

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

2555

LOK SABHA

Saturday, 19th March 1955

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(No Questions: Part I not published)

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

STRIKE IN CALCUTTA PORT

Shri Kashiwal (Kotah-Jhalawar): Under Rule 216, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Railways and Transport to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The recent strike by the ship-owners and stevedores in Calcutta Port."

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): The loading and unloading of ships in the Calcutta Port was affected since the 14th March 1955. The situation arose over a dispute relating to the registration of tally clerks employed by stevedores under the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) scheme. Under this scheme, tally clerks employed by the stevedores alone are entitled to registration. The Dock Labour Board, however, felt that as tally clerks were also employed by the shipping companies, registration of the tally clerks employed by the stevedores alone would be fraught with

complications. The Board, therefore, requested Government to amend the scheme so as to include tally clerks employed by shipping companies also within it. As the whole question of the working of the scheme in Calcutta and other ports was under inquiry by a Committee specially appointed for the purpose, it was decided to wait for the conclusion of the work of this Committee before making any changes in the scheme which, in the light of experience, appears to require modification in various aspects. The tally clerks, however, insisted on immediate registration and attempted to enforce their demand by adopting go-slow tactics. Thereupon, the steamer agents decided to disperse with the use of tally clerks until the go-slow tactics were given up. According to the employers, other staff of the stevedores and steamer companies who work on vessels supervising loading and unloading operations were unable to carry on their work owing to acts of intimidation by workers belonging to the particular union of which the majority of the tally clerks are members.

In this context, the Port authorities, after unsuccessfully trying to settle the dispute, sought the assistance of the Chief Minister of West Bengal who, after giving a hearing to all the parties concerned, took steps to increase the police protection necessary to prevent interference with dock work and offered to look into the matter of decasualization of tally clerks in consultation with the Chairman of the Calcutta Port Commissioners and the Central Government. As a result of the Chief Minister's intervention, the situation has improved and work has returned to normal.

2560