

Mr. Speaker: Certainly, I would welcome such a suggestion; I am prepared to do so.

Shri Kapur Singh (Ludhiana): In respect of the point made by Prof. Mukerjee, I would like to support him. Question Hour is important and it should not be escalated into other things, and some kind of a check should be devised so that *vyavastha* cannot be made an excuse for saying whatever you happen to have in mind.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): This is only about the Question Hour.

श्री बागड़ी : प्वाइंट माफ ग्राइंडर तो बेशक उठा सकता है न ?

Shri Shinkre (Marmagoa): Sir, during the last session, it was found that during the Question Hour, Lok Sabha could hardly have time for one dozen questions: that is why the number of questions had been limited to about 20; this session the number of questions is in the region of 30 and from the beginning we have not been able to answer, not even one fourth or one-fifth of that number. Will you, therefore, direct the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs that from now on the number of questions is reduced . . .

Several hon. Members: No, no.

12-04 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

(SHRI SHANKARRAO KHANDERAO DIGE)

Mr. Speaker: I have to inform the House of the sad demise of Shri Shankarrao Khanderao Dige who passed away at Kolhapur on the 18th February, 1965, at the age of 52. He was a Member of the Second Lok Sabha during the years 1957 to 1962.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may stand in silence for a short while to express its sorrow.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

12-05 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

DISCHARGE OF CASUAL LABOUR ON SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya (Serampore): I call the attention of the Minister of Railways to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The large-scale retrenchment of casual and temporary railway workers in South Eastern Railway at Kharagpur, Kolaghat and other places."

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): On the South Eastern Railway, casual labour have been rendered surplus due to reduction in construction work. It was, therefore, inevitable to discharge the surplus casual labourers. Since the employment of casual labour is resorted to against works of purely casual nature not connected with maintenance and operation of the Railways, it is not possible to retain them in service indefinitely. Efforts will, however, be made to re-engage these discharged casual labourers as and when works may come up requiring their services.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: As the hon. Minister has just assured us that efforts will be made to reabsorb them when the opportunity comes, may I know what is the exact arrangement made on behalf of the railway authority to see that the retrenched workers may again come back and to see that the information reaches these workers when the opportunity of new vacancies comes?