

Mr. Speaker: Originally, I received notice of an adjournment motion, subsequently a Call Attention notice and also a Motion for discussion. Hon. Members will be aware that Shri A. K. Gopalan tabled a motion for adjournment and I said that an adjournment motion was not the proper method of discussing it. The matter is pending with me. He wants a discussion of this matter. I do not know whether this is the opportune moment for a discussion. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister or the hon. Home Minister whether a discussion may be permitted now.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: About this particular matter?

Mr. Speaker: The situation arising out of the fast.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: We have no objection to a discussion taking place, subject to time being available. Anyhow, at the present moment, I have placed these papers for the information of the House. They will be able to judge of the situation from there.

Shri Naushir Bharucha (East Khandesh): Before any discussion takes place, the House should have some inkling as to the line of action the Government propose to take. If the hon. Prime Minister makes a statement and after that discussion follows, it will serve some purpose. Otherwise, we will be talking at cross purposes.

My further submission is that this unfortunate matter is reaching such a critical stage that I think time must be found for a discussion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will go through the correspondence. This also relates to the same matter.

Shri Tyagi: Will the correspondence be circulated?

Mr. Speaker: All the correspondence cannot be circulated. I will have a number of copies prepared

and whichever hon. Member wants them can have them.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: It should be circulated to those at least who write asking for it.

Mr. Speaker: All right. Let that be printed. Whichever hon. Member wants copies, he can get them from the Notice Office tomorrow. Tomorrow, I will have prepared a number of copies.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I take it that tomorrow the newspapers will have published it too.

Mr. Speaker: Therefore, hon. Members will not want it. I will consider this matter. Hon. Members will kindly go through the correspondence and then we shall try to find some time.

12:19 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

CONTINUANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF REHABILITATION

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:—

“The reported request of the Government of West Bengal to the Government of India regarding continuance of the Ministry of Rehabilitation”.

The Minister of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): The Ministry of Rehabilitation was set up fourteen years ago in September, 1947 to deal with the problem of relief and rehabilitation of displaced persons from Pakistan migrating to India in large numbers after

Partition. So far as the Eastern Zone is concerned, migration from East Pakistan had continued on an unrestricted scale till about the end of 1956. This uncontrolled influx had made planning for rehabilitation almost impracticable. The first major step was, therefore, taken in 1957 to regulate migration on the basis of a system of priorities introduced for the issue of migration certificates. This measure was followed by the decision to discontinue rehabilitation assistance to migrants after the 1st April, 1958. Since then concrete measures have been taken to resolve the problem of the displaced persons from East Pakistan on a planned basis.

2. Early in 1959, the State Governments in the Eastern Zone were asked by the Ministry of Rehabilitation to make an assessment of the residual work relating to the rehabilitation of displaced persons. The assessment of the residual problem in respect of Orissa, Tripura, Bihar and Assam was completed during 1960-61 and the Rehabilitation Departments in these States closed. West Bengal furnished their assessment for some of the items in 1959-60 in respect of which sanctions have already been issued. Their assessment of the remaining items of the residual work was received towards the end of 1960 and was discussed at a Secretary level meeting in February, 1961.

3. In June, 1960, it was decided by the Prime Minister at a meeting at which the Chief Minister and the Rehabilitation Minister, West Bengal, were also present that the major part of the work of the Ministry of Rehabilitation should be completed in a period of 12 to 15 months, thereafter the remaining work transferred to the permanent Ministries of the Government of India and the Ministry closed. In compliance with that decision some items of work of a long-term nature regarding which the residual problem had been assessed and provisions of funds made have already been transferred to other permanent Ministries of the Government of India. As stated

earlier, the residual problem in West Bengal concerning the remaining items as assessed by the State Government was discussed in February, 1961. The detailed assessment of the time required to complete the various items of pending work and the best machinery for this purpose is now being worked out. The main heads under which the residual work falls are:

- (i) completion of residual work relating to the rehabilitation of non-camp families in West Bengal;
- (ii) the economic problem, if any, arising in West Bengal amongst those camp families which decline to move to Dandakaranya;
- (iii) completion of the rehabilitation phase of the Dandakaranya Project in respect of displaced persons who move to Dandakaranya for settlement from camps in West Bengal.

4. After the assessment is ready, which is likely to take a month or two, a final decision will be taken by the Government of India as to whether there is still need for a specialised agency like the Ministry of Rehabilitation to deal with the residual work or whether this work could appropriately be transferred to one or more Ministries of the Government of India. I have assured the Chief Minister and the Rehabilitation Minister of West Bengal that before a final decision in regard to the agency to deal with the residual problem in West Bengal is taken, the State Government would be consulted by the Government of India.

Shri Ajit Singh Sarkhadi (Ludhiana): Would the hon. Minister also place on the Table of the House the assessment of the residual problem in the western wing of the Rehabilitation Ministry? Is he aware that there is a consensus of opinion amongst the refugees from West Pakistan that the Ministry should not be liquidated for some time till the residual problem is totally solved?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As this question related only to the eastern region, I made a statement only in regard to the eastern region. As regards the western region, I am also having an assessment made, and a decision, when taken, will cover both the zones.

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi: The assessment should be of the western zone also along with the eastern zone.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I am having an assessment made both of the eastern and western zones, and a decision, when taken, will consider both aspects of the matter.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta—South-West): According to the progress report for Dandakaranya laid on the Table of the House a few days ago by the hon. Minister, a little over 2,000 families have been rehabilitated at Dandakaranya, and the land which has been reclaimed and the houses provided do not provide for more than that figure at the moment. So, when the hon. Minister says that the question of winding up this Ministry may be finally considered and decided within a month or two—I think he said two months—may I know how it is possible to expect that the balance of about 12-13,000 families can be disposed of within such a short time?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: What I have said is that I have divided my problem into three parts. The first part is the problem of rehabilitation of those persons in West Bengal itself. You may call them partially rehabilitated, or I may call it the residual problem. Their cases have to be examined. There is no difference of opinion between me or the Government and the Opposition on this. The problem is to find out the quantum and the extent and the time required. That has to be examined.

The second is the question of those camp families who have been served with notices. Their number is anything between 15,000 and 20,000, and a very large number of them today have not gone to Dandakaranya. What is going to happen to them, what is going

to be the effect on the economy of West Bengal if most of them do not go to Dandakaranya? And the Dandakaranya phase has to be determined in relation to this particular problem. The Dandakaranya project itself has to be considered in relation to this, because if a large number of refugees go, naturally the Dandakaranya project itself has to be considered in relation to this, because if a large number of refugees go, naturally the Dandakaranya project has to be implemented to that extent. If they do not go, and they want to be rehabilitated in West Bengal itself, to that extent presumably the Dandakaranya project will have to be pruned.

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): According to the progress report that we have received, in another six months' time roughly about 5,000 families can be accommodated in Dandakaranya, but notice has been given to 14,500 families residing in camps to leave the camp and proceed to Dandakaranya. In view of the fact that the Dandakaranya project can only accommodate, according to the progress report, 5,000 families, may I know what steps the Ministry is taking in regard to the balance of about 10,000 families who have already received notice, because they cannot get accommodation in Dandakaranya?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: One particular item in my report has been lost sight of. I have said that if I am suffering in the implementation of the Dandakaranya scheme, it is due to the lack of manpower. My trouble today is that people from West Bengal will not go to Dandakaranya, and if people from other States, whether Kerala or Andhra or Punjab, want to go to Dandakaranya, I cannot take them. It is a fact that the vacuum in Dandakaranya today is only of a limited nature. It is true that the number of persons who have received notices is much larger, but as I told the UCRC, please prove me wrong by filling my work site camps in Dandakaranya; fill up all my sites, then I can consider the question. During the last five months an average of only 125 fami-

lies has gone to Dandakaranya on a scheme on which there is already an investment of Rs. 10 crores and a budget provision of Rs. 7 crores, i.e., a total of Rs. 17 crores, and people are not going. Send them there, and if you fill up the vacuum there, I can consider the matter. Today the position is that nobody is going from West Bengal, and you are asking me to continue with doles which I cannot accept.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): I want to know whether it is a fact that a good number of displaced persons have applied for recategorisation, and whether Government intend to accept these applications even after the quit notices have been served on them?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: The question of recategorisation is a very important one, and I am glad it has been raised. There is a scheme called the *bainanama* scheme in West Bengal, which is being implemented. During the last five years 25,000 cases of campers have been sanctioned covering an expenditure of nearly Rs. 20 crores. A family living in the camp for ten years says it is agricultural. They say: "As you have no land in West Bengal, go on feeding us till you give us land". When I produce the land in Dandakaranya, they say they want to be urbanites today, they do not want to go there. You cannot have it bothways. Till a person has been served with notice, he has got absolute right to change his category if he wants to, and his case can be considered, but once notice has been given and he has declared himself to be an agriculturist for the last ten years, he will not be given any doles, he will not be allowed to live in the camps. If he wants to stand in the queue, his turn will come very late. I cannot give him a higher priority than those urbanites in the camp who are my direct charge.

Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat): May I know, in view of the fact that the hon. Minister is aware that this slow progress of movement of camp refugees from West Bengal to Dandakar-

anya is due to the pressure of some vested political interest, whether he thinks that the liquidation of the Ministry would help in the proper rehabilitation of these refugees either in West Bengal or in Dandakaranya?

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: As regards the political pressures, that is the one thing that I have scrupulously avoided living for six years in Calcutta; I try to keep out of it. It is known to everybody what political and vested interests are there and which political parties are pulling in which direction.

Shri A. C. Guha: He referred to some political organisations; he has said something like that.

Shri Mehr Chand Khanna: I have already mentioned it. The position today is this. I am the Minister for Rehabilitation and I want my friends to be rehabilitated, whether in the State or outside. We have given doles to the extent of Rs. 50 crores; Rs. 50 crores had been spent from the national Exchequer for giving free doles to campers in West Bengal. When I took the charge, I was denounced in this House because I did not have rehabilitation facilities available. Now that they are available no man has got the right to say: please go on feeding me; I do not want to be rehabilitated. They have to choose whether they want to be rehabilitated in West Bengal or Dandakaranya. They had the choice for all these years. But I am not going to extend them any further facility. If they want to be rehabilitated, let them come with me and I will look after them. If they do not want to be rehabilitated, there will be no more doles.

12.21 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

The Minister of Industry (Shri Manubhai Shah): I beg to lay on the