

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI H.N. BAHUGUNA) :

(a). The number of postal employees suspended during the calendar years 1970 and 1971 in U.P. Circle were 121 and 115 respectively.

(b) All cases were reviewed periodically. 38 cases were sent to court for trial.

(c) 96. Police authorities were addressed and approached for early finalisation of the cases pending with them for investigation. Divisional postal authorities have also been directed to take action for speedy finalisation of the disciplinary cases or for re-revoking suspension where found justified.

(d)	1970	1971
Suspected frauds	2	12
Minor irregularities	22	30

(e) The cases are scrutinised every month regularly and Divisional Superintendents are addressed for expediting finalisation of suspension cases.

**LEGISLATION TO CURB POLITICAL
DEFLECTIONS**

5766. SHRIBANAMALI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the draft legislation to curb political defections has been prepared; and

(b) if so, the time by which it is proposed to be introduced?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI F.H. MOHSIN) : (a) and (b). Prime Minister, while replying to the debate on the demand for grants for the Ministry of Home Affairs, had indicated the scope of the legislation in this behalf under consideration of Government. Appropriate legislation will be introduced in Parliament as early as possible.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

CURTAILMENT IN OUTLAY ON NAGARJUNASAGAR PROJECT

SHRI P. NARASIMHA REDDY: (Chittoor): I call the attention of the Minister of Irrigation and Power to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

'The reported drastic curtailment in outlay on the execution of Nagarjunasagar Project in Andhra Pradesh resulting in the threatened retirement of thousands of engineers and skilled and unskilled workers.'

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. N. KUREEL): The outlay for 1972-73 on Nagarjunasagar Project is Rs. 7 crores, about Rs. 3 crores lower than in the past years. The State Government have brought to the notice of the Government of India that retrenchment of 731 Engineers, 1113 technical and clerical staff and 992 class IV staff is being contemplated and have sought some special assistance from the Government of India to enable their deployment of these personnel. The possibilities of providing employment to the extent possible are being examined in consultation with other Central Ministries and the State Government.

SHRI P. NARASIMHA REDDY: The statement of the Minister is short but not sweet. The problem of massive retrenchment likely to result from the curtailment in the plan outlay is understood by Government; the seriousness of the problem is also understood by them. I hope that Government will in those circumstances come out soon with measures to avert a retrenchment of this magnitude, particularly in view of the fact that the axe is to fall at the end of this month.

While the statement discloses Government's awareness of the problem and its solicitude to the affected persons, I am sure the massive retrenchment likely to arise betrays a lack of interest or

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difference on the part of Government. Curtailment of outlay inevitably slows down the pace of execution of this important project. It is a matter of regret that in regard to such a project of national importance, Government's attitude has been all along characterised by, I regret to say, indifference and neglect. This Project was commenced several decades ago, back in 1955, completion has been put off from Plan to Plan for lack of adequate outlay. It is well known that curtailment of outlay always leads to curtailment of staff. Government being aware of this will, I am sure, come out and avert such retrenchment.

The other side of the problem is stepping up the outlay and keeping up the pace of execution. This should not be lost sight of. That is why, in this particular statement made by the Minister, I would also like to draw the attention of the Minister to one sentence, namely, "... to enable the redeployment of these personnel." That means the personnel are in danger of retrenchment and are to be re-employed and employed elsewhere. That means it is necessarily cutting down the pace of execution of this important project. I wish the Government would not take such a view to tackle this problem of retrenchment, because, in view of the importance of this project, both aspects of the problem should not be lost sight of. The pace of execution of this project should not be allowed to slow down, as well as the retrenchment aspect which should also be averted.

In this connection, we are aware that the Fourth Plan in regard to Andhra Pradesh has been drastically revised and the axe has fallen primarily on the irrigation and power projects. The percentage of reduction in the revised plan compared to the original plan is as much as 18.5 per cent. This factor has also inevitably contributed to recurrence of a problem of this nature. This has been occurring not only now; it is occurring year after year, and plan after plan. This aspect of the problem also should not be lost sight of by the Minister. Steps should be taken to put an end once and for all to such recurrence of this problem, and it should be seen that retrenchment is avoided primarily to avoid the growth

of unemployment and also to ensure the timely and quick execution of this national project.

In view of these facts, I would like to ask the Minister whether he will give an assurance that the retrenchment would be averted at all costs. Secondly, whether, in view of the importance and national significance of the Nagarjunasagar project, the pace of execution of this project would not be allowed to slow down and that the personnel engaged in the work would be continued to be engaged in the same work without retrenchment.

Lastly, I want to know whether in view of the recurrence of trouble of this nature, which prolongs the completion of this important project, the Central Government would take over the further execution of this project or take over the Srisailem project and thus enable the State Government to deploy the required resources for completing this project at least in time?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO) : With regard to the observations of the hon. Member, I have got full sympathy with them. But in regard to the question that he has raised, it is not possible for us to say that we can avoid retrenchment altogether. We are trying to do whatever we can, to the extent that the people can be continued in employment. But no assurance can be given. But unfortunately, the staff is there in full strength. Therefore, we are trying to make adjustments.

With regard to the financing of the project itself, I can only submit that in the Fourth Plan assistance was given to the States as block grants or loans. But in so far as the Andhra Pradesh State is concerned, unfortunately they have got very little money in their Plan, and that is why the project has been suffering. I do not think there is any possibility to increase the amount, except by way of non-plan assistance.

With regard to the third question, namely, taking over, that is not possible, because it is not the Government policy and it is so

in all the irrigation sectors, in respect of taking over. At the moment, the present policy, as it stands, is that each State has got to stand on its own.

SHRI T. BALAKRISHNIAH (Tirupathi): Sir, I am happy that the Minister has said, while replying, that the matter is drawing the attention of the Government, but then, the Minister of State has replied that he cannot give any assurance so that they can prevent the total retrenchment of the employees that are employed in the Nagarjunasagar project and in the Srisailem project. The employees concerned are related, both in the Nagarjunasagar project and the Srisailem project. In both the projects, the employees are nearly 3,000, skilled and unskilled workers.

It includes some engineers also. I learn from the State Government that the employees are going to be continued till the end of May, 1972 and after that period, they have no funds to continue them further and so they are likely to be retrenched. If so, it will be large scale retrenchment and it will add to the unemployment problem in the State. The State Government examined other possibilities to find out if they could be employed in other departments like panchayati raj, road and buildings etc. and they came to the conclusion that it was not possible. Because of the drought conditions and the inadequate financial resources, the State is not in a position to continue them further. In these circumstances, they are approaching the Central Government for funds to continue them further so that an acute problem of unemployment is not created.

Will the hon. Minister try to persuade the Central Government to allot some funds for continuing them further, without retrenching them?

Secondly, the hon. Minister is aware that Andhra Pradesh is short of power and a factory in Vijayawada had to close down due to shortage of electricity. Cement is selling at a high price; in addition there is the unemployment problem also which has been created due to its closure. Therefore, there is urgent need for completing the Srisailem project so that more

power could be given to the State. Could the hon. Minister make any promise that he would prevail upon the Central Government to get some funds to complete the Srisailem project so that the power shortage in Andhra Pradesh could be met to some extent and the threatened retrenchment may not take place?

DR. K. L. RAO : What the hon. Member has said is substantially correct. But I cannot give any assurance here. The secretary of our Ministry has gone to Andhra Pradesh a few days ago and is exploring in a detailed manner, ways in which assistance can be given. The main problem is not one of progress of the works as so much of the prevention of the retrenchment of a large number of engineers and other categories of people. He is trying to outline some measures by which it might be possible for us to assist in this direction. We are making all attempts but I cannot give any assurance in regard to how far we can succeed in preventing the retrenchment of personnel from Nagarjunasagar Srisailem.

SHRI PARA NARASIMHA REDDY : I want a clarification about what the hon. Minister said in his statement.

MR. SPEAKER : You cannot have a second chance now; do not set a bad precedent. Shri M.R. Gopal Reddy.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY (Nizamabad): My colleague was happy with the statement of the hon. Minister but I am most unhappy with it. Eminent doctor as the Minister is, he wants to heal wounds by sympathetic and soothing words; these will never heal any wound; only proper medicine should be applied to heal the wound. If he wants to set right things in Andhra Pradesh, he shall have to give some money to that State; there is no other remedy.

Retrenchment is a chronic disease in Andhra Pradesh. Several times previously engineers were retrenched and were made bus conductors. This is an humiliating affair for any Government, State or Central.

¹ The other day one scientist who was allegedly denied by an increment of Rs. 50

[Shri M. Ram Gopal Reddy]

committed suicide. Here thousands of people are being retrenched. Suppose any one of them commits suicide. Would there be any moral responsibility on the Government of India and Dr. K.L. Rao? Moreover, Nagarjunasagar project was originally estimated to cost Rs. 90 crores. Now it is crossing the figure of Rs. 180-crore limit. The increase in cost is because of the delay in the completion of the project. If the Government had completed the project in time all this difficulty would not have arisen. Now two circles of Superintending Engineers are being wound up. So, 731 engineers, 1,113 technical and clerical staff and 992 Class IV staff would be retrenched. Besides this, there are thousands of labourers who are working on the project who will also be thrown out of employment. I request that Rs. 3 crores may be sanctioned so that these people can be retained in service. The Minister made a dangerous statement. He said that if only there had been progressive retrenchment all this difficulty would not have arisen. In other words, he wanted the unemployment to be increased progressively. Here is the Planning Minister who has been promising day in and day out that within two years he is going to employ every scientist and every technical man. But, we are seeing the opposite of it. This is bound to create social tensions and *garibi hatao* will remain a dream. So, I would request the Minister to sanction immediately a sum of Rs. 3 crores so that these people can continue in employment. Once a project is completed they should be transferred to some other project so that their skill and experience can be utilized in the interest of the country.

Dr. K.L. Rao is a very good person. He is doing justice to all States except his own State. I do not know why he should feel shy to do justice to his own State. So, I would appeal to the Government, to the Finance Minister and Dr. K.L. Rao to sanction immediately Rs. 2 crores so that we can solve this problem.

DR. K. L. RAO: Now every year out of an allotment of Rs. 7 crores about Rs. 2.7 crores goes towards the cost of the establishment. To that extent, the money actually

utilized for the project is reduced. I am sorry, if I have used the word "retrenchment". We are trying to find out if these affected people could be taken over in other projects. But the establishment cost has to be reduced. Otherwise, there will be no money left at all for the execution of the project. We are trying our best to see whether these retrenched people could be absorbed elsewhere.

12.19 Hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REVIEW AND REPORTS OF INDIAN RARE EARTHS LTD., ELECTRONICS CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD., AND URANIUM CORPORATION OF INDIA, LTD.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI K.C. PANT): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English Versions) under-sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:—

- (1) (i) Review by the Government on the working of the Indian Rare Earths Limited, Bombay, for the year 1970-71.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Indian Rare Earths Limited, Bombay, for the year 1970-71 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-1993/72].

- (2) (i) Review by the Government on the working of the Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 1970-71.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Hyderabad, for the year 1970-71 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-1994/72.]