

Work-Charged Staff of C.P.W.D.

1558. Shri Tangamani: Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) whether the revised scales of pay have been given to the Central Public Works Department work-charged staff on temporary transfer to the New Delhi Municipal Committee;

(b) whether they have been paid the arrears of the pay on refixation; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) No. Staff on transfer to New Delhi Municipal Committee are not eligible for the revised scales of pay unless they revert to the Central Public Works Department.

(b) and (c). The question of fixation of pay of the staff in the revised scales of pay will be considered if and when they exercise their option to revert to the Central Public Works Department.

Work-charged Staff of C.P.W.D.

1559. Shri Tangamani: Will the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) whether the revised scales of pay have been given to the Central Public Works Department work-charged staff on temporary transfer to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi;

(b) whether they have been paid the arrears of the pay on refixation; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) No. The workers transferred to the Corporation will be eligible for revised scales of pay only if they revert to the Central Public Works Department

(b) and (c). The question of fixation of pay in the revised scales will be considered if and when the staff concerned exercise their option to revert to the Central Public Works Department.

12.07 hrs.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

DEATH OF SHRI K. RAMA RAO DUE TO FALLING FROM TRAIN

Mr. Speaker: The other day, there was an adjournment motion relating to the death of Shri K. Rama Rao. I held it over for today. The hon. Minister.

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): Shri K. Rama Rao accompanied by his daughter, a lady nurse and a journalist Shri G. K. Prasad boarded the III class sleeper coach of 11 UP Howrah-Delhi Express on the 9th at Patna Junction for Delhi. They were given seats 72 to 75, which were located on the bench near the door, on the left-hand side, at the Delhi end of the coach. It is reported that Shri Rao was occupying the seat nearest to the door, the other two seats being occupied by his daughter and nurse.

At about 10.20 hours when the train arrived at Buxar, it was reported to the Guard that a passenger had fallen off. The commotion on the platform attracted the attention of the Divisional Operating Superintendent, Dinapore, who was travelling on the train. Enquiries with the passengers travelling in the sleeper coach indicated that the probable place of fall was near about kilometre 610, where attempts had also been made by the passengers to stop the train by pulling the alarm chain which, however, did not operate as the apparatus had been blanked off from Mokameh.

Instructions were issued for all the trains on the run between Arrah and Buxar to look for Shri Rao and 39 UP

[Shri Shah Nawaz Khan]

Janata Express which was following 11 UP about 90 minutes later, picked up Shri Rao at Kilometre 611/6 between Karisath and Behea stations, at about 11.40 hours and when Shri Rao was examined at Behea by a doctor he was found to have been dead. The body was taken to Buxar where his family had detrained and a further examination by the railway doctor confirmed that the life was extinct. The body was handed over to the Railway Police and subsequently, after an inquest by the civil police, to the relatives, the finding at the inquest being "accidental death due to fall from running train".

It is ascertained that no post mortem was conducted.

Railway police have registered a case and their investigation report is awaited.

The Eastern Railway have also ordered an inquiry by three senior scale officers. This inquiry has started from 12th March, 1961.

Enquiries show that the door near Shri Rao was sitting was in good working order and could be closed and secured properly. The blanking off of the alarm chain by the 11 UP Express was notified in Patna papers, including the *Searchlight* on the 2nd March 1961.

The blanking off of the alarm chain apparatus was found necessary in view of heavy incidence of unauthorised pullings on the Dinapore Division of Eastern Railway, and has been resorted to with a view to avoid serious dislocation to trains and inconvenience to passengers, as well as adverse effects on the capacity for running goods trains for clearing essential traffic.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad) rose—

Mr. Speaker: Had he tabled the adjournment motion?

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I had tabled the adjournment motion that day.

My point is this. The Minister says that the door was perhaps not locked and Shri Rama Rao slipped through the door. In the third class sleeper coaches, the railway provides a person to secure the door by putting the latches. May I know why a railwayman was not posted in that compartment, and why it was left in such a condition that any passenger could fall down, and here death has occurred of a very great man?

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): According to reports, Shri Rama Rao was still alive when he was picked up by the Janata Express. There is no mention in the statement made by the Minister to the effect that when the Janata Express picked up Shri Rama Rao he was still alive, and if the Howrah Express could have been stopped, his life would have been saved.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: When he was picked up by the Janata Express, he was, unfortunately, dead already.

Shri Vajpayee: How much time was taken by the Janata to reach the place after the Howrah Express had passed?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: 90 minutes.

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): When the door was in proper order, how did he fall down?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): That is what we cannot say. That is a matter for investigation. But his daughter, who was interrogated by the police at Buxar, was not sure, when she left that berth for the other for breakfast, whether the door was closed or open.

Shri Vajpayee: May I know why bona fide passengers should suffer for the incompetence of the Railway Administration in checking the pulling of chains?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: Although we are very sorry that such a valuable life was lost, I would like to inform my hon. friend, who appears to be very agitated, that in January 1961, there were 811 cases of alarm chain pullings on that one section of Dinapore in passenger trains. If that sort of thing continues, no trains will move. We are accused here that goods are not carried and passengers are not carried. How can we do it?

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I submit that this is a fit case for you to give permission for this adjournment motion to be discussed in the House. It seems that it is the negligence of the railways which has caused the death of Shri Rama Rao. No employee was there to secure the door.

Mr. Speaker: I have heard sufficiently....

Shri Jagjivan Ram: As I have said, an attendant was there, but he was at the other end of the compartment. He cannot be at both the doors at the same time.

So far as this door was concerned, the daughter of Shri Rama Rao herself is not certain whether, when she left her father to go to the other berth to take her breakfast, it was closed or open.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: What of that?

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta—South West): May I seek a clarification?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The matter has been placed in the hands of the police for further investigation into this matter. The hon. Minister has gathered whatever information is available, even from the relations of Shri Rama Rao. Under these circumstances, I do not know if any useful purpose will be served by adjourning the normal proceedings of the House and then engaging ourselves in a discussion of this matter. Let us wait and see.

So far as the blanking off of the alarm chain is concerned, the hon. Minister said that there were 800 odd cases of chain pullings. This is one of the methods of preventing chain pullings—by making it impossible and making it useless. But now in view of what has happened in this case, the hon. Minister will certainly reconsider this matter whether that is effective or something else which would prevent the pulling of chains by improper persons should be adopted, which would at the same time enable persons to pull the chain and utilise it in case of an accident. These are all various experiments. Nobody can accuse the hon. Ministers of having deliberately done a thing so that accidents may occur.

Therefore, I do not see any useful purpose being served in giving my consent to this adjournment motion.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: One point remains. The person who was supposed to secure the door was at the other end of the compartment. He perhaps thinks that the daughter of late Shri Rama Rao should have secured the door. Is it the responsibility of the other passengers or is it the duty of the man who is supposed to be there? He should be there to do it. When he did not do it, it is the direct responsibility of the railway.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I am afraid the hon. Member is imputing to me something which I did not mean. I never meant that it was the duty of the daughter to close the door. What I have stated is that she was not sure whether, when she left her father, the door was closed or not. I am stating a factual position as given by her.

Dr. Vijay Ananda (Visakhapatnam): May I ask a question? Were the other passengers in the compartment asked to give evidence as to how exactly it happened?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I am afraid the Maharajkumar does not know that it was a third class sleeper coach. It

[Shri Jagjivan Ram]

was not an ordinary compartment. There were other berths. This was something like a coupe which was occupied by Shri Rama Rao, his daughter, a nurse and one journalist friend. There might have been passengers in the other berths, but it is not very easy for other passengers in those berths to see what is happening in this berth. It is just a coupe type of third class sleeper coach. (*Interruptions*).

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. In view of what has been stated, I do not think any useful purpose will be served by interrupting the proceedings of the House and giving consent to this adjournment motion.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta-Central): In regard to this matter of alarm chains being put out of commission on account of a very large number of cases where the practice was abused, I want to find out from the Ministry about one thing. There is a penal provision; if one pulls an alarm chain without any reason, one is liable to punishment. We have found from answers to questions in this House that a large number of people have been held up for having pulled alarm chains, but most of them have been let off without punishment. If the Railway Administration does not wish to enforce the penal provisions in regard to the abuse of the practice of pulling alarm chains, would honest, *bona fide* passengers, who might be in need of pulling the chain, be penalised only because the Railway Administration is not behaving properly? This is a matter which is coming up fairly repeatedly in this House, but somehow or other the Ministry does not give satisfaction.

Mr. Speaker: He wants to know if any effective steps have been taken to punish those who pull the alarm chains without reason.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: The House is aware that we came before it for enhancement of the punishment for

alarm chain pulling. But as you know, the punishment is not in the hands of the railways. The case has to be tried by a Magistrate and the punishment is to be awarded by the Magistrate. It is not in the hands of the Railway Administration.

Again, another difficulty—we should not forget the conditions—comes that when a chain is pulled, the train is stopped and the guard goes to the compartment, nobody is prepared to say who has pulled the chain. We should not forget the conditions in which we are moving. I will request Shri H. N. Mukerjee to realise the condition, what it is. We cannot think in a vacuum; we have to think of the social conditions in which we are existing.

Shri Anthony Pillai: Surely there would be fingerprints on the alarm chain, and on the basis of that there could be identification.

Mr. Speaker: All that will be done. Any suggestions maybe passed on to the hon. Minister from time to time.

In view of the statement that has been made, no useful purpose will be served in interrupting the proceedings of the House. I am not giving my consent.

ALLEGED MISHAP AT RUDRASAGAR OIL-WELL

Mr. Speaker: Shri Braj Raj Singh and a few others have tabled an adjournment motion regarding the following matter:

"The cement wall of the Oil well at Rudrasagar having caved in, abandoning of the exploration of oil in that field resulting in an aggregate loss of Rs. 30 lakhs. This has occurred due to the negligence in erecting the said cement wall. The mishap has affected the morale of the people engaged in oil exploration in that region and it may also affect the original time scheduled in the region."