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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

727

728

HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Monday, 23rd February, 1953.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

3-5 P.M.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

STRIKE OF MAIL VAN WORKERS OF THE
P. AND T. TRANSPORT SERVICE, CALCUTTA

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have received notice of an adjournment motion from Shri Nambiar re: the strike of a large number of mail van workers of the P. and T. Transport Service, Calcutta on 18th February, 1953 and the Hunger Strike by the workers that followed affecting the Postal Services of all sections, caused by the victimisation of the Secretary of the Transport Branch of the Union and the continuing discontent and tension among the postal employees all over.

May I know from the hon. Member, the strength of these mail van workers?

Shri Nambiar (Mayuram): About 200 were on strike. There was.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall come to it one after another. When was he victimised?

Shri Nambiar: He was victimised on the 18th. His name is Kalidas Sanyal, Secretary of the Transport Branch of the Union, Calcutta. He was victimised and there was a hunger strike following that. Some paid agents of the Engineer beat them and there was a very big tension. That is still continuing.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Why was he victimised?

Shri Nambiar: This particular Engineer had some ill-feeling against him.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It is a matter of punishment?

Shri Nambiar: Yes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Has the hon. Minister anything to say?

The Minister of Communications (Shri Jagjivan Ram): The facts of the case are that one of our employees was charged with indiscipline and insubordination and he was discharged on the 17th. On the 18th there was a lightning strike for a few hours in which a small number of workers were involved. The strike was called off at 5 P.M. the same day. The work is running smoothly now.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Ordinarily, I would suggest this to hon. Members. The administration has to be carried on, no doubt, in a very generous and careful manner with respect to the employees. At the same time, here and there the recalcitrants have also to be pulled up and punished. If the other employees resort to strikes, that is not a very convenient procedure. Therefore...

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): Whether it is punishment or victimisation is a matter for judgment in each case.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: My difficulty is this as spokesman of the Parliament. It is not possible for Parliament to find in each case whether it is victimisation or punishment which is called victimisation. It may also be victimisation. Under these circumstances, the normal channels of appeal and so on must be resorted to. I hope the hon. Member will certainly advise those people not to resort to hunger strike, and if they are still on hunger strike, to give it up. I do not think this is a matter in which the time of the House should be taken.

Shri Nambiar: I would request the hon. Minister to reconsider the whole matter.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: If only the hon. Minister says that, there may be possibly reconsideration, there may be a conflagration. Let it be set at rest.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have received the following Message from the President:

"I have received with great satisfaction the expression of thanks by the Members of the House of the People for the Address I delivered to both the Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 11th February, 1953."

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have to inform hon. Members that I have received the following letter from Shri Shantilal Girdharlal Parikh:

"I am, suffering from heart trouble since 8th February, 1953, and am completely confined to bed. I have been also advised by my physician that I should take complete rest up to at least March 15th. Under the circumstances I trust you will please grant me leave up to the 15th March, 1953 and oblige."

Is it the pleasure of the House that permission be granted to Shri Shantilal Girdharlal Parikh for remaining absent from all the meetings of the House up to the 15th March, 1953.

Leave was granted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I am bringing up even this matter of short absence to the notice of the House, so that they might be intimated with the cause of absence, but if the House is of opinion that the Speaker may exercise his discretion and grant leave in case of such short absences—of course, it is not going to disqualify him though he wants to intimate to the House—I need not trouble the House by bringing up such matters.

Hon. Members: Yes.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): Except in the case of marriages!

RAILWAYS BUDGET GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House will now proceed with the general discussion of the Railway Budget. Before the discussion commences, I have to announce to the House that I fix the maximum time-limit for speeches as 15 minutes for each hon. Member excepting the hon. Minister of Railways for whom 45 minutes or more will be allowed, if necessary. As regards spokesmen of particular groups are concerned, I am prepared to allow them 20 minutes each, but the total time allowed—whether it be for the spokesmen or any other Members—must be within the limit of time allotted to each group.

Shri Frank Anthony (Nominated—Anglo-Indians): In opening this debate on the Railway Budget, I wish, first of all, to pay a tribute to the late Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar. I knew him for many years before he became a member of the Cabinet. When he was Railway Minister, I was in constant touch with him. There is a fairly wide-spread fallacy today, particularly among neophyte Ministers and Deputy-Ministers, that to be a good administrator, one has to be stern and unfeeling. Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar was, in my opinion, not only a good administrator, but a great administrator. And I think he proved that a real administrator is a person who approaches his problems with a human and warm approach. He was an administrator of long standing, but he was not in any sense a bureaucrat. It was refreshing to see the way in which he cut through red tape. He never hesitated to revise the decisions of General Managers, or even of his own colleague, Shri Santhanam. No case that was brought to his notice was not dealt with by him. He found time—and I am commending this practice to the Railway Ministry—to deal with every case that was brought to his notice. The case of the humblest railwayman received his immediate and personal attention. The country will be poorer for his passing away.

I now come to the Railway Budget and to the Minister's speech. After I read the budget and analysed the speech, my reaction—and frankly I am sorry that the Railway Minister is not here—was a reaction of gloom. It was almost a sense of foreboding. The Minister's speech has been variously described as being objective, as being non-controversial, as being factual. The great defect that I found with it was that it was not factual, but that it was peculiarly objective in that it painted an unduly rosy