

Shri Raj Bahadar: The work has been re-started.

Mr. Speaker: The Question Hour is over.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

Steps to prevent spread of Influenza to India.

S. N. Q. No. 3. { [†] Shri V. P. Nayar:
Shri Easwara Iyer:

Will the Minister of Health be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Influenza is raging in an epidemic form in Singapore and Malaya;

(b) whether adequate steps have been taken by the Government of India to prevent the spread of infection to India, through the passengers from the regions of the epidemic; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in the matter?

The Minister of Health (Shri Karmarkar): (a) Influenza is in an epidemic form in Singapore and Malaya.

(b) and (c). The Government of India have taken steps to prevent the entry of infection to India. The steps taken are as follows:—

1. The Directors of Health Services in the States were alerted and asked to take necessary measures to deal with influenza cases.

2. Officers were deputed to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras to study the situation in ports and to act in close liaison with the State authorities to prevent the entry and spread of the disease.

3. All airport and seaport health authorities were ordered to quarantine and isolate passengers arriving from abroad and who were suffering from influenza. Passengers not suffering from the disease were to be given surveillance forms and asked to

report to the nearest medical authority for a period of five days after entry into India. The names of the passengers with their addresses were also ordered to be sent to the nearest medical authorities.

4. Influenza has been declared as an infectious disease under the Indian Port Health and the Indian (Aircraft) Public Health Rules.

5. One ship from Singapore, S. S. Rajula, with about 1,600 passengers and 200 crew arrived in Madras at 1 A.M. on the 16th May 1957. The Government of India have taken steps to place this ship under quarantine and to prevent its entry into Madras Port. 44 cases of active influenza were on board the ship on its arrival. A team of 30 medical officers and 70 other health personnel totalling about 100 people boarded the ship immediately after its arrival and rendered all medical assistance. Measures for treating cases and isolating them on board the ship have been taken. Steps have also been taken to supply the passengers with food and water.

6. Arrangements have been made for the evacuation of cases which are acutely ill and which require special attention not available on board the ship.

7. Arrangements have been made with the Pasteur Institute, Coonoor, to isolate the virus from the infected cases in India and possible steps have been taken for producing on a small scale a vaccine against the actual virus. It is estimated that it will take about four weeks to produce about 1,000 doses of influenza vaccine from this strain of virus.

I should also like to add, to bring the information up-to-date, that we have received a report as of yesterday that the position after 19th May, 1957 was that about 79 cases of influenza were on board the ship, that 17 new cases occurred on 19th May and that three doctors and seven nurses of the medical team who went to render medical aid have also contracted the disease. Arrangements have

been made to isolate them. I hope the best sympathies of the House are with them.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether any steps were taken to prevent the spread of the disease at the port where the ship, S. S. Rajula, called before it came to Madras?

Shri Karmarkar: Yes, due steps were taken in the ship itself for the treatment of the patients on board the ship.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know in regard to the medical personnel who went to administer some drugs in S. S. Rajula and who on return were reported to be sick, whether Government have taken any steps to prevent further infection from the doctors who went and contacted the disease?

Shri Karmarkar: Those that have been suffering from the disease have been isolated, and we cannot wait to have them immunised before sufficient treatment is given. I should say we deeply appreciate the efforts of those people who at personal risk continued to go there very willingly.

Shri Easwara Iyer: In the case of the Influenza reported, may I know whether any secondary diseases like bronchitis, synocytis or pneumonia have also been reported and, if so, what steps have been taken to prevent them?

Shri Karmarkar: No further developments like bronchitis, etc. have been noticed. Now, the incidence of the actual suffering is supposed to cover four or five days. The person is supposed to develop a headache and then suffer from temperature of 100 degrees and then in about four or five days he recovers.

Shri V. P. Nayar: It has also been reported in the press that there is some mortality in the disease as it rages in the east. I want to know whether the Government have any information whether the disease is prevailing there in the epidemic form or pandemic form and whether the Government has been successful in isolating the virus

which causes this particular type of influenza?

Shri Karmarkar: We have given instructions to isolate the virus and prepare a vaccine as against future possibilities. Regarding actual deaths, our information shows that the epidemic originated in Japan and from October to March the number of fatal cases reported is 1,500.

Shri Radha Raman: May I know whether passengers coming by air from these areas have been kept under quarantine and for how long?

Shri Karmarkar: Instructions have been given regarding air passengers also. The hon. Member will be glad to hear that till now no cases of quarantine have been reported. We do not propose to interfere with *en route* passengers.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Tuticorin Express Accident

*146. **Shri Sadhan Gupta:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 62 on the 25th March, 1957 and state which of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Tuticorin Express Accident have been accepted by Government and the action taken thereon?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): A statement showing the recommendations made by the Commission and the directive issued to the Railways in connection therewith is placed on the Table of Lok Sabha. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 42].

Import of Locomotives

*153. **Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state the number of locomotives imported from foreign countries during 1956-57?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): 431.