

Thursday, 23rd March, 1922

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES
(Official Report)

SECOND SESSION
OF THE
COUNCIL OF STATE, 1922



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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Thursday, the 23rd March, 1922.

The Council assembled at Metcalfe House at Eleven of the Clock.
The Honourable the President was in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY STRIKE.

* 131. The HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: (a) Is it a fact that the services of those employees of the North-Western Railway who took part in the recent strikes and who have been re-employed have begun *de novo*?

(b) Is it a fact that the gratuities of these employees which they earned before the strike have been confiscated?

(c) Will the Government kindly state what is the total amount of the gratuities so confiscated (i) in Loco. and Carriage shops, and (ii) in other clerical establishments?

(d) Are the Government considering whether or not it would be desirable to restore the gratuities legally confiscated?

The HONOURABLE MR. H. A. F. LINDSAY: (a), (b), (c) and (d). These gratuities are intended as a reward for good, faithful, efficient and continuous service for not less than 15 years. They are paid only on retirement. Participation in a strike under the existing rules constitutes a breach in service. Men therefore who go out on strike *ipso facto* lose the amount of gratuity previously earned. The question of the revision of the rules is under consideration. I am unable to say what was the effect of the last strike on the North-Western Railway in cancelling gratuities previously earned.

TRAFFIC INSPECTORS, STATE RAILWAYS.

*132. The HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government kindly state what number of posts of Traffic Inspectors in the Transportation Section on each of the North-Western, Eastern Bengal, and Oudh and Rohilkhand Railways, are held by Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indians, respectively?

The HONOURABLE MR. H. A. F. LINDSAY: The number of posts of Traffic Inspectors in the Transportation Section of the three State Railways held by Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indians, are:—

| | Europeans. | Anglo-Indians. | Indians. |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------|
| North-Western Railway | 28 | 11 | 3 |
| Eastern Bengal Railway | 11 | 5 | 3 |
| Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway | 4 | 6 | 12 |

* The Honourable Member was absent.

RATES FOR SEABORNE FREIGHT.

133. The HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS: Will Government be pleased to state the rates of freights paid during each of the last five years for importing by sea railway materials and Government stores giving the names of the shipping companies with whom contracts were made for that purpose?

The HONOURABLE MR. H. A. F. LINDSAY: Rates for seaborne freight are variable not only week by week, but also according to the nature of the material to be carried. It would take considerable time and trouble to collect the information asked for which is not in the possession of the Government of India, and they are not prepared to put the High Commissioner to this trouble.

KHYBER RAILWAY.

* 134. The HONOURABLE RAO BAHADUR ANNAMALAI CHETTIYAR: With regard to the Khyber Railway will the Government be pleased to state:

- (a) When was the construction of the Railway commenced?
- (b) What was the original estimate?
- (c) What is the revised estimate?
- (d) Who is the present Chief Engineer?
- (e) Does he continue to be in charge of the construction work from the commencement?
- (f) Is it a fact that he was sent to England for the purchase of plant, etc., and stayed there for about eight months?
- (g) Is it a fact that he has purchased plant, etc., to the extent of 18 lakhs of rupees?
- (h) Is it a fact that of the materials so purchased some were discarded as unfit for use?
- (i) Has he any previous experience of work of this kind?
- (j) If so, what is his experience and when gathered?
- (k) Is it a fact that six European officers were appointed to act under him and that each one of them found it necessary to leave after some time?
- (l) Is it a fact (1) that he has taken a building or a garden in Peshawar on lease for a period of three years, (2) that he has spent nearly Rs. 70,000 in erecting a building thereon, (3) that he is using the building as an office, and (4) that he is residing in the same premises?
- (m) Is it a fact that he has entered into an agreement with the owner of the said premises to pull down the new structure after the completion of the contract and restore the same as it stood at the time the agreement was drawn up?
- (n) Is it a fact that buildings fit for office purposes can be had in Peshawar for a rent of Rs. 100 per mensem?
- (o) Is it a fact that two motor lorries are or were engaged for conveying mails from Peshawar to his office at Landikottal?

* The Honourable Member was absent.

- (p) If so, what is the cost of the two lorries?
- (q) What are the monthly expenses for the upkeep of the lorries?
- (r) Is it necessary that he should have motor lorries for the conveyance of his mails?
- (s) Is it a fact that there is a regular postal mail service between Peshawar and Landikottal?
- (t) Is it a fact that coolies can be had in large numbers and for smaller wages in Peshawar in winter than in summer?
- (u) Is it a fact that the Chief Engineer commenced work in summer and paid double wages?
- (v) Is there a European contractor in connection with the construction of the Railway line?
- (w) Is it a fact that the contractor is to be paid a commission of 25 per cent. on the actual amount spent by him over his work?
- (x) Is it a fact that a son of the contractor is employed on the line on a salary of Rs. 1,200 per mensem?
- (y) If so, does he get the commission of 25 per cent. even on the salary of his son?
- (z) Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table a copy of the agreement entered into between the contractor and the Chief Engineer?
- (aa) Will the Government be pleased to state the progress of the construction so far and the amount spent so far?
- (bb) Has any member of the Railway Board made an inspection of the work at any time?
- (cc) If so, how often and when?

The HONOURABLE MR. H. A. F. LINDSAY: The information is being collected and will be furnished to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

The HONOURABLE SAIYID RAZA ALI: Having regard to the nature of the allegations contained in question No. 134, will you please allow the Honourable Member in charge on behalf of Government to reply to this question, Sir?

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: As the rule stands it is at the discretion of the Honourable Member to reply or not.

The HONOURABLE MR. H. A. F. LINDSAY: Unfortunately I have not got the information.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That is the reply?

The HONOURABLE MR. H. A. F. LINDSAY: That is the reply, Sir.

INDIAN FINANCE BILL.

The SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: Sir, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table a Bill to fix the duty on salt manufactured in, or imported by land into, certain parts of British India, further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1894, and the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to amend the Indian Paper Currency (Amendment) Act, 1920, to impose an excise duty on kerosene, to fix rates of

[The Secretary of the Council.]

income-tax and to abolish the freight tax, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting on the 22nd March 1922.

The HONOURABLE MR. E. M. COOK: Sir, I am handing in the following notice to the Secretary which, with your permission, I should like to read out.

' I beg to give notice that, subject to the permission of the Honourable the President, I intend to move at the next meeting of the Council that the Finance Bill, 1922, as amended by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration.'

There was some discussion, Sir, yesterday morning about the date on which this Bill would be taken up, and you were pleased to take the feeling of the House on the subject. I think the general feeling was that, provided the Bill was in the hands of Honourable Members last night, there would probably be no objection on the part of the House, and assuming that if you also had no objection, it should be put on the list of business for Friday (to-morrow). I beg to suggest that that be done. I believe the Bill was in the hands of Honourable Members last night.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I take it that course commends itself to the Council generally.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That being so, I certainly have no objection, and the Bill will be taken to-morrow. Of course, the rule as to amendments must be relaxed at the same time.

The HONOURABLE MR. E. M. COOK: If Honourable Members can find it possible to give me private warning of any amendments, I shall be obliged.

The HONOURABLE MR. LALUBHAI SAMALDAS: That we will do.

The HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That will be convenient. The rule must be definitely relaxed. The Council stands adjourned till to-morrow at 11 o'clock.

The Council adjourned till Friday, the 24th March, 1922, at Eleven of the Clock.