

[Shri Narayanankutty Menon]

enrolling themselves as voters in their constituency.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri G. B. Pant): Sir, there had been some petty incidents there and some persons who were supposed to be sympathisers, whether of Communist or of other political parties, have been involved in them. Cases have been registered by the police. The police have been on the alert right through so that full freedom might be enjoyed by all concerned, and it is possible that the police might have arrested some persons who were sympathisers of the Communist Party. They have also arrested or they have at least registered cases against others also. If the police do not take action in such cases, there is greater danger of people being prevented from going to the registering officers and getting their names registered. The mere fact that in a particular case some persons were arrested and they were discharged does not prove anything. Well, of course, there are cases often prosecuted which end in discharge or acquittal, but that does not suggest anything and I do not think that can be a matter for an adjournment motion.

I do wish that no wrong action be ever taken against anybody, and also that full opportunity should be given to everyone to get himself registered or to file an objection or an application for getting himself registered. If any further instructions are needed, I shall do so.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: There is one wrong statement. The hon. Minister said that the police might have arrested people from other parties also.

Mr. Speaker: No; he said that they might have discharged others also.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: There is a statement exhibited in the news column here, a statement by the District Superintendent of Police that

there was rioting there by the Communists, 41 persons have been arrested and arms have been recovered. He has said that no other cases have been charged in that connection.

Shri V. P. Nayar: While that is the position according to the police, and the Magistrate does not find it even necessary to adduce evidence and he discharges the accused immediately they are produced, I would like to have one clarification from the hon. Home Minister. If these 41 persons have been denied the opportunity to file their claims or objections as stipulated under a particular rule of the Representation of the People Act, what is the remedy open to them? They were in custody during that period. It has been found that they were not guilty at all, there was no charge and the charge framed was groundless.

Shri G. B. Pant: I think if they are unduly prevented from filing their objections or their petitions, then the time should be extended in their case.

Mr. Speaker: In view of the statement from both sides, and particularly the statement from the hon. Minister, I do not think it is necessary to admit this adjournment motion.

12.10 hrs.

EXPLOSION ON AMRITSAR-PATHANKOT RAILWAY TRACK

Mr. Speaker: I have received notice of another adjournment motion from Shri Vajpayee regarding an explosion on the Amritsar-Pathankot railway line on the 29th November, 1959.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): I have also given notice of a calling the attentive motion about this matter.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): This matter was referred to yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member who has tabled this adjournment motion says that the accident has resulted in the track being blown up, the Amritsar-Pathankot passenger train engine suffering damage and the dislocation of passenger and goods traffic on the route. Already, a calling attention notice received on the same subject has been referred to the Ministry concerned. Shri D. C. Sharma informs us that he has tabled a short notice question also. Is the hon. Minister in a position to reply now?

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta (Mahendragarh): I have also given notice of a short notice question on this subject. No statement should be allowed to be made on this motion because we will be deprived of chances for raising short notice questions.

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): It is open to the Congress Members to move an adjournment motion.

Mr. Speaker: Shri Shahnawaz Khan.

Shri Feroze Gandhi (Rae Bareilly): The Minister is not in his seat.

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): We have not got very detailed information available with us. But this much I can say. From the information received at 21.35 hrs. on the 29th of November, 1959, 6 ABP was held up at mile No. 59/17-18 due to explosion of a bomb between Jakolari and Sarna. No one was injured or killed but the track was badly damaged. There was slight damage to the engine. Civil and police officers, Gurdaspur and Pathankot, were advised and they inspected the site at about 23 hours. After inspection, SP Gurdaspur permitted 6 ABP to proceed to Pathankot which suffered

3 hours and 40 minutes' detention and arrived at Pathankot at 1.50 hours. Further traffic over the affected portion has been stopped till repairs are completed after making a search of the track and the area in day-time. One ABP was cancelled between Pathankot and Amritsar and also 57 Down between Gurdaspur and Pathankot. Passengers of 57 Down proceeded by bus. AEN and ATS, Amritsar, are at site.

Shri D. C. Sharma: This is the second incident that has taken place on the same line.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I have not yet finished. ASO (Spl. Int.) of the headquarters office has left yesterday for the scene to make further enquiries. AIG/GRP and the civil and police officers, Gurdaspur and Pathankot, have inspected the site. AIG/GRP, Punjab, is making enquiries on the spot and further details are awaited.

Shri Vajpayee: A similar explosion occurred on the same section on the 16th January this year. It appears that Government have failed to take necessary precautionary measures to safeguard the track. It is a serious matter and in view of the national crisis that we are facing, the railway lines ought to be properly guarded, and the House should be given an opportunity to discuss this question.

Mr. Speaker: Are not adequate steps being taken to guard the railway lines?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Every possible step is being taken. A very thorough enquiry was held on the last occasion and the conclusion was that the accident was a result of a definite act of sabotage from somebody outside our borders.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Ferozabad): Then that becomes more serious.

Shri Shah Nawas Khan: We have introduced continuous patrolling of the line. The G.R.P. and the R.P.F. are patrolling the line and all necessary precautions are being taken.

Mr. Speaker: When an accident took place in January, it was said that it was the result of a sabotage. This accident is not said to be in any way connected with the other incident. The hon. Minister has made some enquiries, and he is awaiting some further information. As soon as he gets some more information, he will place it before the House, and if any such need arises from the facts elicited, I shall certainly consider the desirability of having a discussion on this matter, if necessary. At present, I am not called upon to give my consent to this adjournment motion.

12.18 hrs.

RE: EXPLOSION IN ASANSOL.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Yesterday, I gave notice of an adjournment motion about the explosion in Asansol, and it was brought up in the House. There was also reference as to whether it was a Central subject or not. The subject was raised in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, and the Chief Minister of West Bengal has said that it being a Central subject, he has already written to the Central Government. The death-toll in this accident now stands at 46.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Ferozabad): More may die in view of the serious injuries caused.

Mr. Speaker: When this matter was brought up yesterday, the hon. Deputy Minister said that full information was not yet available. To the best of his

recollection, no permit was given, and it seems to have been a case of unauthorised storing of ammunition. Therefore, the explosion must have occurred. It is also open to the State Government to give permits upto 50. I do not know all the units there, and they may be of a smaller account. Now, the Chief Minister of West Bengal seems to have stated that this is a Central subject and so on. In view of the large casualties that have resulted, may I know what exactly the hon. Minister has to say in this matter?

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukandapuram): Licensing is subject to the Central Government's inspection and comes within the duties of the Inspector of Explosives. It is not the absolute power of the State Government.

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri K. C. Reddy): I have not received any detailed report from the Inspector of Explosives who has proceeded to the spot. The Chief Inspector of Explosives who is at Nagpur has also been asked to go to the spot. We are awaiting a report from these authorities. According to the Explosives Act, the District Magistrate also has to make a preliminary enquiry when an accident like this takes place. We have not received any detailed report till now. We are awaiting a report. As soon as I get a report, I would be able to make a statement on the matter giving the reasons for this accident and other particulars.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: In such matters, there must be quick action. At present, 46 people have died, and more may die because serious injuries have been caused. They have not yet received a report. They must be very quick in these matters.

Shri K. C. Reddy: I quite agree that this has been a very serious accident,