

Firing by East Pakistan Rifles on Belonia Town

628. **Shri Biren Dutta:** Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that East Pakistan Rifles started firing on Belonia town of Tripura on the 1st November, 1965;

(b) the number of rounds they fired; and

(c) whether there were any casualties?

The Minister of Defence (Shri Y. B. Chavan): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

12.03 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

(i) **LAY-OFF OF LARGE NUMBER OF WORKMEN IN RAJABAGAN DOCKYARD, CALCUTTA**

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Transport to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Lay-off of large number of workmen in Rajabagan Dockyard, Calcutta and the Government's decision to close down certain establishments of the River Steam Navigation Company."

The Minister of Transport (Shri Raj Bahadur): The River Steam Navigation Company is an Inland Water Transport firm for carrying and transporting cargo between West Bengal and Assam through East Pakistan and its Rajabagan Dock Yard acts as a centre primarily for carrying on the repairs to the Company's vessels. The financial position of the Company has not been satisfactory for a number of years and the Company would have gone into liquidation

had the Government of India not decided to acquire a controlling interest in the Company in February 1965. Since taking over the control of the Company, the new Board of Directors have been making all efforts to reorganise the Company's affairs for increasing the earnings and reducing the expenditure. Unfortunately, the services between Assam and Calcutta had to be suspended with effect from 6th September 1965 on the outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan resulting in complete dislocation of the Company's activities and seriously reducing the Company's earnings. The position was further aggravated as a majority of the river crew consisted of Pakistani nationals and Indian crew had to be found to man the vessels working in Assam waters. Every effort is being made by the Company to utilise the craft left in Assam to the fullest extent and also find work for vessels in Bengal waters.

2. Rajabagan Dockyard:

On account of considerable reduction in repair and maintenance work in the Rajabagan Dockyard, the Dockyard employees had to be laid off as per provisions of the certified standing orders and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, with effect from 1-11-1965. The position as on 1-11-1965 stands as follows:—

Total strength of employees—2,928

(i) Total No. of employees laid off	1,822
(ii) No. of employees working at present	918
(iii) Apprentices given leave without pay	188
	2,928

In the meantime every endeavour is being made to secure orders for work from the different Ministries of the Government, the Calcutta Port Commissioners and private parties and, depending on orders for new works that may be secured, the men who

[Shri Raj Bahadur]

have been laid off will be brought back to work gradually. Prior to the lay-off, about 400 men who were temporary were discharged from service and 134 permanent men have been superannuated. No permanent workmen have been retrenched at the Dockyard so far.

3. The management had decided to close down two Ghats, viz. No. 4 Calcutta Jetty and Armenian Ghat, but this will not affect the staff immediately as the services of the staff will be utilised in another Ghat for the present. Every endeavour is being made to find out gainful employment for the Company's vessels in Calcutta within the Indian territory. As the employment increases more and more, laid off staff will be taken back.

4. Assam and Cachar.

A small internal service between Neamati and Jogighopa is being run by the Company in Assam. The capacity is being further developed with a view to meet the local requirements but due to suspension of Company's normal through services, there are surplus hands in practically all the agencies in Assam. Cachar section is totally idle as there is no traffic to and from Cachar. The management is examining details as to the categories of employees in different agencies which should be laid off. Up till now there has been no retrenchment of any employee in Assam section.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want to know whether it is a fact that nearly 5,000 Indian employees of the R. S. & Co., Ltd., only in West Bengal have to face unemployment if alternative routes are not found and if the naval and other dockyards in Calcutta are not used, and I want to know whether it is a fact that the co-ordination committee of R. S. & Co. employees' union on the 26th October, 1965, have given a memorandum to the hon.

Minister giving nine to 10 suggestions by which the retrenchment could be avoided and, if so, whether the Government have considered it and whether an assurance was given to them that nobody would be finally retrenched and will be given an equivalent alternative job?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The employees' union have made certain representations and given certain suggestions. I have also met them. Various suggestions have been made in order to provide alternative work for the men, and unless and until that is secured, we will have to keep certain workers laid off, and as and when we get new work, we shall certainly try to take them back. I have repeated that in my answer.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Just a clarification. The second part of my question was about some assurance given to the employees to the effect that though they may be laid off temporarily because of want of work, they will not be retrenched and no employee who has rendered more than six months' service, whether permanent or temporary, would be retrenched. I want an assurance in that respect.

Shri Raj Bahadur: No permanent employee has so far been retrenched; as I said, as and when we get work, all the laid-off workers would be called back, and to the extent possible, we shall not resort to retrenchment.

Dr. Ranen Sen (Calcutta East): In view of the fact that certain suggestions were made by the union for alternative steamer routes—nine to 10 suggestions—and they had a discussion with the hon. Minister to that effect and the hon. Minister has assured them that he would look into those suggestions and try to implement them as far as possible, has the Minister tried seriously to go into those suggestions which would render lay-off or unemployment totally un-

necessary? What is the reaction of the Minister?

Shri Raj Bahadur: We appreciate the suggestions that have been made. Let me make it clear that the management on their own have been themselves trying to find out alternative work for the Rajabagan dockyard workers and also to explore the possibility of the utilisation of the fleet of the steamer companies to the extent possible in the Indian waters. Both these things are under active exploration, and I may assure Sir, that we shall certainly try to do our best. The various resources from where work may be obtained—defence, port, private agencies—all these sources are being tapped. I hope we shall be able to find some work for the Rajabagan workers.

Mr. Speaker: I had notice of another Calling Attention, and that was about the attack on our forces at Dongchui La area on the Sikkim border. I had admitted that but I had put it for the evening or any other day, because one had already been put. But when I came here, I learnt that the Defence Minister was prepared to make a statement on it, and therefore I will allow it now. Objection was taken the other day; let Shri Ram Sewak Yadav put it.

(ii) CHINESE AGGRESSION ACROSS DONGCHUI LA ON SIKKIM BORDER

श्री रामसेवक यादव (बाराबंकी) :
अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं प्रविलम्बनीय लोक महत्व के निम्नलिखित विषय की धीरे-धीरे प्रतिरक्षा मंत्री का ध्यान दिनाता हूँ और प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वह इस बारे में एक बक्तव्य दें :

“सिक्किम सीमा पर दोगचुइ ला क्षेत्र में हमारी चौकियों पर 13 नवम्बर, 1965 को चीनी सैनिकों द्वारा हमला।”

The Minister of Defence (Shri Y. B. Chavan): On 13th November, 1965 at 7.00 A.M. a Company of Chinese

soldiers, approximately 100 strong, came close to two of our out-posts in the Dongchui La area on the Sikkim-Tibet border and opened unprovoked fire of an intense character. The firing continued till 8.00 P.M. Our troops returned the fire. It is confirmed that the Chinese had actually crossed over to our side of the border, to a depth of about 50 yards, for a body of a Chinese soldier was found lying at this point, along with the body of one Indian soldier who had also been killed in the exchange of fire. The Chinese had earlier been observed dragging away one body of a dead Chinese soldier. Our troops made efforts to recover the body of the Indian soldier, but the Chinese kept up a strong barrage of fire throughout the day which precluded this. Later in the evening, when our troops went forward, they discovered that the Chinese had, under cover of darkness dragged away the second body of the Chinese soldier, and also the body of the Indian soldier. The trail of the dragging of the bodies was visible on the snow.

Although the Chinese strength was several times that of the Indian soldiers manning our out-posts, they stood their ground and inflicted more casualties than what they suffered. It is, however, most regrettable that the Chinese should continue to engage in unprovoked firing and intrusions on our side of the border. All this creates unnecessary tension. It seems that in the area just across the Dongchui La, the Chinese are firmly entrenched ever since they brought up their troops close to the border in September. They have committed seven intrusions into Sikkim. This is the third intrusion over the Dongchui La. The earlier two were on 20th September and on 26th September. On the last occasion the Chinese made an intrusion in strength and kidnapped a small three-man patrol of Indian soldiers, well within the Indian side of the border. The Chinese have yet to return the kidnapped personnel, for