

negotiations to explore the possibility of arriving at an amicable settlement with the Unions have been initiated. The Committee was appointed in April or May 1975. One year and three months have passed. Because of the attitude of the Chairman, the meeting of this Committee was not called. That is why there is a delay. So, I would like to know from the Minister whether, now there is no Government in Gujarat, the Government would press the Chairman to come to the conclusions before the proposals put forward by the workers reach the Committee.

SHRI K. C. PANT: There is very much the Government there in Gujarat. It is on the basis of the information supplied by them that I have mentioned in answer to an earlier question that it is hoped that an amicable settlement would be arrived at in the near future. This is what I said on the basis of the information supplied by the State Government.

SHRI VEKARIA: May I know when the Chairman is likely to call the meeting?

SHRI K. C. PANT: I do not know the exact date.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, I would like to know whether it is in the knowledge of the Minister that whereas the question of revision of pay scales of the lower paid employees of the Gujarat State Electricity Board is dragging on since 1974, the Government have appointed one Dr. Kurien as an arbitrator to go into the pay scales of these engineers—senior engineers, deputy engineers and junior engineers—and that the award has already been given covering not only engineers but also the Chairman of the Board, the Members of the Board, the Secretary of the Board who have all been given the increases, I would like to know from him whether he considers this to be an equitable state of affairs that only lower paid employees should remain without any revision for such a long

time. Has the Government of India issued any guidelines in this respect not only to the Gujarat Board but to all other State Board to see that negotiations are conducted expeditiously everywhere because revision is overdue since 1974?

SHRI K. C. PANT: It is true that revision is overdue since 1974 because the previous settlement expired on 31-3-74. But even after that, a special interim relief of Rs. 30 per month has been given by the State Electricity Board which an autonomous organisation. They have also given an interim relief sanctioned on the lines of the State Government's interim relief. They have increased the dearness allowance. Thus these three steps have certainly increased the wages of workers there. But as for the basic question, it was referred to a tribunal and an attempt is now being made to settle the matter outside the tribunal by mutual discussion. As I said earlier, they are hopeful of arriving at an amicable settlement in the near future. Beyond that I do not know the details of exactly what offers and counter-offers have been made. But I do know the broad line which is being adopted by the Gujarat Government which they have indicated.

International Gang of robbers held in Delhi

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*26. **DR. RANEN SEN:**

SHRI SARJOO PANDEY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an international gang which used to rob foreign tourists was held by the Crime Branch in Delhi recently; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI OM MEHTA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Three cases have been registered one each at Police Station Lajpat Nagar, Connaught Place and Darya Ganj and five persons have been arrested.

DR. RANAN SEN: This is very unfortunate. I wanted to know in (b), the facts. Are these the only facts. Recently we have heard of so many cases of crimes committed by these foreign tourists and police arrests. These facts are there, but he simply finishes it in one minute.

SHRI OM MEHTA: I can go on for five minutes, but I thought he would be satisfied by this.

I could give more facts. On the night of 5/6 July 1976, when a party of French tourists was staying in Vikram Hotel, New Delhi, accused Daniel Chaumet alias Sobraj Charles Gurmakh along with his associate Jean Dhusime distributed some tablets amongst the members of the party saying that they would thereby be able to avoid stomach infection. Soon after taking the tablets some of the members started vomiting...

MR. SPEAKER: Is it a long statement? Give the bare facts.

SHRI OM MEHTA: There are five of them I will give their names. They have committed about 11 robberies, and they have been arrested. I think commendable work has been done by the Delhi Police because they were an international gang of robbers who have been arrested. They were jumping bail and going out. Their names are Daniel Chaumet alias Sobraj Charles Gurmakh, Jean Dhusime...

DR. RANAN SEN: He need not give the names.

MR. SPEAKER: He does not want the names.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Let him read the names I want to know. Somebody may come into my house.

DR. RANAN SEN: He does not know how to pronounce the names, nor are we able to follow. It is much better that he does not mention the names.

SHRI OM MEHTA: He may know how to pronounce French names. I am not a French expert.

They were robbing tourists who were coming and staying in various hotels. They committed about 11 robberies in different hotels, some in Delhi, some outside Delhi. Whenever they operated, they were giving drugs to the victims and after that they used to rob of them. Mostly they are cases of robbery. In some cases, the tourists also died.

DR. RANAN SEN: In our craze to entertain foreign tourists in order to earn foreign exchange, it seems a large number of criminal elements are coming to India ostensibly as tourists, and behind this facade they commit all sorts of crimes. This incident took place only very recently, but before that there was another very big incident in which it was found out that one criminal bored through the floor of a room in Ashoka Hotel in order to get into a jewellery shop. We come to know of all sorts of stories. It raises the very big question as to whether the government have any screening arrangement to see that such people are easily detected. The work of Delhi Police is commendable but those persons, we should remember, had been arrested after committing eleven offences. It is reported in the newspapers that some of them were connected with international gangs. Therefore, may I know whether there is any system of at least preliminary screening and some kind of scrutiny into the antecedents of those persons?

SHRI OM MEHTA: To the extent possible screening is done. It is not possible to do a thorough screening when lakhs of foreign tourists come. But to the extent possible screening is done. Besides, all those cases were not committed in India alone. They committed crimes in Thailand and Nepal also; they committed 5 or 6 cases in India in the past few months. During the four or five months when they were in Delhi and when they committed the crime we apprehended them and we arrested all of them.

DR. RANEN SEN: Besides foreign tourists may I know whether the government is aware of the ever growing invasion of India by hippies who commit not only this sort of crime but also many other obnoxious things? Has any step been taken to control or screen the hippies particularly?

SHRI OM MEHTA: This question is not connected to the main question; they have not committed to our knowledge any theft or robberies as was committed by international criminals.

SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAUDHARY: In view of the fact that the persons arrested are members of an international gang of robbers and they have committed offences throughout the length and breadth of the world, may I know whether those persons are in demand in other countries? May I also know whether those persons will not be allowed to leave India till they are tried and they have served their sentences if found guilty?

SHRI OM MEHTA: We will not allow them to leave the country unless they are tried and punished, if found guilty.

Preferential Rates of Advertisements to English Newspapers

*27. **SHRI DHAMANKAR:** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to do away with the preferential rates of advertisements enjoyed so far by the English newspapers over the language newspapers;

(b) if so, when;

(c) whether the desirability of giving better rates of advertisements to smaller newspapers so as to help them get more advertisements has been considered; and

(d) the agency to decide rates, quantum and medium of advertisements to newspapers?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The new rate structure is likely to be finalized soon..

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will be the agency.

SHRI DHAMANKAR: The hon. Minister deserves our congratulations for having taken this correct decision that there should be no preferential treatment to English newspapers. There are very few persons in this country in the village areas who understand English and since we have to reach our propaganda to the lowest strata of society, only local language newspapers can reach them. The English newspapers are prospering because they are getting preferential treatment in the case of rates I want to know whether there is any time limit within which this decision will be implemented? He said: soon. Would it be implemented before the end of this year?

SHRI DHARAM BIR SINHA: I am happy at the appreciation of the hon. Member to the decision that the gov-