

STATEMENT RE. DEATHS DUE TO
FOOD POISONING AT LOK
SAHAYAK SENA CAMP, SAS-
THAMKOTA

The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon): Sir, in the statement made in this House on the 30th April, 1958 about the tragedy at the Lok Sahayak Sena Camp at Sasthamkotta, Government undertook to make a further statement.

From the information now available and statistics collected I am to inform the House that the Lok Sahayak Sena Camp which commenced on the 10th April, 1958 was composed as follows:—

Officer-in-charge, Captain	1
JCOs	4
Other Ranks	52
Civilian Personnel	31
Trainees	525

Food provisions were supplied to the Camp, for reasons of distance previously stated in the House, by a local contractor who is also the President of the local Panchayat Board. The food was cooked by the staff of the Lok Sahayak Sena Training Team. On the 29th April, 1958, poories, vegetables and tea were served for breakfast at about 08:15 hours. Some of the trainees complained that the taste of the poories was bitter. The officer-in-charge of the Camp and one of the J.C.Os. tried the food themselves and found it to be bitter. They also noticed that some crows and monkeys had eaten earlier some portions of the food which had been thrown away and had died soon after eating the same. Further consumption of all food was immediately stopped and prompt measures for medical aid and to remove the affected persons to hospitals were initiated.

The time of the appearance of the symptoms of food poisoning varied from individual to individual. The affected persons were removed to four different hospitals located at Mavelikkara, Chowarah, Quilon and Kadampanad. Several children and one adult of the locality who were not in any way attached to the I.S.S. Camp but

were hanging around also ate some of this food and were affected. They were also removed to hospitals along with the inmates of the Camp. The persons who were then admitted to hospitals from the Camp on the 30th April, 1958 were as follows:

Officer-in-charge	1
JCOs	2
Other Ranks	8
Civilian Personnel	5
Trainees	89
Adult other than LSS personnel	1
Children not attached to the camp	27
TOTAL	133

Persons who have died as a result of food poisoning are:

JCO	1
Other Rank	1
Civilian personnel	3
Trainees	45
Adult other than LSS personnel	1
Children not attached to the Camp	14
	65

Of the remaining 68 persons, by 19:00 hours on the 3rd May 1958, 59 had already been discharged and only the following persons had remained in hospitals:

Other Rank	8
Trainees	9

In the statement made in the House on the 30th April, it was stated that a large proportion of those who had died were military personnel. This does not now appear to be strictly correct. The error in the despatch of information seems to have occurred because the officer-in-charge of the Camp had become a casualty and information regarding the dead had therefore to be collected primarily through the civilian doctors at the various hospitals. They reported the number of dead as that of military

personnel on the assumption that the L.S.S. trainees who were in uniform belonged to the Army.

On receiving the news of the tragedy, the Chief Minister of Kerala who happened to be in the locality, accompanied by local State officials visited the Camp. Several Lok Sahayak Sena personnel who wished to go home to their families were allowed to do so under the advice of the Chief Minister of Kerala.

The Government of Kerala paid Rs. 25 per dead person for funeral expenses and Rs. 7 per head to the trainees who thus returned home. Return of the total amount of money thus disbursed by the Kerala Government has been asked by the Chief Secretary, Central Government will therefore fully reimburse the Kerala Government.

All cooked food and uncooked food-stuffs at the Camp were sealed. All items in use at the Camp are being checked by a medical officer of the Army Medical Corps and supplies are now being obtained direct from Army sources.

Samples of food taken on the day have been sent for analysis to Trivandrum, Madras and Calcutta. They have also been sent for analysis to the Armed Forces Medical College, Poona. The analysis at the Armed Forces Medical College, Poona, by the Pathologist has not been completed and we have so far not officially been informed of the result of the analysis from Trivandrum, Madras or Calcutta.

Although a large proportion of the trainees have already left the Camp, the Camp has not been formally dissolved. Some 50 trainees are now in the Camp, and some of the trainees who had gone away are returning to the Camp. The training course will be completed. It has been decided to issue certificates of training even in the case of those who have not completed the full period as a major portion of the training had been completed before the tragedy.

A court of enquiry under the provisions of the Army Act, to which I

made a reference the other day, has been convened and has assembled on the morning of the 5th May. An officer of the State Government has been co-opted on the court of enquiry.

Government have sanctioned an ad hoc grant of Rs. 200 to the family of each trainee or civilian employee who died in this tragedy. The families of the J.C.O. and the other ranks who have died will receive their family pensions according to their entitlements. Pending enquiry, steps are being taken to sanction provisional family pensions immediately.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukundapuram): In this particular instance the compensation paid seems to be inadequate. I submit that after the court of enquiry has submitted its report Government should reconsider the compensation because all these young men have died.

Mr. Speaker: Government will take into consideration all these.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: The second point is this. This is only a *post mortem* examination of what happened in the Camp. Information has come that these poisonous food-stuffs have been delivered by a particular ship in the port of Cochin and Tuticorin.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Member has brought to my notice that food poisoning has occurred by the consumption of some bags of *atta*, etc. shipped from the port of Bombay. He also informed me that some poisonous substance was also loaded along with it. Though it is labelled 'poison', somebody does not appear to have taken care and poison leaked out and contaminated the food-stuff. He wants a discussion to be held in this House on the lines of the discussion that took place in connection with the crackers. Wherever they were despatched, they exploded and a number of people died. Here, wherever the food-stuff had been distributed a number of people had been affected by food poisoning, not only in this Camp but elsewhere also. Ordinary civilians have been

[Mr. Speaker]

affected. I have therefore, allocated an hour for the purpose of discussion. I am giving notice to all the Ministers concerned: Health, Transport, Defence, etc. so that they may say if they have anything more to say or contribute something. The hon. Members will in the meanwhile study all reports regarding death. My desire is that further contamination of the food-stuff or its distribution to various people may be avoided. That is the object of it.

Let us not pursue this matter now.

COMMITTEE ON ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

SEVENTH REPORT

Shri Mulchand Dube (Farrukhabad): Sir, I beg to present the Seventh Report of the Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House.

I also lay on the Table a copy of the Statement showing the names of Members who have been absent for 15 days or more continuously during the current session up to the 21st March, 1958.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with the Twenty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 5th May, 1958."

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Let me place the motion before the House.

Motion moved:

"That this House agrees with the Twenty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 5th May, 1958."

Dr. Krishnaswami (Chingleput):

Sir, the number of hours allotted for the discussion of the Gift-tax Bill is very limited. Most of the hon. Members wish to throw light on the controversial provisions. I, therefore, suggest that the Business Advisory Committee's recommendation, while generally accepted by the House, in this particular case may be revised by us to 9 hours or even 10 hours.

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): Sir, there are 47 clauses to this Bill and about 15 Members have put down their note of dissent for various reasons. This is one of the important Bills of this Parliament. I would say that 6 hours is too short a time for a Bill of this nature, and it should be extended to 10 hours.

Shri Khadilkar (Ahmednagar): Sir, there are about 104 amendments already tabled to this Bill. I have not received copies of any Government amendments, but I expect that there will be some Government amendments also. In view of all these, I would suggest that the time allotted for discussion of this Bill should be extended at least by three hours.

Shri Bimal Ghose (Barrackpore): Sir, I support what has been stated by Dr. Krishnaswami and others. I also want to know one thing. Certain items put down on the agenda before seem to have been pushed out now. I would like to know what is happening to those items which were formerly put down on the agenda papers.

Mr. Speaker: They will come up.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukandapuram): Sir, about the motions standing in my name for discussion of the annual reports of the Employees State Insurance Corporation, three reports for the years 1954-55, 1955-56 and 1956-57 have been clubbed together. During the last session there was no time and it was pushed on to this session. The discussion of those reports was fixed for today. It seems that it is not coming up today. I submit, Sir, that reports for three years have been