

(b) if so, why no precautions were taken?

The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon): (a) A J.C.O. was accidentally hit by a bullet while passing near the classification range at Delhi Cantt. on 31st January, 1960 and died on the same day.

(b) It has been reported that adequate safety precautions had been taken by the unit concerned.

A Court of Inquiry is in progress to investigate the circumstances in which the J.C.O. lost his life.

12-12 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

LETTER FROM H.E. MR. CHOU EN-LAI, PREMIER OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the letter dated 26th February, 1960 received by me from Premier Chou En-Lai. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-1933/60].

This letter has already appeared in the public press this morning, and it was at the instance of the Chinese Embassy here. I thought that before we handed it over to the Press, I should place it before Parliament, and fortunately there was no delay involved.

In this letter, as will be noticed, my invitation to Premier Chou En-Lai to come to India for talks has been accepted. I had suggested the second half of March. He has said that the month of April would suit him better. So far as we are concerned, we are equally agreeable to the month of April, and we shall proceed to get a definite date fixed as soon as possible. I am likely to leave India by about the end of April, possibly on

the 30th April, to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. That will not come in the way, that is the very last day of April. So, I hope that a definite date will be fixed for this for Premier Chou En-lai to come here for these talks, and I feel sure that when he comes here, he will receive the courtesy and hospitality which India always gives to distinguished guests.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): Since we are here in a democracy where Parliament must always be supreme, could the Prime Minister suggest to the foreign Embassies stationed in Delhi that whenever such letters are received, they should show the courtesy of Parliament being informed first and then issue to the press?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: This is an extraordinary proposal. It has nothing to do with the supremacy of Parliament. Even if I had given it to the press, there will be no discourtesy to Parliament. I felt it was proper for me to bring it here, but it is not merely a question of the Chinese Embassy doing it here. The letter was, no doubt, issued in Peking to the Chinese press and other foreign agencies.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: It was issued here in Delhi also.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I know that. I am merely pointing it out. It appeared, I am told, in the broadcasts from London last evening. So, it becomes world news immediately, and for me to ask the Chinese Embassy here to wait for our Parliament would be rather extraordinary.

As a matter of fact, I might say that our own All-India Radio people who knew about this yesterday asked me if they could give it in their 90' Clock news. I said: "You 'better not; I should like to place it before Parliament first." I could tell them that, but I cannot control the BBC and all the world agencies.