these matters also.

Shri Alagesan: I am grateful to the two hon. Members who have made valuable suggestions. Mr. Nambiar was talking of workers' conditions and you correctly ruled, Sir, that that was beside the scope of the present Bill. But, that does not mean that Government is not solicitous about the conditions of workers.

Mr. Nambiar was referring to some of the provisions of the Convention which is called the Seattle Convention because the Convention was made at a place called Seattle. So far as the shipping in the private sector is concerned, it is a question of adjustment and negotiation between the employers and the seamen and the Government is prepared to do everything

in its power to see that workers get their due.

Then, he was referring to voyages undertaken between Karachi and Chittagong and Calcutta and Chittagong. It is known, that Karachi and Chittagong are within Pakistan. So, since Pakistan itself has accepted the Convention, we shall hope that they will do something to implement this Convention.

As I have said in my speech, as regards the provision of these safety appliances etc. we have insisted that even coastal ships should carry these appliances. It is true that we do not want to over-burden the coastal ships with all these things and that is why a relaxation is provided. Even so, we have been insisting on some at least of these provisions being observed by ships engaged in coastal trade. Our shipping industry is a very young one and we do not like to over-burden it. They will be given ample time to make adjustments to the new Convention and it will not be imposed suddenly on them.

Then my friend talked about flag discrimination. As far as Indian ships are concerned, there is no flag discrimination in foreign ports, as regards port, berthing and other facilities. In fact, it is such a delicate question that it recoils on us if we talk too much of this flag discrimination. In fact, our ship-owners and shipping industry are interested in seeing that this theory of flag discrimination does not work against our interests. When government try to help Indian shipping there is always a fear that the other countries may come upon us and tell us that we are discriminating against them. Some of the powerful maritime countries who have got very large and well-established mercantile fleets have sponsored this theory of flag discrimination and, without knowing the full consequences, some in India have also taken it up. It is not a question of our being discriminated against but it is a question of misrepresenting or mis-interpreting and which we would like to give to our own shipping industry as discrimination against foreign shipping. We have to guard against that. I can assure the hon. Member that as regards port and berthing facilities, there is no discrimination against Indian shipping in foreign ports and the ship-owners have not made any complaint with regard to that.

My hon. friend, Mr. Damodara Menon talked of country craft and wanted to know why fishing vessels

are exempted from this. They are less than 500 tons and they do not carry passengers, and they have been exempted. The Sailing Vessels Committee has recommended what should be done with regard to safety of these country craft. The Officer who was Chairman of that Committee has been put in special charge and he is now looking into the various improvements that he himself has suggested as Chairman of the Committee.

My friend pleaded for recruitment of seamen from Travancore-Cochin State. Now, there are two establishments, one at Visakhapatnam and another at Calcutta for the training of these ratings. In the training establishment at Visakhapatnam the recruits from Madras, Travancore-Cochin and Bombay are taken and in the Calcutta establishment—now of course it is mostly for displaced persons—recruits from other States are taken. There is a proposal to have another establishment in Saurashtra and when that establishment is created, then perhaps there will be greater chance of taking more people from some of the Southern States like Travancore-Cochin etc. in the Visakhapatnam establishment.

Shri Damodara Menon: Nothing in Travancore-Cochin?

Shri Alagesan: There is no proposal to start one in Travancore-Cochin. It is our idea that with these three establishments we will be able to recruit the number required, namely about 2,000 a year. But, as I said, when the establishment in Saurashtra is put on its feet, then there will be greater chances for recruitment from some of the Southern States like Travancore-Cochin. I think, I have covered the points raised by the two hon. Members and I commend my motion to the House.

Shri Nambiar: I should like to have one clarification, Sir. Is it not a fact that the Chairman of the Sea Transport Committee of the International Chambers of Commerce, which held its conference at Paris recently broadcast through the radio a speech entitled the "Indian Shipping Industry", which aroused so much of feeling in Indian industry? The hon. Minister said that with regard to flag discrimination it was not brought to his notice that such discrimination is there. Here, in their own magazine *Indian shipping* published by the Indian National Steamship Owners'

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Association, it is very clearly stated that there was so much discontent due to this. The broadcast of Sir Anderson who was President of this Conference has created so much discontent. Is the hon. Minister aware of it and has he done anything with regard to that.

Shri Alagesan: I do not have the details relating to particular speeches or broadcasts and the reactions that have been created in India. I should like to have time. I can assure him that I will go into it.

Babu Ramnarayan Singh (Hazari-bagh West): May I know one thing; how seamen are recruited and whether there are centres in the States for their recruitment?

Shri Alagesan: There are no centres in the States for recruitment; they have been mostly recruited at Bombay and Calcutta and a smaller number at Madras also. I referred to the training establishments at Calcutta and Visakhapatnam.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There are two training centres and the recruitment is done at the ports. The question is.

"That the Bill to enable effect to be given to an International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, signed in London on the tenth day of June, nineteen hundred and forty-eight, to amend the provisions of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1923 relating to life-saving appliances, wireless and radio navigational aids and to other matters affected by the said Convention be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We shall now take up the clauses. I find that there are no amendments from clauses 1 to 30.

Clauses 1 to 30 were added to the Bill.

Clause 31.— (Transitional provisions)

Shri Alagesan: I may explain that the convention has been accepted by nineteen maritime countries, and it has come into force from the 19th November, 1952. Since we could not pass this Bill before that date, we want to have this amendment made.

Amendment made:

"In page 11, lines 16 and 17, for "the date of the commencement of this Act" substitute "the 19th day of November, 1952".

—[Shri Alagesan]

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That clause 31, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 31, as amended, was added to the Bill

The Title and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

Shri Alagesan: I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East): I had no intention of intervening in this debate, but certain points have been raised in the course of it which made me feel that perhaps at this last stage of the passage of this Bill we might have further elucidation on those particular matters.

First of all, I want to refer to the sort of assurance given by the hon. Deputy Minister that Government does bear in mind the idea of bringing another piece of legislation which would bear upon the living conditions of those who work in our shipping industry. In regard to that, I wish Government were a little more specific, because we feel that the condition of seamen, particularly in the part of the country which I happen to represent, is giving cause for considerable anxiety. I know, of course that Government have recently taken certain measures in regard to the comparative relaxation of certain rigid standards of medical examination, which have been welcomed in Calcutta. But I know that there are certain other very serious grievances which remain to be remedied.

Reference has been made to the Seattle Convention. In regard to that, the standing complaint of labour is that while medical examination standards are sought to be heightened with reference to that Convention, other provisions which related to the amenities of seamen have not been really taken into consideration. But I am happy that Government have given a sort of assurance that these things have not escaped their attention and that certain measures are likely to be introduced in not very distant future.

I also intervened in this debate because a certain reference was made

by my hon. friend, Mr. Damodara Menon, to non-Indian nationals who happen to be forming a very important proportion of workers in the shipping industry. I did not hear the Deputy Minister give any specific answer in relation to that point, but I want to say that perhaps while we are certainly entitled to expect that Indian nationals ought to man our ships as far as that is practicable, at the same time we ought to realise that at the present moment, on account of certain important objective historical conditions, Pakistani nationals form a large proportion of our seamen. In Calcutta Port, for example, more than 80 per cent. of the seamen come from Pakistan. These common working people from Pakistan come to Calcutta, as they have been coming there for generations, as a matter of course so to speak. To them, the bifurcation of India into Pakistan and India is really an artificial operation. They come to India in the natural course, as they have been doing for so many years, and there is not the slightest idea in their mind that as far as their work as seamen is concerned, they are non-Indian nationals. In the present posture of Indo-Pakistan relations, we ought to remember this salutary condition of things.

As far as the seamen of the Calcutta region are concerned, they come mostly from East Pakistan, and I can assure the House that they come here in order to earn their bread, having no ideas about belonging to another country, which is a foreign country. This whole recent phenomenon of the division of our country is something which has taken them by surprise, so to speak, and if we now take any step which would disturb their normal expectations of employment, surely that is going to be not only a very undesirable step from the human point of view, but also an undesirable step from the point of view of the relations between India and Pakistan.

10 A.M.

I know that every encouragement ought to be given to the recruitment of Indian nationals as seamen, but at the same time we have these Pakistani seamen coming to our country just in order to earn their bread. Besides, they have accumulated through generations of experience a kind of skill in seamanship which is almost unequalled. I think that they hold the record in the world as far as cheapness combined with efficiency is concerned. These people have, therefore, to be reassured.

At the present moment, there is some difficulty over their passports

and visas. They have a certain certificate called the C.D.C. which is usually acknowledged by international practice as being tantamount to a passport or visa, but I am told that there have been many representations regarding the difficulties they are experiencing when they have to come to India after having gone home, having completed their tenure of service on a particular ship. I want to draw the attention of Government to the inconvenience which has lately been caused by the delay in the grant of visas to these Pakistani seamen who want to come to Calcutta as a matter of course in order to earn their living. On these Pakistani seamen, the efficient conduct of our shipping industry very largely depends. These Pakistani seamen have really no idea in regard to the political and other involvements of the division of our country. In their mind, I am sure, the division of India is not really a fact, and therefore we should, while trying to recruit as many Indian nationals as possible as seamen, do nothing which would increase the apprehension in the minds of these very experienced Pakistani seamen. Their work has been unexceptionable so far, and that is why I wish Government, first of all, to reiterate the assurance that they gave to the effect that they are going to do something about the living conditions of seamen in our shipping industry, and in the second place, to assure us that nothing is going to be done which will disturb the good feeling which exists as far as the Pakistani seamen working in Indian ports are concerned. I also wish Government to assure us that their difficulties, specially in regard to medical examination and grant of passports, would be sympathetically considered.

Shri Nambiar: I want to obtain some clarification from the Deputy Minister. Can we expect a comprehensive legislation with regard to the service and working conditions of seamen, specially about the hours of work? Will the hours of work be limited to 44 hours? Is there any measure under the contemplation of Government? Are they considering this point at all, or not at all considering it? If they are considering it, will any measure be brought within a very short time? These are the points on which I want some clarification.

Shri Alagesan: I can straightway tell the House that we propose to bring a comprehensive legislation. I can also tell the House that it will include some of the provisions that find a place in the Seattle Convention. At this stage, I am unable to say to what extent we would be able to go,

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but there will be ample time for hon. Members to scrutinise the measure when it is placed before the House, and it can be passed to the satisfaction of all concerned.

As regards the point raised by my hon. friend, Mr. H. N. Mukerjee, it is a sort of contradictory approach. He wants that there should not be any delay in recruiting Indian nationals to serve in our ships. At the same time, he does not want any dislocation to be caused to the Pakistani seamen. It is rather difficult to adjust these two things: he is trying to go slow and fast, if I may say so, in this matter. In fact, anxiety was expressed that we should try and recruit almost the entire seamen from Indian nationals and see that the seamen who are employed in our ships are cent. percent. Indian nationals. At present, it is true that a large percentage of the seamen come from, technically, a foreign country, viz., Pakistan. They also come from Goa, which is in Portuguese India. We are anxious to increase the percentage of Indian nationals working in the ships and towards that end we are issuing what are called C.D.Cs—continuous discharge certificates to recruits, so that they can be taken back. Also New C.D.Cs are being issued to a large number of ex-naval ratings who served in the Navy during the war and have since been demobilised.

I have already referred to the Rating Training Schemes at Calcutta and at Visakhapatnam. Up till now we have turned out about 1,982 trainees from these two establishments. We propose to have another establishment also and soon we may be able to turn out about 2,000 trainees every year. They will gradually replace the foreign nationals who are now working in our ships.

As regards difficulties about visas, I am given to understand that no such difficulties exist and we do not want to place any unnecessary restrictions in the way of Pakistanis who are now employed in our ships.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES OF OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT BILL.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): I beg to move.*

"That the Bill to provide for the salaries and allowances of certain

Officers of Parliament, be taken into consideration."

The Bill follows the pattern of an Act that has been passed by this House and the other one, namely the Salaries and Allowances of Ministers Act of 1952. The position is that under Article 97 of the Constitution the salaries and allowances of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the House of the People and the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Council of States may be fixed by Parliament by law, and until provision in that behalf is so made, such salaries and allowances as are specified in the Second Schedule shall be paid to them. The appropriate portion of the Second Schedule (Part C) says:

"There shall be paid to the Speaker of the House of the People and the Chairman of the Council of States such salaries and allowances as were payable to the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly of the Dominion of India immediately before the commencement of this Constitution, and there shall be paid to the Deputy Speaker of the House of the People and the Deputy Chairman of the Council of States such salaries and allowances as were payable to the Deputy Speaker of the Constituent Assembly of the Dominion of India immediately before such commencement."

Under these provisions, the salaries and allowances of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman were fixed by an order of the President. The salary of the Speaker was fixed at Rs. 3,000 per mensem, with sumptuary allowance of Rs. 500, with a fully furnished residence free of rent. Similar facility was also given to the Chairman of the Council of States. In regard to the position of the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairman, the provisions varied, naturally, as under the previous arrangement a salary of Rs. 1,500 was paid per month to the Deputy-Speaker and the Deputy Chairman plus the daily allowance that they were drawing, but they had no other amenities.

The present intention is outlined in the Bill. I might also add that when the salaries of Ministers were brought down from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 2,250, both the Speaker of the House of the People and the Chairman of the Council of States made a voluntary cut in their salary, equal to the amount that was reduced in the salaries of Minis-

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.