

expansion programme already chalked out. Our information is that in an exchange the waiting list is sometimes more than the capacity. Suppose it is 50,000 line capacity the waiting list is 60,000. These are the bad cases which we are reviewing. We are trying to increase the capacity. The waiting list should never go beyond the capacity of that particular exchange. The review is going on. There will be some cases where the capacity is not there. We have to do some planning in accordance with the capacity of that particular sector or particular exchange.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 142.

**Release of militant Sikh detenus**

\*142. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD :†

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that hundreds of militant Sikh detenus were freed in May this year, as reported in the Statesman of May 13, 1991;

(b) if so, the exact number thereof; and

(c) to what extent the same has resulted in bringing down the militant activities in Punjab and also for creating a climate congenial for free and fair general elections in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) and (b) As a goodwill gesture for creating a climate congenial for the holding of free and fair general elections notified in April 1991, the Government of Punjab had decided to withdraw 252 cases releasing 356 detenus.

(c) Militant activities have not substantially reduced. In fact, some of the candidates were killed.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Mahendra Prasad.

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: May I know whether the Government has held any talks with different sections of militants to bring about a congenial atmosphere? If so, with which sections of the militants the talks were held, what were the precise issues and what was the outcome thereof?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Sir, the dialogue has been started with some of the politicians in Punjab. But we have not been able to contact some of the militant organizations. And I have my own reservations. But still we are going to try to contact some of the militants who believe in the integrity and unity of the country and believe in the Constitution. If they are prepared to accept these conditions, the Government is prepared to talk to them.

AN HON. MEMBER: Did the Government contact any section of the militants?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Not yet.

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Sir as it is well known, in Punjab politics has been mixed with religion and some of the political parties tried to exploit religious emotions in the General Elections. May I know whether the Government has taken any effective steps to separate religion from politics following the High Court judgment declaring elections of certain candidates as void—who tried to exploit religion in elections.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: The reply to the question is given by the hon. Member himself that election petitions can be filed in courts. The same will be applicable in the case of those who utilize religion for getting votes.

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Do you want any law to be passed not to allow any party advocating religious sentiments to participate in elections?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Actually there is nothing of the type under consideration of the Government at this stage.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Sir, there is more than meets the eye. After listening to the

Prime Minister's reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address, there is a very thin line between carrying out negotiations with the militants—and I strongly feel that the dialogue should always be on—and the surrender of Punjab to the Khalistan protagonists in Pakistan. Now, I would like to ask the Home Minister whether the former Prime Minister has struck a deal with the secessionist elements in the country.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: At least on record we do not have anything of the nature which the hon. Member is referring to.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: If it is secret, how will the Government know? (Interruptions)

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: There are some deals which in fact are available in the secret files. (Interruptions)

SHRI RAJ MOHAN GANDHI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, since the international Sikh community is a factor in the Punjab situation and a continuing factor in the Punjab situation, will the hon. Minister kindly answer whether the Government is maintaining through diplomatic and related channels some contacts with the international Sikh community also with a view to bringing an eventual settlement to the Punjab situation?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Sir, I am aware of the fact that some of the hon. Members do not like the idea of Sikh militants being mentioned in the House because every Sikh is not a militant. So, it is a matter of accident that some of them happen to be Sikhs. But there are a large number of Punjabis all over the world who, in fact, have been trying to help them. And we are making all efforts possible through diplomatic channels to see that they stop this kind of activity against India.

श्री कृष्ण लाल शर्मा : सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि पंजाब में जितनी भी पोलिटिकल पार्टियाँ हैं और उनके बारे में जो यह कहा जा रहा है कि हम कोई ऐसा

कानून लाना चाहते हैं जिससे जो सेसेनिस्ट्स या जो वायलेंस में विश्वास रखने वाली पार्टियाँ हैं वे चुनाव में हिस्सा न ले सकें, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि आर० पी० ए० एक्ट में अमेंडमेंट जो 29 (ए) में हुआ है जिससे रजिस्ट्रेशन आफ पार्टीज के लिए कंडीशज ले डाउन की गई हैं उससे बियांड ऐसी कोई नई चीज है जिस के लिए नए कानून की जरूरत है? 29(ए) में सब कुछ कवर्ड है? Constitution, Secularism and socialism, they cannot take part. It is not registred even.

तो इसके अलावा और क्या नई चीज आप कानून में लाना चाहते हैं?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Sir, the hon. Member is trying to confuse the whole issue. He must have heard what the Prime Minister clearly stated both in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Whether immediate summary trial will be resorted to in the case of those who believe in secessionism and they can be disqualified before the election, and whether any legislation of this type can be brought about is a matter which is under the consideration of the Government. And we are at the final stage. I don't think, according to the present Representation of People Act, there is any such provision under which summary trial can be held and immediate disqualification can be resorted to. So, that is one of the things that the Government has in view, and we would like to see that such a legislation is brought about as early as possible.

श्री कृष्ण लाल शर्मा: समरी ट्रायल की कोई जरूरत ही नहीं रहती। they are not registered even under 29(a). तो इसमें तो आपको देखना चाहिए।

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to say that we must face the facts in Punjab. It is right to say that the Punjab problem today is a Sikh problem. I would also

accept what the hon. Home Minister has said that every Sikh is not a militant. Punjab problem is a Sikh problem. And the second thing is that unless you are ready to talk to the militants, no political party today in Punjab is in a position to deliver any goods. And a previous statement of this or that nature really means that the Government really does not propose to go any further in the Punjab problem but carry on with the policy which they had before they came into power. And the Presidents' Rule has produced very injurious results not only to Punjab but to the country as a whole.

श्री लक्ष्मण : आप सवाल कर लीजिए ।

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA:

I am coming down to the problem. So, my view is that it is not right to be tilting at the windmills and say that 'we are going to have immediate trials and disqualify them.' Why don't you give the people of Punjab a chance? Give the people of Punjab a chance. Don't worry what statements they make and see what the result of the election is. You must have your finger on the people's point of view. And in the last election by denying the people of Punjab a chance a tremendous amount of damage has been done. I can assure you, people would not have voted for those who are disloyal to the country. But I don't know why you lack confidence. My view is that by imposing other restrictions that you are planning, you are only playing into the hands of the militants and not trusting the public.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: I agree with some part of what the hon. Member has said, that in Punjab we have to hold elections and we should not put forth any kind of excuses for postponing the elections. I am in full agreement. But at the same time, we cannot possibly take the risk of some of the people taking a plea, as if, it is a kind of referendum on the question of secession. That is the point due to which we had to boycott the elections. The Congress party boycotted the elections because of the fact that some people, some militants, were saying that they were going to plead secessionism. I

am aware of the fact that by passing a Resolution in the Punjab Assembly, it is not going to be effective. But so far as the international community is concerned, they will get a tremendous amount of publicity which, in fact, the Government did not want to give, that kind of opportunity to those people. I can assure the hon. Member that this is, in fact, not the intention of the Government to make this a kind of excuse for postponing the elections in Punjab.

श्री सुरेन्द्र सिंह टाकूर : आदरणीय सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि पंजाब में चुनाव के पोस्टपोन की बात को लेकर वहाँ के राज्यपाल श्री मल्होत्रा ने क्या सरकार को आश्वस्त किया है ? यदि यह सब है तो सरकार ने वहाँ दूसरा कोई राज्यपाल नियुक्त करने की प्रक्रिया चालू की है ? महोदय, आज एक नेशनल पेपर में एक खबर है कि सरकार किसी व्यक्ति विशेष को उस पद के लिए तैयार करने की कोशिश कर रही है, लेकिन वह स्वीकार नहीं कर रहे हैं। अगर यह भी सच है तो क्या मंत्री महोदय बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि उन्हें मनाने की जरूरत क्या है ? पंजाब का गवर्नर पद स्वीकार करने वाले व्यक्तियों की कमी नहीं होगी। मैं मंत्री महोदय से निवेदन करना चाहूँगा कि ऐसे लोगों का वहाँ बिल्कुल न भेजा जाए जिनको मनाना पड़ रहा है क्योंकि इस देश में ऐसे भी लोग उपलब्ध हैं जो खुद जाकर वहाँ काम करना चाहते हैं।

श्री एस.बी. चवण : सभापति महोदय, पहले सवाल का जवाब यह है कि यह हम ठीक नहीं समझते हैं कि कोई भी गवर्नर इस किस्म के डिक्लेट करने की बात शुरू करे कि आपने इलेक्शंस मुझसे बगैर पूछे पोस्टपोन किए। दोनों में कम्युनिकेशन गैप हुआ यह बात सच है और उसी कारण उठो यह कहने की नीयत आई कि इलेक्शंस होने वाले हैं, लेकिन उसी दिन इलेक्शन कमीशन ने शाम को इलेक्शंस पोस्टपोन करने का एलान किया। तो

उन्होंने यह समझा कि एक तरफ मुझे एलान करने के लिए कहा गया और दूसरी तरफ इलेक्शंस पोस्टपोन कर रहे हैं। यह समझकर उन्होंने यह कहा कि अगर मुझ पर विश्वास नहीं है तो मैं त्यागपत्र देना चाहता हूँ। दूसरी बात माननीय सदस्य ने जो पूछी है, उसके बारे में इतना ही कहना चाहूंगा कि जो लोग अनविलिंग हैं, उनको पंजाब में भेजने का कोई सवाल ही पैदा नहीं होता है। मैं तो चाहूंगा कि ऐसे लोग जहाँ पर भेजे जाएं जो अपने एक्सपोरिऐंस ने पंजाब के हालात को दुरुस्त करने के लिए तैयार हों। अन-विलिंग होते हुए जर्देस्ती किसी को भेजने का सवाल ठीक नहीं है और यह भी ठीक है कि जो सारी चीज अब्बार में आती है, वह हंड्रेड परसेंट ठीक होती है। यह समझकर आप सवाल पूछ रहे हैं तो इसमें कोई सच्चाई नहीं है कि अन-विलिंग आदमी को वहाँ पर भेजने की कोशिश की जा रही है।

#### National Highways in Bihar

\*143. SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Highways in Bihar are in poor conditions; and

(b) if so, what amount has been sanctioned by Government for repair and maintenance of National Highways in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) National Highways in Bihar are generally in traffic worthy condition, except few short stretches on various Highways which occasionally get damaged by floods and rains.

During 1990-91 Rs. 1148.83 lakhs was allotted in respect of maintenance and repair works in Bihar. In 1991-92, Rs. 183.00 lakhs have been released so far. The total amount for the maintenance of the National Highway net work will be known after the Budget is presented and

out of this, the allocation for Bihar will be determined.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : मान्यवर, मंत्री जी का जो लिखित जवाब है, उसमें उन्होंने कहा है कि कुछ छोटे खंडों को छोड़कर बिहार में राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग आमतौर पर यातायात के योग्य है, उन खंडों को छोड़कर जो बाढ़ तथा बारिश से कभी-कभार क्षतिग्रस्त हो जाते हैं। मान्यवर, मैं तो चाहता हूँ कि मंत्री जी कम से कम अपनी मारुति कार से दुर्गावती से आसनसोल तक और मोहनिया से आरा तक एक बार यात्रा कर लें, जो कि बाढ़ का इलाका नहीं है, बाढ़ से क्षतिग्रस्त रोड़ नहीं है बल्कि उस इलाके में तो कभी बाढ़ आती ही नहीं। इन रोड़ों की हालत जरा आप देख लें ... (व्यवधान)

श्री यशवन्त सिन्हा : भ्रष्टाचार की बाढ़ भी तो आती है।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : हाँ, असल बात तो यह छिप गई कि भ्रष्टाचार की बाढ़ से यह रोड़ क्षतिग्रस्त है यह जरूर, पानी की बाढ़ से तो क्षतिग्रस्त नहीं है। तो इन दोनों रोड़ पर मैं आमंत्रित करता हूँ मंत्री महोदय को, कि जरा अपनी मारुति कार से चलकर देख लें कि यह रोड़ यातायात के योग्य है या नहीं? फिर लौटकर नहीं आ सकती आपकी मारुति कार उधर से। यह बात ठीक है उत्तर प्रदेश की सीमा तक राष्ट्रीय पथ ठीक है, उधर बंगाल में भी ठीक है, लेकिन बिहार का जितना इलाका है उसमें जी. टी. रोड़, जो सबसे प्रमुख रोड़ है, जैसा आप जानते हैं दिल्ली से, पूरे उत्तर भारत से कलकत्ता तक जोड़ने वाली यह सड़क है ग्रांड ट्रंक रोड़, उसकी हालत इतनी खराब है कि आप कल्पना ही नहीं कर सकते। मान्यवर, आपको तो मैं नहीं कह सकता कि आप उधर चलिए, देखिए, लेकिन मंत्री जी को मैं जरूर कह सकता हूँ।

श्री समापति : तो क्या आप वहाँ मारुति कार का दौरा करेंगे? यह प्रश्न है।

श्री अग्निवर्नी कुमार : हम लोग भी साथ चलेंगे। मंत्री महोदय आप एक बार चलें। ... (व्यवधान) ...