

depends upon the Bangladesh Government agreeing to take steps so that more water could be flowed down. We are glad that the Prime Minister has declared that the Government has taken a position so that Bangladesh agrees to it. He said that if it does not agree some tough decision has to be taken. Pending the action being taken by the Union Government to force Bangladesh to take steps so that more water could flow down the Ganges, what intermediary steps the Union Government proposes to take to facilitate a greater flow of water of whatever we have got, coming down from the Upper Ganga down to the Calcutta level? One of the proposals is desiltation. There are certain other proposals also. But the Minister of Irrigation can share with us what other steps they have got to allow a greater flow of water along the Ganges down to Calcutta Port.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** It is a suggestion. They will note it. Some dredging is always going on there. (Interruptions)

**SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:** It is not going on. I make a statement that nothing is being done for desiltation at Calcutta Port despite our repeated requests to the Government.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Some dredgers were purchased and they were working there.

**SHRI DIPEN GHOSH:** It is dredging by the Calcutta Port Authorities. Sir, this dredging is a very costly affair. The Calcutta Port Authorities are asked to dredge for navigability purposes so that bigger ships could come to the Calcutta port. And this is beyond the financial capacity of the Calcutta Port Authority also. So, an over-all decision has to be taken by the Union Government.

**SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:** There was a definite proposal for dredging, and it was not done by the Union Government.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Question No. 122

### Travel concessions for ex-servicemen

\*122. **SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether there is a demand for providing travel concessions to ex-servicemen who are recipients of bravery awards; and

(b) if so, whether the Ministry of Defence have taken up the matter with the Ministry of Railways?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI):**

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) The matter regarding grant of facility of free travel by rail to gallantry award winners was taken up with the Ministry of Railways. The Railways have indicated that it would not be possible for them to enhance the scope of existing concessions, due to financial constraints.

**SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:** Sir, yesterday you asked us to be kind to the Congressmen and not to call them incompetent. So, I will say judging by this reply that this shows minimum competence. Sir, the question is about ex-Servicemen. They were prepared to risk their life for the country. And they come out, they retire at a very young age. We politicians never retire. But they have to retire at a very young age. And the minimum thing that could be given to them is the facility of travel. And how can the Railways take the stand that financial constraints are there? There is a Government. The Railways is not a law unto itself. There is no Cabinet Minister here. I do not know whether he is still there because everything changes very fast here. But the Minister of State is here. With this huge Defence

budget, can they not set aside a few crores of rupees for the sake of ex-Servicemen?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
Sir, hon. Swamyji has agreed that...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:  
Swamiji? A little yellow does not mean that I am Swamiji.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in place of calling Swamy, in Hindi we call Swamyji.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
It just shows....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Swamyji from Tamil Nadu.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Not Chandra Swami.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
Sir, his question relates to the concessions to be given to the gallantry awardees. That is his question. So, there it is not a general kind of ex-Servicemen. His question is only about gallantry awardees. Therefore, we said that we took up this matter—and many hon. Members also requested the Defence Minister—with the Railway Minister. And they say, we are giving various concessions. But at present because of the constraint of resources, we have not been able to extend this concession. That is the answer that I am giving to you.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:  
Okay, Can I ask Minister the second question? What is the amount of resources that would be involved in giving this facility?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
That has not been worked out.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:  
How do they know the constraint of resources, if they have not worked it out.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
It is the Railway Ministry which has to work it out. We have said this is the total number...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:  
You must have got it from them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Railways are working it out.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:  
What is the constraint of resources for which it is not possible? What is the amount of resources required for it?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
They have said that they are not in a position to extend this concession to these awardees, gallantry awardees. The Railways have to work it out.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:  
How do they know then that there is going to be constraint of resources, when nothing has been worked out? The thing is that you are anti-servicemen. This Government is totally anti-servicemen.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
How can you say that? I strongly refute this. They are being given various concessions.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:  
The fact is that the attitude of the Government is totally casual, absolutely casual. (Interruptions).

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:  
Sir, I refute this allegation.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, the Armed Forces personnel in service are the responsibility of the Central Government but the moment they retire, they cease to be the responsibility of the Central Government and they become the responsibility of the State Government. Now, Sir, it is very unfortunate that the Railway Ministry should have turned down the recommendation for the benefit of the gallantry award

winners, who have staked their lives for the defence of the country. I requested the Railway Ministry for granting them this little concession. They should not only have granted this financial concession but they should have even reserved seats for these people who have fought for the country. I think the nation has to be grateful to them. I hope the Prime Minister must intervene and a directive will be given to the Railway ministry that concessions should be given to those who have won gallantry awards. The Government took a very good step by constituting the K. P. Singh Deo Committee and a lot of concessions were given to the Armed Forces personnel and ex-servicemen.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Only recommended and not yet given.

**SHRI SURESH KALMADI:** Sir, I think the Government has set up a monitoring committee to see that all the benefits meant for ex-servicemen are duly given to them. I hope the States are not neglecting ex-servicemen and they are also having monitoring committees for the various schemes meant for the benefit of ex-servicemen.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** Sir, these are two different questions. One relates to the question of giving railway concession to gallantry award winners, whose number is 2485, and the other relates to ex-servicemen. This was taken up only yesterday and I have answered it in detail and the present question is limited.

**SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:** Where has he answered?

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** In the Lok Sabha.

**SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:** In the Lok Sabha? We do not take any notice of that. Sir, can you allow this kind of a disrespect for the Rajya Sabha? *(Interruptions)*.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** I think he is not in good mood today. No disrespect is shown. I answered this question there, the facilities that we were giving to the ex-servicemen, and how we help them to be self-employed, what is the reservation made for these ex-servicemen in employment etc. Now today's question only relates to those who have won gallantry awards in enemy action. That is the question and their number is 2485... *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI SURESH KALMADI:** They fought for the country and you cannot just say that their number is 2485. Why don't you give them railway concessions?

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** You put a question and I will answer it. It is not that the Railways are going to direct, give the concession and the seats will be reserved. The Railway Ministry says that they are not in a position. That is what they have said.

**SHRI SURESH KALMADI:** You should follow it up.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** General Aurora.

**SHRI RAJIV GANDHI:** Mr. Chairman. Sir, I will have this issue looked up again and we will try and do something.

**SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA:** Sir, I am very happy to hear that the Prime Minister has agreed to do something about it but I would like to mention that in connection with looking after the gallantry awardees, I had taken up this case more than a year ago for giving them additional allowances than they have been getting and after a lot of effort their allowances that have been revised are so meagre that most of these chaps have said that all that is going to happen is that you are giving Rs. 20 or Rs. 40 extra rather than giving a substantial amount. I had taken it up and had written to the Defence Minister and Railways

Minister about it but I got a very bland answer. I am now happy that the Prime Minister is going to do something about it. Once again, I would say that if you forget the ex-servicemen and don't deal with them fairly and squarely—which I am sorry, is not being done as far as pension is concerned—this will upset the ex-servicemen greatly. Some of them actually staged a dharna here. But nothing has happened to satisfy them. I would again recommend that pension cases, rank for rank, must be reconsidered because they are getting fed up. We get letters from them that we sitting here in Parliament have done nothing for them, and we do not want to go back and say that we have a totally unsympathetic Government who in spite of all our efforts turned a blind eye.

**SHRI SITARAM KESRI:** After the assurance of the Prime Minister. I think there should be no doubt. That is the final word.

**श्री राम अवधेश सिंह :** श्रीमन्, "समर्थिग" का क्या मतलब है... (व्यवधान)। प्रधान मंत्री के "समर्थिग" का मतलब "नर्थिग" होता है... (व्यवधान)।

**SHRI JAGJIT SINGH AURORA:** I don't think the Minister understood my question; I raised the issue of pension.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** I am happy General Aurora took up this case with the Defence Ministry. We are pursuing this matter. On the question raised by him, I may announce about the enhancement of allowance by the Ministry of Defence, that has been given to awardees of Param Vir Chakra and Mahavir Chakra. We are giving Rs. 200/- to Param Vir Chakra awardees from 1-1-1967; Rs. 160/- to Mahavir Chakra; Rs. 120/- to Vir Chakra; Rs. 180/- to Ashok Chakra; Rs. 140/- to Kirti Chakra and Rs. 100/- to Shourya Chakra, and after the death of these awardees, these monthly allowances

will continue to be paid to their widows. On the question of rank for rank pension, some friends have gone to the court. This is *sub judice* and we are trying to consider the demands of these ex-servicemen.

**श्री यशवन्त नाथ सुकुल :** सभापति जी, हमारे प्रधानमंत्री जी का यह आश्वासन कि वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त सेवा निवृत्त सैनिकों को यात्रा खर्चा पर विचार किया जायेगा, सराहनीय है। लेकिन इस संबंध में मैं यह कहना चाहूंगा कि रक्षा मंत्रालय की ओर से 26 जनवरी को जो गणतंत्र परेड आयोजित की जाती है उसमें वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त सैनिक तो भाग लेते ही हैं, उनके साथ साथ वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त बालक भी भाग लेते हैं और ये सब रक्षा मंत्रालय की ओर से शामिल किये जाते हैं। इसलिये मेरा सुझाव है कि वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त बालकों को भी कुछ राहत मिलनी चाहिये, कम से कम जब तक वे बालक हैं यानी 21 वर्ष से पहले तक, जब तक वे मेजर नहीं हो जाते हैं, तब तक हमारे जो वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त बालक हैं उनको भी यात्रा खर्चा मिलनी चाहिये। इससे देश की सद्भावना की उन के प्रति वृद्धि होगी और राष्ट्र का सम्मान होगा। मैं चाहूंगा कि प्रधान मंत्री जी इस विषय पर भी विचार अवश्य करें।

**श्री सभापति :** मैं समझता हूँ कि यह डिफेंस मिनिस्ट्री से संबंधित नहीं है।

**श्री चिंतामणि पाणिग्राही :** वीरता पुरस्कार प्राप्त बालकों का मामला अभी तक हमारे पास नहीं आया है। जब यह मामला हमारे पास आयेगा तो विचार करेंगे।

**श्री राम अवधेश सिंह :** संसद में आ गया है तो आपको विचार करना चाहिये। प्रधानमंत्री जी बालकों के बारे में बहुत बोलते हैं और वे यहां पर मौजूद भी हैं... (व्यवधान)

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** The hon. Member wanted to know whether all these gallantry award winners, and even the children who participate in the Republic Day Parade, are also going to get some awards. We would look into it.

**SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY:** Mr. Chairman, Sir, the question is about only those ex-servicemen who have been given gallantry awards, bravery awards; not about all ex-servicemen. Of course, the hon. Minister has answered and the Prime Minister has given an assurance just now. Apart from this, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government that freedom fighters have been given pension and they have also been extended railway concession, travel concession, for one year. Sir, the number of ex-servicemen who have received gallantry awards is limited. It is not in lakhs.

**SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:** Two thousand.

**SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY:** Not in lakhs. It is a very small number. The services rendered by them are no less equal to that of the freedom fighters. The freedom fighters fought for the attainment of freedom for this country. Similarly, these people have laid down their lives to defend the Independence of this country, to safeguard the Independence of this country. The Prime Minister just now said that he will do something about it. I do not know what is that 'something'. I want a categorical statement in this House, either by the Prime Minister or the Defence Minister, that immediate steps will be taken to give this concession to the ex-servicemen and to fulfil their other demands. (Interruptions). The Prime Minister said 'something will be done'. I would like to know, what is that 'something'. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what is that 'something' which they are going to give. (Interruptions).

**SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY:** The hon. Minister should take a hard look at it.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** Sir, as Mr. Reddy has point-

ed out, the number of ex-servicemen who have received bravery awards is not much; it is 2,485. We understand the anxiety of the hon. Members. That is why the Prime Minister also responded. Sir, in regard to the railway concession extended to the freedom fighters, it was the Prime Minister who said 'Alright; we extend it by one year'. Therefore, when the Prime Minister has said that he will look into this, I think that is enough.

**Removing the upper age limit for widows/divorced women for entry into Government service**

\*123. DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:†

**SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to remove the upper age limit for employment in Government service for widows and divorced women; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM):** (a) and (b) According to the existing orders, the upper age limit for appointment to Group 'C' and Group 'D' posts under the Central Government has been relaxed upto 35 years of age (upto 40 years for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) in respect of widows, divorced women and women judicially separated from their husbands, who have not remarried. There is no proposal to remove the upper age limit in respect of these categories.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Ratnakar Pandey.