

Shri Nambiar: May I know whether there are temporary railwaymen not confirmed in anticipation of retrenchment arising out of the merger?

Shri Alagasan: I am not aware of any such thing.

Shri B. S. Marthy: How many extra second class bogies are to be provided due to the abolition of the first class bogies?

Shri Alagasan: As soon as the first class is abolished, these bogies are intended to be converted into second class bogies, without any reduction of amenities or conveniences.

Shri K. K. Basu: May I know, since the regrouping, how many senior grade posts such as deputy directors and others were created?

Shri Alagasan: There has been a considerable reduction in the number of senior gazetted posts.

Dr. S. P. Mookerjee: Has the attention of the Government been drawn to certain statistics which have been recently published, indicating that there has been a steady deterioration in movement and efficiency and especially movement since the starting of the zonal system?

Shri Alagasan: Since the starting of the zonal system, there has been greater efficiency, with regard to movement. We have not moved coal so far to the extent to which we have been moving now, and for instance, at one point Moghalsarai alone, 1,165 wagon-loads of coal are moved a day and on the whole we are moving 500 wagons more on an average daily than the guaranteed minimum.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know whether the congestion in the Calcutta docks is due to the increased efficiency of the zonal system?

Shri Alagasan: It is not due to the zonal system. Of course, it is well-known that we are short of wagons, and this congestion is partly due to the inadequacy of the wagons.

Shri U. M. Trivedi: How many honorary gazetted officers have been created, on account of this zonal system?

Shri Alagasan: I have no idea.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know whether the Calcutta port was not congested before two or three months and whether the congestion has taken place only during the last two or three months?

Shri Alagasan: There are various reasons for that. One is the arrival of all food ships at a particular time,

resulting in a bunching of ships. It is not due to the paucity of wagons alone. There are various other causes also.

Shri B. S. Marthy: Is it not a fact that due to the zonal system in the South, the Madras-Bewwada line has a lot of congestion, and that several petitions have been received by the Government in this connection?

Shri Alagasan: We are taking very early steps to remedy that congestion.

Shri Nandadas: The hon. Minister answered that all the first class carriages will be converted into second class compartments. Am I to understand that there would be no additional accommodation for the third class passengers, consequent on the cancellation of first class?

Shri Alagasan: I do not know how this arises from that. We are trying to provide more third class coaches also.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: When the first class is abolished, what will be the name given to the highest class?

Shri Alagasan: The second will be the highest class, and we will have in addition air-conditioned coaches too.

Shri Raghavalah: As a result of this regrouping and zonalisation schemes in the Indian Railways, may I know, what is the approximate number of workers that are likely to be retrenched?

Shri Alagasan: No workers are likely to be retrenched. Yesterday I answered a question in the other House that a very small number only has been retrenched.

Shri Nambiar: Arising out of the answer given already, may I know, Sir, whether the Government have received complaints from staff about the large number of transfers from place to place, particularly on the Southern Railway?

Shri Alagasan: Government gave an undertaking with regard to the three zones which were formed in the last lap. Government did not give any such undertaking with reference to transfers in any other re-grouped zone. But even so, these transfers are restricted to the minimum possible extent.

MULTI-PURPOSE WELFARE CENTRES

*884. **Shri N. P. Saha:** (a) Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state how many multi-purpose welfare centres for female labourers have been opened in Bihar coalfields and at what places?

(b) Do the female labourers get any stipend?

The Minister of Labour (Shri V. V. Giri): (a) Eighteen centres, a list of which is placed on the Table of the House.

(b) No.

I may add, Sir, that no stipend is paid, but female workers joining the centres are paid knitting and other charges at certain specified rates. The material is supplied by the Fund and the articles so prepared are sold to the coal-miners.

STATEMENT

List of places in Bihar coal-fields where multi-purpose welfare centres have been opened.

Patherdih, Bhuiyanbarree, Bhowrah, Jeetpur, industry, Bastacola, Kustore, Kankanee, Bansjora, Sijua, East Bhagatdih, Bhull, Deep-Leikdih, Bokaro, Kargall, State Railway Colliery at Giridih, Bhurkunda and Relligarha.

Shri N. P. Sinha: May I know, Sir, if only the women labourers are entitled to make use of these centres or even those females residing in the vicinity can make use of them?

Shri V. V. Giri: I think it is only for the female labourers, but I am not certain.

Shri B. S. Murthy: What is the total expenditure on these centres?

Shri V. V. Giri: I have not got the information here, but if the hon. Member is anxious I can give it to him later.

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know, Sir, whether any share is borne by the employers?

Shri V. V. Giri: Employers are Government? It is maintained from the Coal Mines Welfare Fund.

Shrimati A. Kale: May I know, Sir, whether the women labourers get any maternity benefits or whether the Act is a dead letter?

Shri V. V. Giri: They do get.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: What are the activities undertaken by these multi-purpose centres?

Shri V. V. Giri: The report has been supplied to every Member of the House and I request the hon. Member to go through it.

Shri Namadas: May I know, Sir, whether the Government contemplate starting such multi-purpose welfare

centres for mica mines, and if so, is there any programme for Gudur mines?

Shri V. V. Giri: They have, Sir.

Shri Baghavaiah: May I know, Sir, whether there is any such scheme started for the female workers in the Kothagudem Coal Mines?

Shri V. V. Giri: I am not sure.

Shri Nambiar: May I know, Sir, whether this scheme will include the contract labour also or it will be confined to only those who are on the pay-rolls of the management?

Shri V. V. Giri: I think it includes contract labour also.

Shri Abdu Satter: May I know, Sir, whether any such welfare centres exist in any other coal-fields, especially in West Bengal?

Shri V. V. Giri: Yes, in other coal-fields also.

HYDROPONIC CULTIVATION

*833. Shri Dabhi: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that experiments in hydroponic cultivation have been made in Kalimpong in West Bengal;

(b) if the answer to part (a) above be in the affirmative, whether the experiment has been successful; and

(c) if so, to what extent?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c). It has been demonstrated that plants can be successfully grown to maturity through this technique but the expense is far too high.

Shri Dabhi: May I know, Sir, if it is a fact that 'hydroponics' is useful in deserts and stony places, and if so, whether Government contemplate making any experiments in that direction?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: It is nowhere demonstrated that this can be done cheaply. The only thing that can be found from the experiments is that there is a possibility of doing it, but the cost is very heavy.

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know Sir, the technique—how it is done?

Shri V. P. Nayar rose—