

[Shri Shahnawaz Khan]

way Protection Force Act, 1957. [Placed in Library, see No. LT-341/62.]

- (ii) to lay on the Table a copy of the Railway Protection Force (Second Amendment) Rules, 1962, published in Notification No. GSR 1411 dated the 27th October, 1962, under sub-section (3) of section 21 of the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957. [Placed in Library, see No. LT-483/62.]

RULES UNDER INDIAN TELEGRAPH ACT

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Bhagavati): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Rules under sub-section (5) of section 7 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, together with an explanatory note:—

- (i) The Indian Wireless Telegraphy (Experimental Service) Rules, 1962, published in Notification No. GSR, 1164 dated the 1st September, 1962.
- (ii) The Indian Wireless Telegraphy (Demonstration Licence) Rules, 1962, published in Notification No. GSR, 1165 dated the 1st September, 1962. [Placed in Library, see No. LT-484/62.]

12.14 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS (RAILWAYS) FOR 1962-63

The Minister of Railways (Shri Swaran Singh): I beg to present a statement showing Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (Railways) for 1962-63.

12.14½ hrs.

ELECTION TO COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Shri Dasappa (Bangalore): I beg to move:

"That the Members of this House do proceed to elect in the manner

required by sub-rule (3) of rule 254 read with sub-rule (1) of rule 311 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, one Member from among themselves to serve as a member of the Committee on Estimates for the unexpired portion of the term ending on the 30th April, 1963 vice late Shri B. J. Singh."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Members of this House do proceed to elect in the manner required by sub-rule (3) of rule 254 read with sub-rule (1) of rule 311 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, one Member from among themselves to serve as a member of the Committee on Estimates for the unexpired portion of the term ending on the 30th April, 1963 vice late Shri B. J. Singh."

The motion was adopted.

12.15 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE Seventh Report

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with the Seventh Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 8th November, 1962".

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That this House agrees with the Seventh Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 8th November, 1962".

The motion was adopted.

12.15½ hrs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE Simplification of Procedure

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Jalore): You will remember that

you wanted to effect a simplification of procedure and this was to be taken up immediately after the Question Hour. But when I rose, you permitted Shri Ranga to proceed with something else.

Mr. Speaker: Now is the time to take it up. I will hear him.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: You will remember that you mentioned it yesterday and then I submitted that it might be postponed to today when we might have some suggestions to make.

I quite appreciate the anxiety of leaders of the various Groups about simplification of business and procedure, trying to cut down the business in your office as well as in governmental offices. But there are certain difficulties which I would like to place before you. When I raised this question, it was observed that it was within the framework of the rules that certain procedures had been sought to be adopted. But if you look into the rules, you will find that they do impinge upon the rules. They are bound to. Not that I have any objection to the rules being modified to suit the present needs.

You say that only 30 questions would be put on the list for oral answer. I have no objection to that. But this does impinge upon rule 45. When you have admitted a question, you have got to put it on the list under rule 45; you cannot put it out. So this does impinge on that rule.

As I submitted earlier, I have no objection to the rules being modified. But let us understand that we are revising the rules and we are drawing upon a procedure for simplification to be adopted under the new conditions.

I will refer to your suggestion No. 1 regarding questions. The rule which you propose to have is that a Minister will be called upon to answer only once a week. Here I wish particularly to stress that we do not mind with-

drawing our questions or not putting questions to certain Ministries which have not very much to do with the present emergency. Take Community Development and Health. We are prepared. We want to discriminate and use our discretion not to put questions there. But where the question of war effort is concerned, in regard to those Ministries which are concerned with the war effort, I think we must get an opportunity to put questions at least twice a week—a larger number of times. This is because our administrative machinery has got to be geared up. You will yourself find that so many questions of urgency and importance which will help the war effort are tabled by hon. Members and they come before the House. Only today there were certain questions put to the Minister of Irrigation and Power. Here I have got my question, No. 51. According to the reply itself, the report which was submitted lists a complete charge-sheet against the working departments. These things have got to be brought to the notice of Government and action has to be taken in a much more speedy manner.

Therefore, I think it will not be proper to limit the questions particularly in respect of those Ministries which have got to do something with the war effort. We can so arrange our list that those Ministries which are concerned with the war effort have to answer questions twice a week; questions concerning other Ministries can be allowed to be taken up once a week. This is my suggestion.

Another thing here is that only 5 questions will be listed. I would suggest that instead of listing five questions, we limit the number of notices being given, because once you get notice of the question, you have got to go through the entire process, your secretariat as well as the ministries, and when it comes, whether you list it or not, the whole labour has already been gone through. There-

[Shri Harish Chandra Mathur]

fore, if you want to save the labour to the ministries and if you want to save the labour in the secretariat, then again this will have to be amended in that light, because I can give notice of ten questions for written answers. They go there and the whole thing is processed. You may list only five, but I have a right, according to the present procedure, to give notice of ten questions for written answers, and they will have to be processed. So, it will not serve any useful purpose. This simplification will not serve any useful purpose so far as work in the secretariat or the Ministry is concerned. If we want to cut down, then we will have to cut down the number of questions which we ourselves give. We can put a voluntary restriction on ourselves. You can also frame rules or change the rules. I do not mind the questions being limited to even three instead of five, but I am quite clear in my mind that in regard to the departments concerned with war production and war effort, there should be no limit at least for some time, because there are so many matters which will have to be geared up and so many things will have to be evolved. Our administrative machinery is not at all geared up to meet the needs of the war, and the hon. Members must get an opportunity to bring such matters to the notice of Government on the floor of the House. That is my submission in regard to these questions.

I understand the position so far as private resolutions are concerned. It is quite a salutary thing. Now the name of the Member will be ballotted instead of the resolutions, and it may cut down to the work. I have nothing to say regarding the other two items.

Mr. Speaker: Dr. Singhvi. He will be very brief now. It should not be a discussion for a long time.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi (Jodhpur): You will recall, Sir, that I myself initiated the move by lodging a formal motion

with you suggesting that rule 32 might be suspended or at least questions should be reduced and restricted during the existence of the emergency. The underlying idea was that we should try to relieve and spare the strains on the administration. However, the idea underlying the suggestions, I think, however, that Lok Sabha has not to be relieved to the same extent as the secretariat of the Government so that the proposal allowing only one amendment in the name of a group or a party I would strenuously oppose. I would submit that this would fetter the latitude and the freedom that has been conventionally given to Members to move amendments according to the best of their lights, and therefore these amendments should be permitted to be moved not on behalf of the groups, one amendment each, but on behalf of individual Members as such.

Secondly, we should clarify that these changes or alterations which, as Shri Mathur said, also involve certain alterations in the rules automatically, will obtain during the period of emergency, not that they are being put on probation as was suggested yesterday and that if they are found satisfactory, they will continue. It should be specifically stated that these rules and alterations will only obtain during the period of the emergency.

Thirdly, in my humble opinion, only three days in the week should be allotted for questions as a whole, and each ministry may come up once every week. The present suggestion is that each ministry will come up only once a week, but, of course, there will be questions every day. This, somehow, does not take stock of the sense of seriousness which we must endeavour to impart to our deliberations in the present state of emergency.

So far as the question of limitation on the number of questions is concerned, it should be that Members should give six questions in all; not more than three may be starred. The

suggestion is implicit in the proposals that not more than three starred and not more than five questions in all would be listed; that means, of course, that the Members will observe this restriction and will give not more than five questions in all.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): Sir, I submit that the idea my hon. friend Dr. Singhvi has in mind and perhaps shared by some other hon. Members here that Parliament might cut down its own business by eliminating Question Hour and things like that is wholly inappropriate. You will recall, Sir, that when Hitler's bombers.....

Mr. Speaker: He may kindly speak on our proposal that has been placed before the House.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: It is in connection with that, that I want to emphasise this fact that the Parliament should assume more powers and give more time to war business and war effort than it did in peacetime. You will remember that during the Second World War when there was a blitzkrieg over London, the House of Commons sat from day to day. I do not want that this House should sit from day to day, but it must give more attention to the war effort. Therefore, the Ministries that are concerned with war efforts direct may, if it is possible, be called upon to answer questions even more than once a week and the other Ministries may be called upon to answer questions once a week..... (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: It is only those Ministries that would be engaged in war effort which should be spared some time.... (Interruptions).

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: It is for the House to judge which Ministries are more important and which are less important.

Shri Mathur said that the right of the Members to give notice of questions might be curtailed or limited.

It will confront us with some practical difficulty because the practice is to club one Member with other Members in one question itself. They are not given previous notice and a Member does not know which person has given the same question beforehand; he has no insight as to which question will be disallowed by you. Therefore, to limit the right of a Member to give notice of as many questions as he wants will be wholly out of tune and out of place. It is for you to decide which question should be disallowed or clubbed with other Members.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Sir, the proposal to divide the Ministries so as to make a Ministry reply questions only once a week is, I feel, something very wrong. It is the entire country that is busy; not only the Ministries. There are also the Deputy Ministers, Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries and so on. Moreover, most of the questions were tabled in the month of September itself, that is, before the emergency arose. As for myself, I have not tabled a single question after the emergency has arisen. The present practice should, therefore, continue. That is my suggestion.

The second proposal is that not more than three questions should be allowed for oral questions. I may be excused for saying that the Ministers take notice of only oral questions; they take no notice of unstarred questions and vague replies are given. I suggest that there may be 60 oral questions though only 20 or 30 may be answered in a day. There should be no restriction on this; that is what I have to submit.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, Defence and Atomic Energy (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Sir, I did not wish and I had no particular desire to enter into this discussion because I thought that the person to decide this matter is yourself: I was quite happy to leave

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

it in your hands as you were supported by leaders of the various Parties I thought that the matter was settled.

Mr. Speaker: It is the Congress Members who have objected.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am sorry, Sir; therefore I want to make it clear that the hon. Members who object do not represent my views or the Party's views. They are individual objections. There are two ways of looking at it. The House values and is zealous of the Question Hour; I think, rightly so. It is a very important institution which certainly we would not like to inhibit in any way. But, at the same time, it is a fact to be remembered that we have to face an emergency, and in approaching that, apart from the saving of time, the temper of emergency should be present and it should always be there. If that temper goes, it makes us slacken a little; there is almost a tendency, there may be a tendency. Therefore, it is a good thing to place some limitations to things which distract our attention in various ways.

I am told that there is no other Parliament in the world, for instance, where questions are asked for more than four days in the week. Even the other House here has only four days for questions. There is hardly any other Parliament where more than one or two supplementaries are asked. But here the practice has grown up. I do not object to that practice. I am merely pointing out that all these tend to change the temper of the House into a discussion of relatively petty matters when very big matters are in our mind. Anything which does that, I think, would not meet the emergency adequately.

Some hon. Members said there are some Ministries which are not intimately connected with the war effort. I do not know which Ministry is not connected in some way or other with the war effort. The Food Ministry and the Railway Ministry are most

intimately connected with it. Transport is the background of every effort that we make; also the Ministry of Information or the Ministry of Health. Every Ministry is intimately connected with this effort. Some may be a little more connected and some may be a little less connected with this effort. In fact, we want every Ministry to think of this matter from the point of view of increasing our efforts to help our armed forces, our production, etc. Everybody is connected with the subject.

One thing which was suggested by an hon. Member is worthy of consideration. He said that some attempt should be made to stop the onrush of questions at the earlier stage. When questions come in, all the time and energy and money are spent on them, and then, afterwards, they may not come up at all. If something could be done to stop it at the earlier stage, then, there would be a clear saving of time.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: I do not think there is need for a further discussion.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Sir, on a point of personal explanation. I do not think we have ever viewed these questions on party lines. The Business Advisory Committee considers certain matters and they are always placed before this House, and Members of the Congress Party as well as other parties do make suggestions. The House takes a decision thereon. I do not think we have viewed this matter on party lines at all. We have never done it in the past, and I thought that in the present emergency, more particularly it was in the national interest, that I spoke according to my own lights.

Mr. Speaker: That is right. He may have his views, and I have no objection. But I might just give my explanation as to what prompted me to take these steps. First of all, there

are thousands of questions received, and the present practice is that as soon as a question is received it is transmitted to the Ministry concerned. They get to work on it. They send telegrams to the different quarters of the country. Much money and labour are spent on that. Ultimately, if I find that it should not be admitted, it is disallowed, and the labour and expense are wasted in that case. 20,000 questions are received in a year. The first direction that I have given is that a question, as soon as it is received, would not be sent on to the Ministry unless I have scrutinised it and taken a decision whether it is to be admitted or not. Only those questions which I think are to be admitted will be passed on to the Ministry concerned, so that the onrush in the first instance could be eliminated altogether.

The second objection that was taken by Shri Harish Chandra Mathur was that this procedure would impinge upon our present rules. I cannot agree. There is rule 38 in the Rules of Procedure to the effect that I can allot days, any that I like, to different Ministries. Instead of dividing them into three groups, I propose to divide them into five groups in the first instance, and there is also the idea that only four days may be allotted for answering questions, so that we may give the Ministries more time to work for the war effort. Certain objection was taken and some Members said that this was a valuable right of theirs which they would safeguard jealously, and since it has been the practice here to have five days for questions, and it has been pointed out by Members that five days must remain there, I agreed that all the five days might remain for answering questions. But the Ministries would be divided into five groups so that each Minister has only to come here for one day in the week, and devote all his other time to the war effort, and in the case of this emergency all attention should be directed to the war effort. That was the second thing.

So far as the allotment is concerned, there is nothing that prevents me from dividing the Ministries into any number of groups and therefore, for that suggestion I wanted the approval of the House, though it was within my rights to divide the Ministries.

Then Shri Harish Chandra Mathur has referred to rule 45. I have no objections. There is nothing that impinges upon that rule. Any number of questions might be sent, but I could get the permission of the House that only five would be entered and I would disallow the others. I would request hon. Members to give or indicate to me the priority as to which one has to be put in first, and then I shall have that indicated, and I will put on the list only those five that I admit. Therefore, there is no difficulty so far as that rule is concerned, and hon. Members should not feel that there would be any infringement of any rule or that we require any modification in that. There is no difficulty at all. They can send in even more than five questions and I will also allow them to do so, and they can put in the priority so that if one is not taken ultimately or is transferred, the second one, which is next in priority, can be pushed in. So, five questions in a day for each hon. Member should ordinarily be sufficient.

So far as the putting of starred questions in the list is concerned, what I said was that only 30 of them need be put down. Ultimately we reach 20; generally it is only 10, 12 or 15 that we have been reaching. So, the others* may be automatically transferred to the unstarred list. That was what I suggested. There was nothing novel or strange that was being done.

Some hon. Member has also suggested that it is the Secretariats of the Ministries that have to attend to the war effort and there is no need to spare any others. So far as our staff is concerned, I must inform the

[Mr. Speaker]

House, and the House will be happy to learn that in anticipation of sanction, I have already spared four men and sent them to the war effort, so that they might be utilised there. I hope that I will be able to spare more and place them at the disposal of that machinery which is tackling the war effort, so that that work might be done. I hope that the other Ministries—of course I am in no position to advise them and they know it best—would also think in those terms and also spare some men so that we have not to recruit fresh people for this war effort and we can do that with the staff that we have already got. Therefore, there was nothing novel in what I had suggested: only a modification of the procedure and the hon. Members of the Opposition had also agreed. I hope hon. Members of the Congress would also be able to agree with that procedure.

Let us work out the thing. We are not taking away any right of hon. Members and I can assure them that it is only during this period that we can just tackle it. Therefore, there ought not to be any difficulty. I hope hon. Members would agree to my appeal in this respect so that we might work on it just for sometime.

Shri Karni Singhji (Bikaner): I want to make one point clear. When most of these questions were tabled by us, there was no emergency in the country. Today, our country is forced with quite an emergency, and I am quite sure that if you could appeal to all hon. Members here, most of us would be very happy to withdraw 80 to 90 per cent of the questions which we have tabled. As a result of the meeting that you had with the leaders of the groups, I had made that submission, and as soon as I went home I ran through my questions. I have already written to you to withdraw 80 to 90 per cent of all the questions that I have tabled. I think voluntarily our country responds much better.

Mr. Speaker: I would be very happy to agree with this suggestion. If

I do not receive more than five questions from each Member, I shall have no necessity to exercise my discretion at all.

Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West): Yesterday you put it in the form of an appeal. So far as notice of amendments is concerned, groups may agree to it, but what about unattached, detached and isolated Members? They will be having an advantage against us, groups. I do not think that would be fair. There is the other aspect also. I do not think—emergency or no emergency—this particular right of tabling amendments should ever be curbed.

Mr. Speaker: I am not curbing any right of the hon. Members. They may rest assured that they shall have that freedom.

12.42 hrs.

RE: ELECTION OF SHRI G. BASU

Mr. Speaker: We shall now take up the matter about Shri Basu's membership.

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): May I seek one or two clarifications about this question of Shri Basu's election? I do not know why this has been referred to Parliament, because on previous occasions, so many elections have been set aside and no references have been made here. I want to have a clarification about that.

I know this election has been set aside by the High Court. A stay order was granted. On the question of appeal to Supreme Court, what is the position? That has not been referred to. We want these clarifications, before it is taken up.

Mr. Speaker: There is no question of Supreme Court yet. The advocate for Mr. Basu had applied to the High Court that he wanted permission to appeal to the Supreme Court and the High Court was not open yet. Pro-