

Shri Datar: One full typed page.

of the Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital."

Mr. Speaker: It may be laid on the Table of the House. We have got a lot of other work to be done today.

Shri Datar: I lay the statement on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-3420/61].

Shri Dasaratha Deb: May I know if any aid or loan would be given to the people who have been affected by the fire accident?

Shri Datar: I shall read the statement.

Mr. Speaker: No, no. All that the hon. Member wants to know is, whether any aid or loan will be given to those persons who lost their houses, for rebuilding their houses.

Shri Datar: It would be given.

Mr. Speaker: That is all that is necessary. The hon. Member will look into the statement in detail later on.

I have to make an announcement. There are two more Calling Attention Notices. Under Rule 197(3), not more than one Calling Attention Notice would be admitted for the same day, but today being the last day, the other Calling Attention Notices were put down on the Order Paper. The statements in respect of these will be laid on the Table of the House by the Ministers concerned, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel, as is usual in such cases.

(ii) STRIKE BY CLASS IV EMPLOYEES OF LADY HARDINGE MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL.

Dr. Melkote (Raichur): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Health to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The strike by more than 300 class IV employees and sanitary staff

The Minister of Health (Shri Karmarkar): Sir, I lay the statement on the Table. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-3421/61].

(iii) SHORTAGE OF COKE SUPPLY TO ENGINEERING UNITS IN COIMBATORE

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan (Coimbatore): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The situation arising out of the shortage of coke supplies to the engineering units in Coimbatore."

The Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Sardar Swaran Singh): Sir, I lay the statement on the Table. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 106].

Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan: Those of us who have given notices may be given a copy of the statement.

Mr. Speaker: Yes; possibly she is not aware that any hon. Member who has given notice of a question or any other matter can get a copy of the answer or the statement as the case may be. Only, the hon. Member must apply . . .

Dr. Melkote: Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention . . .

Mr. Speaker: I have already said that statements in regard to Calling Attention Notices No. 67 and 68 will be laid on the Table of the House.

Dr. Melkote: I want some information. Is it a fact that in 1956 some American soldiers, dead-drunk, beat the workers of the Lady Hardinge Hospital and College and the matter was compounded by the management for a partly compensation of Rs. 800 only from the American Embassy and even which amount has not been paid up till now to the affected employees?

[Dr. Melkote]

Is it a fact that about 10 workers stand dismissed for attempting to organise a meeting in their union premises for the collection of the Gandhi National Memorial Fund on the ostensible plea that prior permission of the Principal had not been obtained?

Is it a fact that the then Deputy Director-General of Health Services who was then the Principal of the college, insultingly pulled down the National Flag in 1959 which was flying over the premises of the union on the eve of the Founder's Day, hoisted by the union to welcome the then Home Minister, the late Pandit G. B. Pant, and the present Health Minister?

Is it also a fact that on the workers staging an immediate protest strike, the then Principal rehoisted the flag and tendered unqualified apology to the workers and told them that he would be the first of the superior administration to join this union? Is it a fact that in spite of drawing the attention of the hon. Health Minister to this fact, no action seems to have been taken so far against him? On the other hand, he has been recommended for an extension in service for one year.

Mr. Speaker: How long is it?

Dr. Melkote: Only one more question, Sir. Is it a fact that the Lady Principal of the Lady Hardinge Medical College pulled down the National Flag, trampled it under foot some ten years back?

Shri Karmarkar: An old story.

Dr. Melkote: Is it a fact that workers in all the Government medical institutions particularly in Delhi are insulted and harassed by the management and their grievances are neither redressed nor are their cases referred to arbitration or adjudication and in fact not even heard and hence an atmosphere of soothing dis-

content is prevailing amongst all the workers of all the hospitals?

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): It is a serious situation—the National Flag being trampled.

Shri Bal Raj Madhok (New Delhi): It is a most important hospital, and when such is the situation there, we should have a discussion over it.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Who is the Principal of this college?

Mr. Speaker: I would not have allowed those questions to be put but for the fact that, even though some of these things may be an old story, something wrong has been committed. I do not know whether there is legislation to prevent such things. We have passed legislation here, to the effect that if any item of income has escaped assessment, even eight years earlier, it is open to the authorities to revive it now, notwithstanding the fact that they were busy all the time. Improperities have been committed and the Ministers go on saying that it is an old story! Evidently, not having satisfied with what is happening, the hon. Member, who is a responsible person, has given notice of this, in the House. Evidently he has exhausted all other remedies and has come to this House and placed these facts before the House. If what he says is true, I am afraid the hon. Minister must look into the matter with greater attention than what has been given to it so far.

Shri Karmarkar: Yes. The workers of the Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital had many demands. Thanks to Dr. Melkote who is their adviser, the Ministry went through these matters. A responsible officer of the Labour Ministry was also there. As a result of that, there was an understanding which has been recorded by the Labour Conciliation Officer or whatever he was. Both the parties signed that. All the other demands were conceded.

There are only two points—not the flag incident—about which the workers have gone on strike. All the other points are finished. They are not alive, according to them also.

Dr. Melkote: It is not correct.

Shri Karmarkar: The notice that we have received does not mention this flag incident. There are two points which remain as a result of those understandings, about which the workers are dissatisfied, according to our information. One is that the staff wanted to have representation on the management of the college. That was not a condition agreed to at the time of the original agreement which was arrived at just four months back. Everything was according to that agreement—not the management of the college which is a semi-Government institution,—but with the Government themselves, who reviewed the cases and agreements arrived at from 1948 till now. There are nine such cases.

I should like to tell the House that in order to prevent our Ministry from taking any partial view of the matter, in view of the fact that they have already arrived at a decision—some of the people were dismissed or discharged—what we did was, we sent up the matter to the Home Ministry. One of their responsible officers went into the matter. He reported that there was no reason for us to interfere in the matter. Therefore, we did not interfere in the matter. That is one live issue that the workers have put forward.

I entirely appreciate all that the hon. Member said about the Flag. All that is past story. All that was gone into and they agreed. I am prepared to place on the Table of the House a copy of the agreement that was arrived at, and a copy of the letter that we have received so that the House may be in possession of the whole picture. With regard to this also, after the officer of the House Ministry gave a finding, we accepted

that finding. It was fully gone through. The workers were given an opportunity. We requested the concerned union to send any additional facts which the workers might have. They said "We have nothing more to add."

Now, after the decision was conveyed to the concerned union, they have come up with some information which I have again forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs, along with the original papers. That is the present position.

Mr. Speaker: What about the persons having been dismissed in connection with the National Flag incident?

Shri Karmarkar: Within an hour's time, I shall place a copy of the statement which contains the original agreement. (*Interruptions*). All their original complaints were gone into and they have arrived at a solemn agreement.

Shri Ram Sewak Yadav (Barabanki): There is no question of an agreement.

Shri Karmarkar. Out of those issues, one live issue remains. All other things have been dealt with and they are satisfied. If you look at the copy of the agreement and if you still feel that there is reason to reopen the original matters on which they agreed, then I am entirely at your disposal. But within an hour's time, I shall submit a copy of the agreement which was signed just a few months back. The live issue now is not the National Flag incident but the reinstatement. It was sought to be interpreted by them, and my hon. friend thought that a review meant implicit reinstatement.

Mr. Speaker: The simple point is this. Even now some people have not reconciled themselves to the

[Mr. Speaker]

change-over. They would have liked the foreign Government. There are here and there whispers, "Oh! That Government was much better." There are some people who are die-hards, who have not yet reconciled themselves; they would salam the foreigner and not the Minister here. Under those circumstances, if they have taken a wrong action of having dismissed a person for having hoisted the national flag, it may not be convenient for those persons who have been brought up in a tradition. They never took part in the civil disobedience movement or never worried themselves. To such people even getting freedom for this country and making the ordinary man feel that he is the king of the land was itself an anathema.

The hon. Member says a man was dismissed because he hoisted the national flag and the principal brought down the flag and trod upon it. These are very serious allegations. I do not know how any person could enter into an agreement. A person cannot be allowed to commit suicide. I do not know how any person could enter into an agreement saying notwithstanding your dismissal, I will go home. For what charge? For having pulled down the national flag or for dismissing a person for having hoisted the national flag? Apart from the question of bread, I feel this is a very serious insult to the House. Therefore, there is no question of agreement in this matter. I would request the hon. Minister to go into this matter once again and satisfy Dr. Melkote. Dr. Melkote was a Minister himself. He is a responsible Member of this House; he does not make charges easily. I would urge upon the Minister to look into this matter again. If he satisfies me, I am sure he can satisfy Dr. Melkote also.

Shri Karmarkar: Lest some misunderstanding is created, I personally went through all the records of the case and I did not find anything on the Government papers showing that

the flag was trodded upon or punishment was inflicted for hoisting the flag. Actually the then Secretary Dr. Jivraj Mehta, went to the scene in 1948 and he himself found no reasons to condone any recalcitrant attitude and things like that. The matter was gone into. I have not seen anywhere the question of the flag being trodded upon. I requested Dr. Melkote to produce some proof.

You can understand my views in the matter and what I would have done. For me there is no question of any limitation of even a hundred years if such a thing is done. My friend did not oblige me by bringing any evidence. How am I to go beyond the records before me?

Not only that. The party went to the court of law and the suit was dismissed. After all that, how am I to proceed, as a responsible Minister responsible to this House, on the basis of something which does not exist on the records, so far as proof is concerned? Therefore, I am prepared to share with you all the papers.

Dr. Melkote: I challenge the whole statement. The reason for the dismissal has been.....

Mr. Speaker: Did he show those papers to the Minister?

Dr. Melkote: I did. I told him, "Would you sit with me and go through all the papers?" (*Interruptions*).

Shri Karmarkar: This is an important matter and the hon. Member is my friend whom I hold in the highest esteem. There was nothing top secret about this. I shared my whole files and my officers sat with the hon. Member for days together. He knows every bit of the papers on record. I beseeched him to give me some paper and evidence, but he has not given me. What am I to do?

Dr. Melkote: Sir, I demand the sitting up of a Committee of this

House to look into this whole question and give their opinion.

Mr. Speaker: There is no harm if I go a little out of the way. I request the hon. Minister and the hon. Member to come to me and let me also go through it. This is only a suggestion. I want to avoid misunderstanding. Both the Minister and the Member are honourable. There seems to be some misunderstanding. Of course, I cannot compel them to come to me, but if both of them agree, they can kindly come over to me and let me also look into this matter.

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur). When are they to meet you? You can fix the time also.

Mr. Speaker: That is a matter between us.

12.36 hrs.

POINT OF INFORMATION GENERAL ELECTIONS

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Bishnath): Mr. Speaker, since Parliament is adjourning today, I want to ask a question I have given a calling attention notice about the question whether polling days will be declared as paid public holidays. When we raised the question with the Election Commission, they told us that it is for the Government to do it, because it is not within their jurisdiction. I had written to the Prime Minister also. I had spoken to the Law Minister and I also put in a calling attention notice. Everything has been disallowed. Would you permit me to ask this question through you to the Law Minister whether Government propose to take any action in view of the fact that in most places in West Bengal, electricity is so short and we do not have one day on which all factories are closed? The entire industry is stalled. Therefore, it will be very difficult for industrial workers to cast their votes unless it is a paid holiday. Two hours respite does not do the work.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member raised the same point the other day.

The Minister of Law (Shri A. K. Sen): Yes, Sir. I said on that occasion also that so far as the Government are concerned, they have advised all the State Governments to declare local holidays for the areas where polling takes place. As I said, efforts rest with the Chief Election Commissioner to fix the date which is either a declared local holiday or a public holiday like a Sunday. More than that, it is not within the competence of the Government to compel the employers to grant paid holidays on the polling days. Employers of factories and commercial establishments—i.e. non-government employers—are also requested to grant adequate time to the workers to enable them to go to their respective polling booths to cast their votes. I do not know what time is usually granted by these factories and other establishments, but we have not any power up till now to compel these factors or other non-government establishments to allow paid holidays for the polling days. This time, booths would be set up very near the voters of every area and in fact, the number of booths will be far greater than than the number during the last two elections. It is expected that in regard to factories and industrial establishments, it will not be inconvenient for the workers to go and cast their votes during the time allowed to them by these non-government establishments for casting their votes.

If in future, we find that really any impediment is deliberately sought to put in the way of workers casting their votes near the factories and so on, we would consider introducing adequate legislation in future. But up till now orders have not been passed either for the Chief Election Commissioner or the local Government to compel any particular course of action. Up till now no complaint has been received by the Chief Election Commissioner in the last two elections that workers in any industrial area or other areas where commercial establishments are functioning had suffered from any disability in