

LOK SABHA DEBATES

12503

LOK SABHA

Saturday, 7th September, 1957.

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE

AMENDMENT TO INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE (PAY) RULES

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the All India Services Act, 1951, a copy of the Notification No. S.R.O. 2726, dated the 31st August, 1957, making certain amendment to the Indian Administrative Service (Pay) Rules, 1954. [Placed in Library. See No. S-258/57.]

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA

Secretary: Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary of Rajya Sabha:

"In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 162 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Railway Passenger Fares Bill, 1957, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 31st August, 1957, and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

12504

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

FLOODS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Shri Radha Raman (Chandni Chowk): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The floods in Jammu and Kashmir, loss of life and property resulting therefrom and the steps taken by Government to relieve distress."

The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant): Sir, the Jhelum basin has, this year, suffered one of the worst floods in its history.

During the last spring, there were three minor floods in this basin when large tracts of cultivated land between the Wular Lake and Sambal were submerged. The monsoons have caused further and more intensive flooding in the same area.

From 24th August, there was a continuous down-pour for 36 hours resulting in unprecedented rise of the water level in the river Jhelum. The level at Sangam, confluence of the Liddar and the Jhelum, rose to 31.2 feet which was about a foot higher than the highest recorded previously, that is, in the year 1950. With the return of the spill-waters to the basin the level at Srinagar rose to 25.2 feet on 27th August, which also was nearly 7 feet above the danger level and the highest ever recorded. The river Sind also broke all previous records. Bunds on either side of the Jhelum breached at more than a hundred places and the entire area between

[Pandit G. B. Pant]

Srinagar and Anantnag, and the foothills of the Eastern and the Western slopes was submerged. Low-lying areas in the valley had remained submerged from the floods in spring; with the recent floods, an additional 70,000 acres of land went under water. Parts of Srinagar City itself were affected but enormous efforts by the Army prevented the breaches in the cantonment area from attaining dangerous proportions. Bunds between Srinagar and Sumbal, however, were overtopped and a part of the national highway between Khanabal and Baramula was also submerged, causing dislocation of traffic. Owing to the high level of the Wular Lake and the flood conditions prevailing in the areas below Srinagar, the drainoff of the water was slow and back-flow of the flood waters caused flooding of additional areas in and around Srinagar.

The Province of Jammu suffered similar floods from the rivers Tawi and Chenab. Owing to continuous rains Tawi was in flood from 26th August and simultaneously the river Chenab. The bridge over Chenab at Doda, north-east of Jammu, was washed away and so also the southern approach of the bridge at Ramban, north of Jammu and one of its piers damaged. The river also touched the 450-foot span steel girder of the bridge at Akhnoor, overtopped the masonry work of the head-regulator of the Ranbir Canal by 10 feet and out-flanked it on the left up-stream. This caused damage to the head-works and serious floods in the Ranbir Canal, damaging the canal for a length of about four miles. This meant not only inundation of cultivated lands but also choking up of the power house and the tube-wells with debris, with the consequent failure of electricity and water supply in the city of Jammu.

The river Tawi out-flanked the bridge over it near Jammu and cut off all approaches to the city. The Jammu-Banihal road was damaged at several places. The canal system of the Tawi river became badly damaged

and about 1-1/2 miles of the Ranbir Canal was filled with silt, cutting off irrigation facilities to the Ranbirsinghpura, otherwise known as the granary of Jammu. The Ujh and Pratap canals were also breached at a number of places and bridge No. 6 between Doda and Ramban, north of Jammu, was washed away.

Whilst an accurate assessment of the damage and loss caused by the floods must necessarily wait, it is clear that these will be heavy. In the Province of Jammu, 14 deaths have been reported from the district of Doda. There may have been some loss of life in the Kashmir Valley also, but no figures are yet available. Many heads of cattle have perished and damage to crops in the inundated areas is expected to be great. The Chief Engineer (Irrigation) of the State has reported that the system of protective bunds built up at a heavy cost since 1950, has been washed away and serious damage has been caused to other works, particularly bridges, roads and canals, in both parts of the State. No assessment has yet been possible of the damage to huts and permanent structures.

Although the rivers have not yet returned to normal, it is believed they no longer pose serious menace. The level of Jhelum fell five feet by noon on the 31st August, 1957, and it was felt that the danger to Srinagar had receded.

The Prime Minister of Kashmir has been personally visiting the affected areas and supervising rescue and relief operations. The Revenue Minister and a Minister of State have been touring the Jammu area. The Flood Committee, consisting of officers of the Engineering and other Departments of the State, got to work from the 25th of August and were busy enforcing protective measures. Intensive patrolling was undertaken by day as well as by night, with the help of the Army and Air Force and of members of the local militia and police. Non-official agencies also lent

a helping hand, and it was possible, as a result, to prevent further breaches in the embankments, particularly in Srinagar and to save a large part of the city from the threat of floods. Rescue operations were commenced immediately and a large number of people were evacuated to safety by boats. The distribution of rations and food amongst the needy flood-sufferers was commenced with the utmost promptitude and the machinery for dealing with protective and relief measures has been geared up to minimise further suffering and loss in the affected areas. The contribution of our Army and Air Force in all this work has indeed been splendid. The Prime Minister of Kashmir has reported that the morale of the people is very high and their co-operation has made it possible to render assistance to the distressed people effectively.

Ration depots have been opened at Jammu, Akhnoor and Sambal. Supply of electricity and drinking water was restored in the city of Jammu by 30th August. A Bailey bridge has since been launched across the Tawi to take the place of the bridge outflanked by the river. Supply of water to the Ranbirsinghpura for irrigating the Shali (paddy) crop is being arranged from the Tawi and the work is expected to be completed within a few days. The work of restoring communications and the canal system has also been taken in hand.

The State Government have authorised the Deputy Commissioners and Tahsildars, respectively, in the affected areas to render cash relief up to Rs. 500 and Rs. 200 to needy persons. The Government have also set up a Central Flood Relief Committee consisting, among others, of members of the State Legislature, representing various shades of public opinion. A sum of Rs. 5 lakhs has been placed at the disposal of the Committee for administering relief.

Among the steps taken by the Army to provide prompt and effective assist-

ance to the State Government, the following deserve special mention:

- (a) Army Engineers built a number of diversions on the Jammu-Akhnoor Road and restored normal traffic by the 30th August. Land-slides in the vicinity of Ramban Bridge were also cleared by Army Engineers and line-construction parties. The Bailey Bridge across the Tawi river was also erected by Army Engineers.
- (b) 3,000 maunds of rice have been loaned to the State Government and large quantities of clothing, including 10,000 blankets, have been diverted for issue to victims of the floods in the Kashmir valley.
- (c) Light aircrafts were used to help in the evacuation of persons marooned in the Jammu area. They also carried out a few airdropping operations. Army engineering equipment was used to a limited extent in the evacuation of marooned people.
- (d) Mobile medical teams have been formed in the valley and are assisting in the prevention of epidemics.

A sum of Rs. 1 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund has been placed at the disposal of the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir as aid to the stricken people. A further sum of Rs. 10,000 from the same Fund has been separately earmarked as assistance to women and children of the State. The Indian Red Cross Society are arranging for the distribution of 1,000 blankets, 3,750 lbs. of milk powder, a quantity of medicines, 500 yards each of white ribbed cotton material and assorted cotton cloth and 1,000 sweaters.

The Ministry of Irrigation and Power have deputed a Chief Engineer to assist the State authorities in respect of protective measures to be

[Pandit G. B. Pant]

undertaken. The Kashmir Valley Flood Protection Scheme (Phase I), estimated to cost about Rs. 95 lakhs, and which involves enlargement of the spill-channel from Padshahi Bagh to the Wular Lake, was nearing completion and this work will be continued. Good progress has also been made in the strengthening and retirement of the Jhelum bund. In the last financial year, an expenditure of Rs. 21.67 lakhs was incurred against a loan assistance of Rs. 32.5 lakhs. The loan assistance provided for in the Central Budget for the current year for this item is Rs. 14 lakhs, the allocation for the second Plan period being Rs. 1 crore.

Shri B. S. Murthy (Kakinada—Reserved—Sch. Castes): On a point of information.

Mr. Speaker: No questions are asked.

Shri B. S. Murthy: On a point of information, Sir. I want to know whether any extra quota of food-grains has been rushed to the affected areas.

Pandit G. B. Pant: Foodgrains have either been sent or additional consignment will be sent in due course.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): Sir, I beg to announce that the following items of business will be brought forward in this House from 9th to 14th September. Except where otherwise specified, the various items are mentioned in the order in which they will be taken up:

- (1) Consideration of business carried over from today's order paper.
- (2) Consideration and passing of the Life Insurance Corporation (Second Amendment) Bill.

- (3) Consideration of motions for modification of the Representation of the People (Conduct of Elections and Election Petitions) Rules.
- (4) Consideration of a motion for the reference of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Bill to a Joint Committee.
- (5) Consideration of a motion for the reference of the Delhi Development Bill to a Joint Committee.
- (6) Discussion on the Plantation Enquiry Commission Report, Part I—Tea, for which notice of a motion has been given by Shrimati Parvathi M. Krishnan.
- (7) Consideration and passing of the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Amendment Bill which is now pending in the Rajya Sabha and is expected to be passed early next week.
- (8) A debate on Planning on a motion to be moved by the Minister for Planning will be held on 13th September.

Time permitting, the following items will also be brought up:

- (1) Discussion on the Food Situation.
- (2) Discussion on Rice Milling Committee's Report on a motion given notice of by Shri S. N. Das.
- (3) Discussion on Government's decision regarding the future of non-Government (Light) Railways on a motion given notice of by Shri Jhulan Sinha.

The House is already aware that a discussion on explosions which have occurred in railway wagons and sheds at Asansol, Katpadl and Kanpur to be initiated by Shri S. V. Ramaswamy will be held on the 11th September, at 5-30 p.m.