

RAJYA SABHA

*Thursday, the 28th May, 1998/7th
Jyaistha, 1920 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock,
Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTION

Functioning of Government Machinery

*21. DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Will the
PRIME MINISTER be pleased to s.tate

(a) what steps Government propose to
take for the quick disposal of files .using
modern methods instead of using the*
existing obsolete methods and circulating-
files from one Ministry to the other Ministry
entailing delay; and

(b) the details of steps already taken by
Government to ensure efficient functioning
of Government machinery?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, EUBLIC
GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINIS-
TRY OF FINANCE (BANKING. RE-
VENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI R.
JANARTHANAM): (a) and (b) A state-
ment is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) A software package 'Office Proce-
dure Automation (OPA)' has been de-
veloped by National Informatics Centre
(NIC) to help monitor the pendency of
files/cases and to assist easy tracking of
files. The package is based on the present
working of the Central Government
offices prescribed in the Central Sec-
retariat Manual of Office Procedure.

(b) Various initiatives taken towards
efficient functioning of Government
machinery include:

- (i) Help and advice by the Department
of Administrative Reforms and
Public Grievances to the
Ministries/Departments in the area
of Organisation and Methods.
- (ii) Progressive computerisation of
Government operations.

(iii) A detailed review of all the laws,
regulations and procedures
administered by different Minis-
tries/Departments, and setting up
of a'Commission to review Ad-
ministrative Laws.

(iv) Steps taken by Ministries/Depart-
ments to delegate and decentralise
powers to field units and to other
levels of Government to enable
decisions and service delivery at the
'lowest operational level.

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Sir, one of the
important things... (*Interruptions*)...
achieved./iiIn the management of our
administration. Our administration, which
must -have been very modern about a
hundred or hundred and fifty years ago,
really remains as such without taking into
account all the modern developments in the
world. I-will divide it very shortly into two
parts—the technological part and the
management part—and I will quickly deal
with the management part because our
administration has to first decentralise. Too
much is concentrated in one person, from
my experience in the Ministries, and my
experience is a long one. One of the great
things about atomic energy was that Dr.
Bhabha shifted the whole Ministry, away
from Delhi to Bombay and that certainly
helped quick decision-making in a big way.
There are now other aspects which delay
things. I know there are brilliant officers in-
charge. But in my State I know there are
officers who are allowed to stay.-in their
places of work for just two or three months
and then they are transferred.-Now, that is
not called good administration. An officer is
transferred only because he didn't please
somebody. In the British days, they had to
be in one position for three years, unless
there was a very good reason to change
them.

Our whole system is based on the
holiness of files. A file is treated as though
it "is a Bible itself. In modern times a file is
a cumbersome one. If you wanted tostart a
new activity, there is a

department called SIU - I don't know what it stands for. That is what it is called, and the only thing that is stated is, "If you want more people in your Ministry, all that you have to do is increase the number of files and you will get more people". Maybe, I am giving the worst aspects of it. But my question refers to this matter. What is important is that we have not developed modern technical methods by which information on a file can be transferred to another person, by even a floppy disk. A floppy disk is something in which you can put all the information that you want to pass on to another person. There is no need to go on shifting files, which takes six months for a decision which can be taken in one hour or in about half-an-hour. I feel very sad. While the country is progressing in all directions like the use of Electronic Mail, the use of floppy disks, and I know at one time many people were given computers in the South Block...*(Interruptions)*

SOME HON. MEMBERS: What is the question? *(Interruptions)*

DR. RAJA RAM ANNA: Sir, I have put a question and now I am putting a supplementary. ... *(Interruptions)*... He has given it in writing, but I have not received it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You give the points.

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: But, I don't know the answer, Sir. If you want me to stop, I will stop.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a statement laid on the Table of the House. Have you got it?

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: I have not received it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: A copy of the statement is available outside in the Lobby. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: If it had been given to me, I would have told you. I am concluding, Sir. I would say that

modern technology should be used in improving administration, but this is not being done.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: Sir, I thank the hon. Member for putting a very good supplementary. The hon. Member mentioned about 'floppy' system which is a little bit outdated. Presently, the Government is using a software package "Office Procedure Automation (OPA)" which has been developed by National Informatics Centre to help tracking of files. Of course, as is said, a file is very important. If you jumble up the word "file", it becomes life. It is concerned with the lives of the people of India. Therefore, to tackle delays, files have been tracked by using these methods. Our Ministry is to help and advise all Departments, in this regard. Now, 17 Ministries are using it and it is motivating the people. We are on the job and the system is improving. The delays have been considerably reduced. As mentioned by the hon. Member, progressive computerisation in Government offices is going on not at a very good speed but at a speed which is tolerable for the improvement of the system.

The hon. Member spoke about decentralisation of powers. I would like to inform the hon. Member that steps have been taken by Ministries/Departments to delegate and decentralise powers to field units and to other levels of Government to enable decisions and service delivery at the operational level. The hon. Member would appreciate...

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: I don't know what answer the Minister is giving. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: I am answering it. What is the trouble with you?

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: It is a great disappointment to hear the answer from the Minister. The hon. Member did not put any specific question as such. I don't know on which basis the Minister is

replying. What is he saying? It is too funny. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: The hon. Member has put a specific question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: The Minister has answered my question, but I have to put a supplementary to him. I will be very brief. Sir, there are two parts of the question in this paper that he has given. It is wonderful if it was really true and was being used. I can only hope that all he has said here will be used by the Ministries. But it is not being done. So far as the movement of files is concerned—I am not referring to the present Government or any other Government—this is going on for the last hundred years; certainly when I was in the Ministry; it is very slow.

The second supplementary is this: I have reason to believe that a file which takes, perhaps, one or two minutes to finish off takes six months to come out from the Ministry. It is just passed on and on and on. There is no way in the answer to explain how they intend to hurry up files around the Secretariat. People just don't care because the system of filing itself is wrong.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: Sir, on the basis of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission, I have given the answer. It has given so many recommendations. We are only a nodal and catalytic agent. We are going to accept some of the recommendations. ...*(Interruptions)*... I am explaining the written answer which has been laid on the Table of the Sabha. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Raja Ramanna has asked as to how you are going to expedite the movement of files so that they can be disposed of within two or three months and not six months. ...*(Interruptions)*... This is his simple question. ...*(Interruptions)*... You should give a simple answer.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: Sir, we are using automation system developed by the NIC. With the help of office Procedure automation procedural operation system which tracks the movement of files, the movement of files will not be delayed and the disposal of files will be within a reasonable time.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Sir, my question is very specific and is related to part (b) of the Government answer with regard to efficient functioning of the Government machinery. I believe that it is not the quick movement of files only which is very, very important. The other essential step for the efficiency of the Government is coordination among different Departments. Sir, I would like to give one example. The subject of health of women is the concern of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Women and Child Development. Examples can be multiplied. My specific question is whether there is any common planning for coordination among various Departments for promoting the same cause. I would also like to know whether there are any rules or laws in this regard. They have mentioned here some procedures and laws. They have mentioned here some procedures and laws. I want to know whether there are or are likely to be any administrative laws and procedures for inter-departmental coordination and consultation for dealing with matters of common concern. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: With regard to the question put by the hon. Member, I would like to say that there are many recommendations given by the Fifth Pay Commission in its report submitted in January 1997. These recommendations are on record. Some of the recommendations are (a) re-organisation of a number of Ministries and Departments (b) re-organisation of the functioning of the Central Government (c) reducing the levels of decision-making (d) assured career progression for improved motivation, etc. ...*(Interruptions)*.. It goes on

like this...(Interruptions)... Sir, we are not accepting all the recommendations. Only some of them will be accepted by us. ...(Interruptions).. Our Department is a nodal and catalytic Department. We are on the line to improve efficiency and file movement. As far as our Department is concerned, we can only motivate, help, advise and persuade them. That is the work of this Ministry. ...(Interruptions)...

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Sir, again it is unfortunate that the hon. Member has put a question with regard to coordination among various Ministries and the minister is replying to something else. ...(Interruptions)... We do not need additional information. We want information on a specific question.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: Sir, this question relates to the movement of files and tracking of files. ...(Interruptions).. This question does not pertain to coordination among various Ministries. The function of the Ministry of Personnel is to motivate, help, advise and continuously persuade them. There are 79 Ministries and 17 of them are following the automation system. The rest of them will slowly go in for that. ...(Interruptions)..

श्री मूलचन्द मीणा : सभापति महोदय, अभी मंत्री जी बता रहे थे फाइलों के जल्दी निपटारे के लिए, वेतन आयोग की जो सिफारिशें हैं उनके अनुसार हम कार्यवाही कर रहे हैं। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि आज जो फाइलें बनती हैं, वह जन-समस्याओं से संबंधित होती हैं। जब जन-समस्याओं के निराकरण का समय निकल जाता है। जब जन-समस्याओं के निराकरण का समय निकल जाता है, उसके बाद तक भी फाइलें आपके विभागों में पड़ी रहती हैं। मैं आपसे यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि पांचवे वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों के आधार पर क्या आपने कोई योजना बनाई है जिससे शीघ्र उनका निपटारा हो सके, फाइलों पर कार्यवाही की जा सके और समस्याओं को दूर किया जा सके? क्या इस प्रकार की कोई योजना बनाई गई है?

प्रधानमंत्री (श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी) : सभापति जी, फाइलें बड़ी धीमी रफ्तार से चलती हैं, यह सर्वविदित है। कभी कभी तो चली हुई फाइल वापिस नहीं आती है। वह कहाँ जाती है। इसका पता लगाना बड़ा मुश्किल है। लेकिन कुछ परिवर्तन हुए हैं प्रक्रियाओं

में, सत्ता के विकेन्द्रीकरण में। इस तरह के नियमों को खत्म कर देने के बारे में जिनके कारण विलम्ब होता है। पुराने नियम हैं मगर फाइल का पेट भरना है, उस पर टिप्पण चाहिये और वह फाइल उसी दौर में से गुजरती रहती है। एक कमीशन बनाया गया है जो इस तरह के पुराने नियम, कायदे और प्रक्रियाएं हैं, जिनकी अब कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है, उन्हें खत्म करने के बारे में सिफारिश देगा और दूसरा सत्ता का विकेन्द्रीकरण किया जा रहा है। फाइलें इसलिए भेजी जाती हैं, नीचे सत्ता नहीं है और नीचे फाइलें नहीं हो सकते हैं। अब यह स्थिति बदलती जा रही है। आप यह स्वीकार करेंगे कि फाइलों के जंगल में इस केन्द्रीय सरकार में प्रवेश कर के सही-गलत निकलना जरा मुश्किल काम है।

PROF. RAM KAPSE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, part "B" of the reply states that there is a detailed review of all the laws, regulations and procedures administered by different Ministries/Departments, and setting up of a Commission to review the administrative laws.

I would like to know whether the Commission has started working. How much time is required to take a decision in this regard because there are some enactments which are hundreds of years old and are not required? I would like to know the time limit which is expected by the Government. I would also like to ask that even if we do with computers, work with computers, the basic problem is, we do not regard the individual has any right as far as his query is concerned. So, if the selective element, the personal element, which is going on in the offices is stopped, only then the technological help will be of some help. Sir, I would like to know whether the attitude of the person dealing with the file is going to be changed and whether anything is done for that.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have already said that we are only a nodal and catalytic agent and we only persuade. We have set up a commission in May, 1998, and it has started functioning. It has been given three months' time to submit its report/ Regarding the time limit, this is the

approximate time limit I have given. With regard to the later part of the question, which is about the change of individual attitude, I submit that we have inherited this file culture from the British period. The attitude of file-making has to be changed in a collective manner. All aspects have to be changed in a collective manner.

Retirement age of Central Government Employees

*22. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Fifth Central Pay Commission had recommended the enhancement of the retirement age of the Central Government employees from the present 58 years to 60 years;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to accept and implement this recommendations; and

(c) If not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING REVENUE AND INSURANCE) SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This recommendation has been accepted by Government in May, 1998 and necessary orders have been issued. The age of retirement in the Armed Forces and the Central Para Military Forces has also been decided to be raised by two years.

(c) Does not arise, in view of (b) above.

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली : सभापति महोदय, जिस समय मैंने यह प्रश्न भेजा था उसके बाद केन्द्र सरकार ने केन्द्रीय सरकार के कर्मचारियों की सेवा निवृत्ति आयु सीमा बढ़ाने का महत्वपूर्ण फैसला किया जिसके लिए मैं केन्द्र सरकार को बधाई देता हूँ और एक प्रकार से जिस उद्देश्य से प्रश्न पूछा गया था उसका उत्तर केन्द्र सरकार ने अपने एक्शन द्वारा, अपने कृत्य द्वारा दिया है। तो भी मैं दो पूरक प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ। एक पूरक प्रश्न यह है कि क्या केन्द्रीय सरकार के कर्मचारियों की सेवा

निवृत्ति की आयु 58 वर्ष से बढ़ाकर 60 वर्ष कर देने के केन्द्र सरकार के फैसले के परिणामस्वरूप पब्लिक सेक्टर अंडरटेकिंग, बैंकिंग, विश्वविद्यालयों और कालेज क्षेत्र के कर्मचारियों द्वारा भी सेवा निवृत्ति की आयु सीमा बढ़ाने की मांग उठायी जा रही है? क्या विभिन्न राज्यों के कर्मचारी भी अपनी सेवा निवृत्ति की आयु सीमा बढ़ाने की मांग कर रहे हैं और क्या केन्द्र सरकार ने केन्द्रीय कर्मचारियों की आयु सीमा बढ़ाने का फैसला करते समय राज्य सरकारों से भी परामर्श किया था या नहीं?

प्रधान मंत्री (श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी) : सभापति जी, आयु की सीमा बढ़ाने की सिफारिश वेतन आयोग ने भी दी थी। उसको स्वीकार कर लिया गया है। उसके साथ-साथ भर्ती की आयु भी दो साल बढ़ायी गयी है। जिससे कोई घाटे में न रहे। प्रदेश सरकारें और अन्य स्वशासी संस्थाएं अपना निर्णय करने के लिए स्वतंत्र है। अगर उनके लिए वित्तीय कठिनाई पैदा होगी तो हम जानते हैं कि वे केन्द्र सरकार के पास आएंगे और उस पर, आने पर विचार किया जाएगा।

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली : मेरा दूसरा पूरक प्रश्न है कि सेवा निवृत्ति की आयु सीमा दो वर्ष बढ़ा देने का स्वेच्छिक सेवा निवृत्ति योजना पर क्या असर पड़ेगा? क्या सेवा निवृत्ति की आयु सीमा बढ़ाए जाने से कर्मचारियों को होने वाले लाभों के मदेनजर स्वेच्छिक सेवा निवृत्ति योजना कम आकर्षक नहीं हो जाएगी और क्या इसको अधिक आकर्षक बनाने का सरकार का कोई इरादा है या नहीं?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : मैं नहीं समझता कि इससे आकर्षण कम हो जाएगा। जो स्वेच्छा से निवृत्ति लेना चाहते हैं वे फिर भी स्वेच्छा से निवृत्ति लेगे।

SHRI V.P. DURASAMY: Sir, the answer given by the honourable Minister is very vague. Specifically I want to know how many persons are getting extension of service by virtue of extending the retirement age from 58 to 60. And, will it not affect the job opportunities for the unemployed young generation? And, apart from that, Sir, I would like to know whether this order is applicable to the quasi-governemnt Corporations and Boards? I have received telephone calls from my friends from the Chennai Food Corporation of India that 47 employees of the Food Corporation of India are going to retire tomorrow. But the Food Corporation of India has not yet received