

MR. SPEAKER : Let him ask a direct question.

SHRI P. K. DEO : Is it not high time that the licensing system should be decentralised ?

SHRI SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD : That is not under contemplation.

श्री नवल किशोर सिंह : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि इण्डस्ट्रीयल लाइसेंस के निस्तार के लिये कोई अवधि सरकार ने निश्चित की है कि इतने दिनों में जहाँ कोई खामी नहीं होगी, उसका अवश्य निस्तार (डिस्पोजल) कर दिया जायगा ?

MR. SPEAKER : The statement has been laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI N. K. SINHA : The statement says nothing about any time-limit for disposal of applications.

श्री सिद्धेश्वर प्रसाद : श्रीमन्, आमतौर पर कोशिश यह की जाती है कि तीन महीने में इण्डस्ट्रीयल लाइसेंस ईशु कर दिया जाय, लेकिन जैसा कि स्टेटमेंट में स्पष्ट किया गया है, कभी कभी ऐसी दरहवास्तें आती हैं, जिन में जो जानकारी माँगी जाती है, वह पूरी नहीं दी जाती है, उन से जानकारी मंगाने में देर लग जाती है। कभी कभी जो इण्डस्ट्रीयल लाइसेंस माँगे जाते हैं, उन का कई पार्टियों से सम्बन्ध होता है, उन की छानबीन में देर हो जाती है।

RE : Q 485

MR. SPEAKER : Next question. Shri Hukam Chand Kachwai.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : उन को पुलिस ने गिरफ्तार कर लिया है, वह जेल में है सबाल कैसे पूछेंगे ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह अपने आप उस तरफ चले गये, हम से तो पूछा नहीं। अगर हम से पूछ कर गये होते तो हम देखते।

Railway Ticket Racket

*487. SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a Railway ticket racket has recently been unearthed in Northern Railway ;

(b) if so, whether some arrests have been made in this regard ; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) This does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

(c) Checks at various levels are prescribed and all possible preventive measures are taken to deal with malpractices connected with tickets. I want to clarify that this reply to part (a) of the question does not mean that there is no racket at all. It is in reply to the specific question whether recently a racket has been unearthed.

As hon. Members are aware, I am not one of those who want to hide things, because the administration is as much yours as mine. Rackets are going on, and all possible efforts are being made. In fact, I am also going on inspection, and there is a non-official organisation on ticketless travel. I am happy to tell the House that only the day before yesterday an entire marriage party of 75 persons including

the newly wedded bride and bridegroom, found their way to the lock-up for travelling without tickets in the Kaul-Gaya Passenger train. They were caught in a surprise magisterial check near Jamnawan Railway Station. They were summarily tried and fined Rs. 75,000 and in default they were sent to jail. The marriage party had come from Pekai village, Musai Thana of Patna District.

Therefore, this ticketless travelling has become a feature of our administration, and I for one want to take very many steps to check this ticketless travel.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : I am glad my question has helped the Minister come out with a frank statement. However, the hon. Minister has confused two things. Here the specific question is whether the Railway Administration has unearthed a Railway ticket racket.

On the 19th May there appeared a press statement in the *Indian Express* by an officer of the Northern Railway, Mr. Kohli, who is the Divisional Superintendent. He has admitted that racketeering is going on within the four corners of the law, and that it is very difficult for the railway authorities to check it. So, my question is whether any instructions have been given to the Vigilance Department to investigate into this ticket racketeering and whether the Vigilance Department has totally failed, and secondly whether this racketeering in the Northern Railway has been going on because of some railway officials and unauthorised travel agents being in league.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : In regard to the statement by Mr. Kohli, I have got that information. I concede that the Vigilance Department should work with better efficiency. I may inform the House that today I met the officers connected with this question and I have proposed very many modifications and improvements in the methods of finding out these rackets, and I will pursue it.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : The hon. Minister has not replied to my question about the vigilance department. He merely made a little observation.

MR. SPEAKER : In your case I have noticed that you do not come out direct with the question ; you add introductions and later on explanations. Kindly conform to the rule and put a straight question.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : My straight question is whether the ticketless travel racket is going on in collusion with some railway officials and some unauthorised travel agents.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : Yes, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : That is the best way of answering a question Yes, Sir ; or No, Sir.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : The hon. Member wanted to know whether some unauthorised travel agents and some railway officials were involved and I made a straight answer. These people are involved and we are trying to find out. That is the real trouble... (*Interruptions*)

श्री एस० एन० पांडे : क्या मन्त्री जी बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि जब आपको मालूम है कि इस तरह की रकैटिंग चल रही है तो उसको दूर करने के लिए आपने कौन से स्टेप लिए हैं और पहली बार आपको यह मालूम हुआ था ?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : So far as the steps on the concerned, I have got a series of steps that have been taken and if you permit me I shall lead them ; they are about two pages.

MR. SPEAKER : You can lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : The point is that we are taking continuous steps. We have to go on pursuing. There is no final solution to these matters.

Conversion of Howrah-Amta Section into Broad Gauge

*490. SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it has been represented to Government that the Howrah-Amta Section, which was closed down recently, if converted into broad gauge and extended, may provide an alternative route between Howrah and Kharagpur which is considered essential for the smooth running of South Eastern Railway trains; and

(b) if so, the action, if any, taken on the said representation ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The major portion of the alignment of the Howrah-Amta Light Railway is on the District Board Roads. If a Broad Gauge is to be constructed, a different alignment would be essential. An alternative route between Howrah and Kharagpur is not considered necessary from the point of view of the existing rail facilities.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Is it not a fact that it was the opinion of people in the railways that the track between Howrah and Kharagpur was much too overworked and, if so, what steps do the Railways propose to take on that opinion ?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : I have already answered that was not the opinion of the railway administration.

They have given me the information that between Kharagpur and Howrah, there are two lines and three lines track and they will be able to take all the traffic that can be secured.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : I regret I am unable to accept this because I was told by very competent persons that the tracks were not enough. Anyway, I do not like to go into that *jagda* now. Would you kindly tell us if in view of the density of population that exists in that area, and also from the point of view of serving the industries, this conversion of the light railway into broad gauge will mean new business for the railways and, at the same time, whether production will go a long way ?

SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA : The hon. Member may be right in his assessment on the situation, but the fact is that we have no money for opening new lines and the proposal, if implemented, would cost Rs. 8 crores to Rs. 9 crores, and there is no money available in the plan expenditure for that purpose. In fact, the hon. Member knows we want the restoration of the cut of Rs. 250 crores, and if that cut is restored we will be able to think about this thing.

SHRI A. P. SHARMA : The Minister has explained the difficulties in converting the narrow gauge line into broad gauge. But is this difficulty only in the case of the Howrah-Amta light railways or in the case of the other light railways also like the Shahdara-Saharanpur line, because, in that case it will altogether a major policy decision. We would like to see that wherever these lines are closed, they should be converted into broad gauge, because perhaps.

MR. SPEAKER : I admire your way of putting it. (*Interrupter*.)

AN HON. MEMBER : What is the answer ?