

"Balo Balo Sabe Shato Bida Benu Rabe Bharat Aabar Jagat Sabhai Shresh-thaasaan Labe".

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : The poetry is not of Shri Rabindranath Tagore, it is of Shri Atul Prasad.

SHRI A.K. PANJA : I am always reminded of Tagore whenever I think of Atul Prasad.

17.42 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Seventeenth Report

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : Sir, I beg to present the Seventeenth Report of Business Advisory Committee.

17.44 hrs.

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION

Medical Scheme for DTC Employees

[Translation]

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had asked a question (No. 155) which reads as under :-

[English]

The total expenditure on medical facilities of DTC during the last six months and the number of employees registered thereof.

Whether the scheme for the welfare of the Employees is likely to be discontinued. The answer was :

The total expenditure Rs. 7,72,86,318 for six months.

[Translation]

The Delhi Transport Corporation has suffered loss to the tune of Rs. 113 crores during the period of one year and the Delhi Transport Corporation spent

an amount of Rs. 7 crores under a medical scheme during the period of 6 months. I would like to tell you as to how this money was given in the past. In the reply to an earlier question in this regard it was stated as under :

[English]

"About 36,000 employees and their families are getting medical facilities. In 1982-83 the amount given was Rs. 55,03,316/- In 1983-84 it became Rs. 73 lakhs. In 1984-85 it jumped to Rs. 9.15 crores'. It increased by about fifteen times in one year

[Translation]

An amount of Rs. 7,15,00,000 was paid to them under the medical scheme alone. I am happy to note that one of our Ministers has achieved a great success in the Department of Railways. I am not saying this, but the work done by him speaks of him. The same Minister is also Minister of Transport, but the manner in which this money has been paid is a matter of regret. Had this money been paid their welfare, I would have welcomed this step. The Delhi Transport Corporation has paid an amount of Rs. 7 crores during the period of 6 months i.e. this amount will come to Rs. 14 crores in one year. They are very clever and they know the art. I am saying this because it is happening during the regime of a Minister, who is fearless and who takes very quick decisions. Sir, I would like to know as to what this scheme is after all. You are fully aware of the state of affairs prevailing in the Delhi Transport Corporation. I wish that nobody should travel by DTC buses. The Delhi Transport Corporation has a fleet of 5,000 buses which include 900 private buses which are under its operation. Still it has suffered heavy losses during the period of one year. One will feel surprised over this huge loss. The D. T. C. has suffered a loss of Rs. 176 crores. It has played with the people of the country. It has suffered successive losses from 1958 to 1980. It has suffered loss to the tune of Rs. 113 crores during the period of one year alone. Who took this money? You should look into this scheme. It is a very wonderful scheme! Even an M. P. does

[Shri Mool Chand Daga]

not get so much monyes. Some of the employees got reimbersement to the extent of Rs. 3,000 each. They gave the reply very wisely that they were not aware of it as they do not maintain separate account in respect of each employee. I would like to know the names of doctors and chemists included in the panel. On what basis they are included in the panel ? This matter involving an amount of Rs. 7 crores has come up before this House under your chairmanship. The Minister-incharge is a very powerful Minister. He has also found time to be presnt here now.

In reply to this question it has been stated :

[English]

“In view of the large number of employees covered undea this scheme individual accounts are not maintaided”.

[Translation]

What is this scheme. I would like to know the details of this scheme.

[English]

“ The respective Unit officer will be responsible for maintaining the re-imbursement scheme account of each employees and also those of doctors and chemists”

Now, what is that scheme ? Can you tell us whether it is a statutory scheme under a particular Act or whether it has been laid on the Table of the House ?

[Translation]

And this scheme was formulated. Earlier an amount of Rs. 44 lakh was provided under this scheme. Now this amount has gone up manifold. Now, you have also dismissed many persons. You will have to see as to who those persons are who indulge in bungling.

First of all, you should explain to us as to what this scheme is ? Sir, you will be surprised at the very strange manner

in which this Corporation functions. What their officers say is as under:

[English]

“ In view of the large number of employees covered under the scheme. individual accounts are not maintained”.

[Translation]

I do not want to go into its details, because you will say that it is irrelevant. Sir, Every one is expected to keep an account of each and every item of expenditure. It has not appeared in the newspapers. It has been stated in reply to a question. It has been revealed that doctors and chemists are in league with the Officer of your unit and other employes. All of them have a hand in this in the same manner in which a dishonest 'bania' evades payment of taxes in connivance with the officers.

To whom does this money belong ? Why is this corporation incurring losses ? Sir, if I go into its details, you will not allow me. You should tell me as to who appoints these doctors in the panel and who prepares this panel. Who are these doctors and chemists ? Within a period of 6 months, medicines worth Rs. 7 to 8 crores were prescribed and sold. This amount will go up to Rs. 15 to 16 crores during the period of one year only. It means that an individual will get such a huge amount by way of reimbursement of medical expenditure. From where does this money come ? When I asked this question, you gave a reply thereto. Here you read the reply prepared by your officers. For preparing such a reply those officers should be awarded 'Padam Bhushan'!

Please tell me as to who appoints these doctors and chemists. What is this scheme ? Under this scheme very high fee is charged for a visit. An amount of Rs. 8/- is charged per visit. A specialist charges Rs. 50/- per visit. These doctors unnecessarily declare people sick.

Sir, A number of illegal transactions take place clandestinely. Why do all these things happen ? They go to the doctors, who prescribe best medicines. Mr. Azad,

perhaps you may purchase very cheap medicine, but their one bill is to the tune of Rs. 175/-. Medicines are prescribed. The chemists issues two receipts, i.e. 'A' and 'B' He takes the receipts and presents them before the cashier. The officer okays it. Instead of giving medicines the chemists gives soap cakes sometimes and Cinthol powder or some other articles the other time. Although the doctor does not pay a visit at home, yet a visit is shown in his name. A nurse can also be engaged at home and her fee is Rs. 60.

AN HON. MEMBER : Why don't you join the D.T.C. ?

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA : Now, this friend of mine is asking me to join D.T.C. I am not in need of a nurse as I have become an old man. I failed to understand the advice given by my friends sitting behind me. So far as the question of engaging a nurse is concerned, I am not aware whether the nurse will be a male or female. Sir, through you I would like to say that an enquiry should be conducted into this scheme. When there is C.G.H.S. Scheme

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now and put your questions.

[Translation]

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am speaking, because you are in the Chair. I am taking very valuable time. Today, I have got an opportunity. A very powerful Minister is sitting here. You will see that in tomorrow's newspapers, the matter will appear with banner headings. I am speaking with high hopes. Since you are in the Chair, I am speaking, otherwise I would not dare to speak. I am speaking because you are in the chair. Hon. Shri Bansi Lal ji is also sitting here. That is why I am speaking more. I hope that action will be taken on it. He had said that an enquiry would be conducted into it. What are the details of the enquiry so conducted. I would like to know the number of doctors, chemists and employees who have been punished as a result of that enquiry. What are the names of the employees involved in it? What

are the reasons for which this scheme was introduced when a scheme of Delhi Administration is already in operation ?

I would like to know one thing more. Earlier a limited amount was allowed by way of medical reimbursement. What was that limit and what is present position? Who has given advice for introducing this scheme and who had formulated this scheme ?

Time is very short. I have raised certain points and I would like to say that this amount may be utilised for the benefit of those persons, who are really sick. The persons, who are not sick actually, may not be allowed to take benefit of this scheme. What is the use of this scheme when doctors and chemists are becoming corrupt? I would like to point out one thing more. Officers go to a specialist for their treatment. Is their skin different from that of ordinary persons. The ordinary employees will get treatment from the doctors - M.B.B.S. doctors- whereas the officers go direct to the specialists. There is no restriction for them. What a nice scheme they have prepared. I want to submit to the hon. Minister that these rules have been framed by those very officers and, as such, this scheme should be brought under some law.

I am taking valuable time of the House because the hon. Minister is very competent. I hope, he will take steps to remove the corruption prevalent there. It is hoped that he will bring about improvement in this Department in the same way he had done in the Railways and will show the door to the corrupt. Only coming days will tell. Today, our Prime Minister goes by the name of 'Mr. Clean' in the country and I hope this will continue in the future as well. For this hon. Shri Ghafoor is there, hon. Shri Bansi Lal is there and I am quite hopeful that they will live upto it, I want that the hon. Minister may reply to it and take stern action against them, them only I shall be able to have sound sleep in the night.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRI BANSI LAL) : Sir, the hon. Member has sought for discussion on the basis of the reply to Unstarred Question No.1515 replied

[Shri Bansi Lal]

to on 28th November 1985. At the outset, I would like to state that only the factual information was sought as to the total expenditure incurred on Medical Benefit Scheme of DTC, the number of beneficiaries under the Scheme and whether the scheme was likely to be discontinued. The reply given was in relation to these questions only. The hon. member has now said that it is not clear from the answer as to what is a Medical Panel Scheme of the DTC, through in the question put up by him, he himself has referred to this term 'The Medical Panel Scheme of DTC.' However, to clarify the position, I would like to state that the Delhi Transport Corporation has been providing medical facilities to its employees. The workers had been agitating for a long time for improvements in the medical facilities provided to them. This was one of the major demands for which DTC workers had gone on strike on 23rd March 1983. Consequently the Government had set up a High Level Committee to go into the workers, demands.. This Committee had among other things, recommended that :

"The DTC management should draw up a panel of approved doctors and approved chemists in various zones near the places of the residences of employees. Employees may consult concerned doctors in their zone and buy medicines from the concerned chemists of their zone. Payment to the doctors and chemists will be made directly by the DTC management. Members of the families of the employees would be entitled for specialist treatment in Government and Municipal Hospitals."

The Government had accepted the recommendations of this Committee in principle and asked DTC to formulate schemes and wherever financial implications are involved, the proposals be referred to the Government. The DTC had formulated the Medical Benefits Scheme which is commonly known as 'Medical Panel Scheme' and went ahead with its implementation from 1.5.1984 in anticipation of Government's approval. It has referred the matter to the Government for EX-POST-FACTO approval. The Scheme was introduced by DTC on trial basis and has been continuing since then.

The Medical Scheme presently operative in DTC provides that a DTC employee not only can have the treatment by doctors of the dispensaries of the corporation but also from two doctors and two chemists from the panel of doctors and chemists. The Medical facilities can be availed of by employee as well as his family. The employee and his family are also entitled to specialist treatment. There are no monetary ceilings on the expenditure to be reimbursed to doctors and chemists. Through the scheme has been in operation for more than 18 months, the evaluation as to its impact and implications has not been finalised by the DTC. It has been extending this scheme from time to time. On receipt of the proposal for the EX-POST-FACTO approval, the Government has been examining the details of the Scheme in consultation with the Bureau of Public Enterprises and the modifications to the existing scheme to curb the possible misuse of the scheme are being sorted out.

Since the time of introduction of new Medical Scheme on 1st May 1984 the DTC has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 9.15 crores in 1984-85 and Rs. 8.82 crores in 1985-86, upto 31st October 1985. This amount represents the bills preferred by doctors and chemists for treatment taken by employees and their families and reimbursement of diagnostic charges to the employees. The number of beneficiaries of the DTC Medical Scheme is approximately two lakhs covering more than 36,000 employees and their dependents. It may be added that earlier to May 1984 the specialist treatment was permissible in respect of only the employees and not for the family members. Under the present scheme all of them are covered.

The hon. member has indicated at the possible collusion among employees, doctors and chemists and resultant heavy expenditure. It is a fact that the expenditure incurred on the scheme has been on the high side. The possibilities of misuse by onscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out. The scope of misuse can arise through issue of fake prescriptions by doctors, payment of cash kind in lieu of medicines by the chemists. In fact, certain cases of irregularities have come to the notice of DTC management. The medical officers of DTC

who were entrusted with the responsibilities of overseeing implementation of the Scheme and scrutinizing bills have detected cases of excess billing. Based on the scrutiny and investigation, 352 doctors and 117 chemists have been de-panelled, services of one employee have been terminated, and the matter is under investigation in as many as 146 cases through the outside agencies.

As I have stated earlier, the matter regarding continuance or otherwise, or modifications is under consideration, and the decision will be taken soon.

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) :

It is already evident from the reply, and the points being raised that some big irregularities are going on under the cover of this medical scheme. My point is whether the Minister will consider constituting a high-power committee to go into all the details of this medical scheme, and if necessary propose a fool-proof medical scheme in place of the scheme at present being implemented.

(Translation)

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI (Mandsaur) - Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I want to convey to the hon. Minister that if this trend (which you have just read out) continues even after your assuming the charge of this Department, I think, it will smear your good reputation. I am of the view that the campaign initiated by my brother Shri Rajesh Pilot should have been continued. As you have said just now, they have already reached Rs. 8 crore figure and as far as I know, this figure had touched Rs. 9 crores last year and I think this amount will go up further in coming three or four months.

First of all, I want to know how you define a family. There are 36,000 employees in D. T. C. at present and if you take 5 or 6 members in family unit, the number of persons who get reimbursement benefit comes to over two lakhs and you yourself have admitted it at one place. So far you have spent an amount of Rs. 8 crores under this head. In many States, the M. L. As. and even the members of Parliament are entitled to this medical facility, but instead of reimbursing the

amount, they are paid a fixed amount every month in lieu of medical facilities. If you adopt the procedure in D. T. C. also, you can save crores of rupees. I want that you should reconsider the reimbursement system, and as you have also said that this scheme is still on trail basis, I shall request you that this trail system should be stopped forthwith and be replaced by another scheme which may save money and at the same time may add to your reputation also. The way the level of efficiency has increased in the Railways under your leadership and that of Shri Madhavrao Scindia, the people of this country expect the same level of efficiency from you and Shri Rajesh Pilot in D. T. C. as well. Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, all that I want to submit to the hon. Minister, through you, is that right now 800 private buses are under D. T. C. operation besides their own fleet of 5,000 buses. You just work it out and see whether this loss is confined to their own fleet of 5,000 buses or are the private buses also running at loss. Had these private buses been incurring loss, they would have left the D. T. C. a long back. The entire loss is shown to have been incurred by your own fleet. What do you expect from the people who are habitual of bungling; will they make your trial scheme a success? They are determined to do so and you, perhaps, would remember that it was because of these people that a trade union leader, a person like Shri Lalit Maken had to apologise publicly while he was a member of this very House. Therefore, my submission is that if you do not undertake timely action against those who are basically against you and misuse the public money, Chaudhary Saheb, it will go on records of history that although you handled the biggest public undertaking of Asia, the Railways well, yet you failed in one of the smallest undertakings of the country. Therefore I would say that the issue raised by Shri Mool Chand Daga is very important. Therefore, you must review the panel of doctors which you have formed, reconsider the conduct of the people who recommend these doctors to you and also give a fresh thought to this scheme. You get a family defined and pay a fixed amount as medical allowance. If you do

[Shri Balkavi Bairagi]

not do all these things, it will not add to your reputation.

I hope, you will give thought to these suggestions. If you do, I shall be grateful to you. I thank you very much. Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[English]

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER (Bangalore South) : The entire nation is subsidising D. T. C. Crores of rupees we spend on that Corporation, The other day, a subsidy of Rs. 34 crores was sanctioned in the supplementary budget. The nation looks towards D. T. C. with pride and it should be a model transport corporation. But, unfortunately, they are incurring losses.

In Bangalore, they have increased 25 per cent of their charges. When we asked them about it, they said, what is happening in Delhi in spite of all of you sitting there ? It is unfortunate.

Mr. Danga had just now explained how crores of rupees have been mismanaged. It should be avoided. What is the budget provision for medical scheme ? What was it last year and what is it now ? What was the actual amount spent and what is the provision this year ? Who is scrutinising this ? Who are the persons who are going to audit this amount ? Have they submitted any report with regard to the audit of last year ?

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY (Nalgonda) : At the outset, I am not against the facilities provided to the employees.

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : Nobody is against it. We are all against the corruption.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He is not also against it. You are also not against it. Then who is against it ?

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : We are concerned with the large scale scandal that is going in there. Why can't you

open some CGHS dispensaries for them just like you are doing for the Members of Parliament ? You also provide for them separate hospitals and other things. But why are you paying money directly to the doctors ? Why can't you provide them facilities in the shape of medicines and other things ? You also allow them to go to the specialists and submit the bill to you. You also arrange Accountants for them and open accounts departments. Let them submit their cash payment bills and you examine them and then make the payment; if necessary, you can take action against the erring persons.

I am of the opinion that something wrong is going on there. I doubt whether the money is going to the real beneficiaries. Some middle man is playing some mischief there. I hope the hon. Minister will enquire into the matter or appoint a high level committee to go into details and take necessary action and see that justice is done to the employees. The money actually should not be misappropriated in this way.

SHRI BANSI LAL : One question was raised by Shri Balkavi Bairagi about the definition of a family. The definition of a family has been made very wide and we will have to change that. At present, the definition of a family of an employee means : 'The employee's wife or husband; as the case may be and residing with the employee Legitimate children and step children wholly dependent on and residing with the employee. Minor brother and minor unmarried sisters or widowed sisters, wholly dependent on and residing with the employee if the father is; (a) not alive; or (b) wholly dependent on the employee and residing with the employee. Parents, if they are wholly dependent on and residing with the employee, subject to the condition that the combined income of the parents does not exceed Rs. 400 per month.' So, that is the definition of the family and that is a very wide definition.

I am in agreement with the members that the scheme should be revised.

Some way should be sorted out. We are doing it in consultation with the BPE.

The BPE has also given some guidelines. The guidelines given by the BPE are :

"In order to eliminate the misuse and streamline the Medical Benefits Scheme for D.T.C. employees, the following revisions are under consideration :-

(a) BPE has advised that the system of direct payment to doctors and chemists should be abolished. This Ministry also holds the same view and the system of reimbursement to the employees after verification of bills should be introduced.

(b) As against present unlimited reimbursement, BPE has advised that as overall ceiling of one month's salary comprising basic pay plus D A. should be prescribed. The Finance Division's view is that overall ceiling could be Rs. 900/- in the case of persons drawing less than Rs. 900/- and for those who are drawing salary more than Rs. 1200/- the annual ceiling should be fixed only at Rs. 1200/-. D. T. C. Management, however, have been suggesting a ceiling of one month's pay subject to a minimum of Rs. 1200/- per annum, since prior to May, 1984, the ceiling per employee was Rs. 100/- per month. One possible alternative is to fix a ceiling of Rs. 1200/- per year for all, irrespective of whether the employee draws pay more than or less than Rs. 1200/-

(c) As against the present beneficiaries which cover all dependents

in the family, the definition of family should exclude sisters and brothers as also children and parents having monthly income in excess of Rs. 250/-.

(d) Admissibility of specialised treatment only in Government hospitals as against present facility of treatment even in private nursing homes".

So, we are trying to find out some way by which all these malpractices are eliminated.

I agree, and I feel concerned with the other Members that there are malpractices in this. Some people have got the reimbursement to the tune of Rs. 3000/- per month. There is no end to it.

So, we will have to have a fresh look at it, we will have to change it and we will have to take strict action in the case of defaulters and if necessary, I will hand over some of the cases to the C. B. I

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Thank you.

SHRI BANSI LAL : So, we are doing this and I can assure the hon. Members, through you, Sir, that no stone will be left unturned to check all these malpractices.

18.19 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, December 17, 1985/ Agrahayana 26, 1907 (Saka)