

the rural areas? I would also like to know whether he is aware that about 10 or 12 years back when Mr. K. K. Shah was the Urban Development Minister, a foundation stone was laid by Shrimati Indira Gandhi in Bombay for developing a slum area into building houses and still nothing has been done on that plot. In this connection, may I know whether, during his recent visit to Bombay, he has assured the Chief Minister that the slum area in Bombay will be quickly developed and sufficient funds will be provided for this purpose? The basic point, which my hon. colleague from that side also has raised, is the difficulty that the per-square-feet criteria about which the HUDCO or the State Government has issued guidelines, is out-of-date due to all-round inflation. So the inflationary spiral has eaten into the corpus. Therefore, I would like to know whether he is prepared to issue new guidelines and direct the HUDCO and the State Governments accordingly so that it will be a worthwhile and pragmatic proposal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is more a suggestion. Go on and answer it Mr. Sethi.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As far as rehabilitation of the slums into housing is concerned, it would not be possible for us to take it up on a big scale. In Delhi if I were to provide houses to all the slum dwellers, the cost will be Rs. 1100 crores and the cost of this for the entire country will be an astronomical figure. Therefore, Sir we have taken a deliberate decision that as far as slums or commercial areas are concerned, 16th February, 1977 is the cut-out date and, as far as the colonies are concerned, the jhuggi-jhonpuri areas are concerned, June, 1977 is the cut-out date. All those who were there before these will be allowed to remain there, and we will improvise the slums which would cost us between Rs. 150 and Rs. 200 per capita and, I think for myself—whether I succeed or not depends on funds—that in four and a half years we want to improvise every slum.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Number 344. (Interruptions).

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I asked three questions. (Interruptions) What happened to Bombay? Please tell us whether you went there and what you promised to Mr. Antulay. You are just forgetting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think I can allow it.

Shortage of Staff in the Posts and Telegraphs Department

*344. SHRI S. KUMARAN:†

SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA:

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Posts and Telegraphs Department has been facing the problem of staff shortage resulting in deterioration on its performance;

(b) if so, what are the details of the understaffed departments and what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are being taken for the immediate recruitment of adequate staff to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON):

(a) and (b) The shortage of staff faced by the Posts and Telegraphs Department is to the extent of 8 to 10 per cent of the sanctioned posts in various cadres. This shortage is partly due to rapid and all round expansion of the various activities of the Department and also partly due to certain time lag between the sanction of posts and filling up the posts caused by certain procedural formalities of recruitment.

(c) The recruitment procedures have been recently streamlined to cut down delays. Recruitment to the clerical and allied cadres has been further decentralised to the Divisional level to ensure finalisation of recruitment formalities quickly. The filling up of vacancies is being

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri S. Kumaran.

monitored at the headquarters and all possible steps are taken to have expeditious recruitment of the sanctioned staff.

SHRI S. KUMARAN: Sir, this is a serious question. From various parts of the country there are reports appearing daily about delivery of telegrams. For example, from Madras, thousands of telegrams are sent by post. In Kottayam and other parts of Kerala, thousands and thousands of letters are pending sorting. And about telephones I need not explain. The Minister himself has admitted that overtime has increased from Rs. 11 crores to Rs. 27 crores last year. According to the trade unions there is a shortage of between 20 and 30 per cent in the various departments. And the funny thing is, in our country, lakhs of educated-unemployed people are available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the question?

SHRI S. KUMARAN: I am coming to it, Sir. This is a serious question, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know. The question may be very serious, but you should come to it sometime.

SHRI S. KUMARAN: Lakhs and lakhs of unemployed people are ready and people are prepared to pay the telegraphic charges and so on. There is no financial difficulty, no lack of money.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Minister.

SHRI S. KUMARAN: May I know from the hon. Minister what is the real obstacle in the recruitment and employment of people? May I know from the hon. Minister what are the main obstacles in filling the vacancies and also whether the hon. Minister will come forward with a crash recruitment programme to fulfil the country's needs?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, the hon. Member has stated out in detail what was already admitted. The admitted fact is, annually there is a certain measure of shortage. Our calculation is

that there is a shortage of between 8 per cent and 11 per cent, about 9 per cent on an average. The reasons I have already spelt out. Recruitment has got to go through a gambit, different stages. Now the total employees in the P & T are about eight lakhs. Extra-departmental—about 2.45 lakhs; regular—2.53 lakhs; telecommunication—2.58 lakhs. Now today it is about eight lakhs. The annual intake is of the order of half a lakh. That is to say, in respect of the persons who are retiring, 10 per cent rise will be there. That is the position. What we do is we make an assessment or a projection as to what will be the requirement and start the process. But for the process to be completed, it takes about 18 months. (Interruptions) You just listen to me. We have got to spell it out, we have got to advertise, we have got to take them in, and the training must be completed. Therefore, we begin the whole thing about a year or more ahead. Still there will be some measure of backlog; and the backlog is to the extent I have indicated. There are two factors which are coming in our way. We have got to recruit through the employment exchanges for certain posts. We have got to recruit through the Staff Selection Board for certain categories of posts like Clerks and Stenographers. What we find is that the employment exchanges invariably lag behind in giving us the lists; incomplete lists are given and we are stagnant. As far as the Staff Selection Board is concerned, this comparison shows that in that section there is an accumulation because the Staff Selection Board has not given us people as per our requirement. As the central recruitment took time, we have decentralised it. At the Circle level they can do it. It can go down to the divisional level also. That is the present pattern. We are thinking of certain other methods also. We propose to recruit a large number of people on the basis of recruitment for two years. This is not the final thing. This is just my thinking. I am just sharing it with the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A standing pool.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: A standing pool, if I may say so. We will keep them ready and get them trained, because what happens is that even after the recruitment takes place quite a number of them drop out and we do not get the required number. Therefore, we propose to keep the number larger. What we are doing for the mazdoors is that the persons who have completed so many days as regulars have been made permanent. Once this arrangement comes in, we will have a standing pool from which we just take people in and put into the permanent structure. This is the arrangement we are working out. With that, the shortage will be met. The hon. House will see the magnitude of the problem: about half a lakh of people to be recruited through different agencies with different types of requirements. 50 per cent of the recruitment from within the Department and 50 per cent from outside, varying from cadre to cadre, we have not got any single agency where total pooling takes place. In spite of all this, the shortage is only 8 per cent. That is a good achievement as far as I can see it.

SHRI S. KUMARAN: Sir, I am thankful to the Minister for having given us an elaborate reply. I would like to know whether it is a fact that various P&T trade unions have submitted proposals. Are those proposals contrary to the Government proposal or complementary to the Government proposal?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: If the hon. Members tells me the exact matter, I can answer. This I cannot answer.

SHRI S. KUMARAN: I would like to know whether the Government has received certain proposals from the trade unions.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: We have a pile of proposals before us. Everything is being processed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, do you want to ask any question?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I have put the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, the supplementary. You are not paying attention, which is rather unusual. Mr. Shyam Lal Yadav.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV: Sir, we are thankful to the Minister for the outline of the proposal that he has given, although it is going to take some time to be implemented. I would like to know whether this assessment of shortage of workers, of 10 or 11 per cent, is realistic. I am afraid the shortage is more because looking at the payment of overtime that is being done I apprehend that in the Department there is a conspiracy not to recruit sufficient number of people so that the employees who are there can get overtime payment to a large extent. I would like to know whether the Minister would like to make some ad hoc appointments immediately so that this gap is covered. The scheme that he has outlined for the expansion of postal services, telegraph and telephone services may be taken up further. And secondly I would like to know the number of casual workers that are working for years together. They have not been regularised or confirmed in their appointment. This may be done so that other casual workers may be employed. (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Yadav, how far are you going? (Interruptions).

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV: What is the difficulty in making appointments to the posts of clerks, messengers and postmen who deliver letters and telegrams? What is the difficulty in making immediate appointments? What has been the period of the shortfall. Is it only one year, two years or years together that the shortfall has been continuing? Will he take some immediate steps to make ad hoc appointments so that this may be wiped out. In view of the large number of unemployed persons, why should they not be employed immediately? Then you can further go on regularisation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Minister.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, this is not an area of speculation, and we do not believe in speculation on what can be the percentage. We have got real figures.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was one important question in the beginning about ad hoc appointments.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I will come to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of course, the second question, the third question, the fourth question, the numberless questions were just off-shoots.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: No, no. He just started with other things. That is why I said that it is not a matter of speculation. I would say that these are the figures up to December, 1979: The shortage of the Junior Engineers is 13 persons the Technicians 13 persons, the Linemen 9 persons, the Telephone Operators 8 persons, the Time Scale Clerks 9, Telegraphists 9 persons and Group B 15 persons. These are the actual figures. Actual solid figures are there. I do not want to go into that.

With respect to *ad hoc* appointments, I do not believe in *ad hocism*, and *ad hocism* is bad. You cannot make *ad hoc* appointments because there are definite rules governing appointments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it because *ad-hocism* has got a bad meaning these days?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: *Ad hocism* will not dovetail in a perfect system. That is the difficulty. It is practically impossible. *Ad hocism* and systematic thing will not go together. That is the difficulty. There is no question of *ad hocism*.

The casual workers are to the extent of 66,000. That is the total number of casual workers. We have now come to an arrangement. Now the casual workers who have completed 750 days, are regularised on a basic salary at the lowest level, the starting stage, of the salary of that particular type of employees. The casual workers who have completed a lesser number of service, are also regularised with a certain

measure of salary. I do not remember the details. Those regularisations take place, and then they are recruited permanently into the whole arrangement. This is the arrangement. The casual workers are the happiest lot as far as the satisfaction is concerned because their claims are recognised by the Board, and this arrangement has been made. A positive step has been taken to regularise them on the way to making them permanent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Short please. Mr. Sundaram.

श्री नरेन्द्र सिंह : श्रीमन् मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह जो ओवर टाइम का काम होता है संचार विभाग में और इस विचार से कि उनको ओवर टाइम मिलता रहे, क्या इस कारण से भी जो नई नियुक्तियाँ हैं वह रुकी हुई हैं ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The evil of overtime.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, as the hon. Member has understood, overtime is a matter which I am considerably exercised about. I have come out with a statement about it. The matter is being analysed in detail. It is not entirely due to the shortage of staff. There are certain operations. It can be brought down. This percentage of shortage has been a thing which has been existing. Even when the shortage was not there, the overtime was Rs. 11 crores about three years ago, four years ago. Now it has shot up to Rs. 27 crores, not due to shortage increase. The shortage kept the same level. Nevertheless it has shot up. To that reasons have got to be found elsewhere. The reasons are being analysed and I am absolutely sure we can bring down the overtime.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Sir, the hon. Minister gave a detailed answer explaining the difficulties in recruitment and in timely filling up of the sanctioned strength and other vacancies. If he were in the Opposition, he would not accept any of these explanations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. He is not. You may forget it.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Sir, the present shortage is more than what he has actually stated. Even according to him, the lowest is 9 per cent and the highest is 15 per cent. The conspiracy is not to get overtime, but the conspiracy is to save money. If they are made, permanent, if permanent vacancies are filled up, the expenditure will go up. So it is an indirect method of increasing the work-load on the workers and maintaining the shortage. It is a conspiracy on the part of the Department to save some money. So I would like to ask the Minister whether he will give a time-limit to all the General Managers of Telecommunications and the General Managers of the Postal Department to fill up the existing vacancies within at least six months. I agree with him that there should be no ad-hoc appointment. It will lead to corruption.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, after having said about the way this thing has accumulated, I cannot give a time-limit within which it can be cleared up. It can only be by alteration of the system. I cannot give a time-limit to the employment exchanges. I cannot give a time-limit to the Staff Selection Board. I cannot give a time-limit to the persons who are coming. I have also informed the House that even in regard to those who are recruited our experience is that there is quite a lot of drop-out from those persons who are coming in and getting training because they get better jobs. This is another problem that we are facing. Therefore, taking all the aspects of the matter into account, I regret I cannot give an assurance that I can give a time-limit. I do not consider that the present shortage is at an extraordinary level, taking all things into account. And the only solution is what I have spelt out and which we are going ahead with, namely, creating a large pool out of which persons can be recruited into permanent vacancies

and thus the shortage can be wiped out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Last question. Mr. Pradhan.

SHRI PATITPABAN PRADHAN: Sir, the hon. Minister, while explaining about the bottleneck with regard to recruitment, mentioned that the employment exchanges are not in a position to cope with the situation. But our information is that even when the employment exchange forwards some names, those persons do not get any call, and that is why there is a conflict between the Department and the employment exchanges. Will the hon. Minister be kind enough to lay the information on the Table of the House as to in which States and on what dates the indents for recruitment were made on the employment exchange and the nature of their response?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, may I clarify the position? I should not be understood as making a sweeping statement that the employment exchanges are completely failing us. There are instances. That is all I said. And this is one of the contributing factors, a minor contributing factor; but it is not a major contributing factor. Depending upon the cadre, it may be five times the number required or ten times the number required that we ask for so that we can sieve out of them. There are cases in which the employment exchanges are delaying and not giving us within proper time. This question is one of time; it is not a question of number. There are cases when we do not get it within the time that we ask for. There are cases when they are not able to give us the number we are asking for. The number we ask for may be.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Several times.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN:several times the number we require. But generally they do keep up. But there are instances when they do not give us. I have emphasised that this is not a major contributing factor. It is a contributing factor. The totality of it

is, it comes to a situation like this. I do not want to highlight the failure of the employment exchanges as the main contributory factor.

*345. [Transferred to the 30th June, 1980].

*346. [The questioner (Prof. Ram Lal Parikh) was absent. For answer vide col. 33 infra].

Sale of Commercial Space by M/s. Nehru Place Hotel Ltd., Nehru Place, New Delhi

*347. SHRI SYED RAHMAT ALI: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that M/s. Nehru Place Hotel Ltd., Nehru Place, New Delhi has collected Rs. 89,67,236.35 from public in the form of earnest money for sale of commercial space in the plot originally auctioned by the DDA on 17-3-76 for the construction of a 3—5 star hotel;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to safeguard the money deposited by public as earnest money?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI MOHAMMED USMAN ARIF): (a) Government are not aware that Messers Nehru Place Hotel Ltd., Nehru Place, New Delhi has collected Rs. 89,67,236.35 from the public in the form of earnest money for sale of commercial space in the plot auctioned by the D.D.A. on 17-3-1976. However D.D.A. has reported that it had come to their notice that the auction purchasers were selling commercial space without obtaining the permission of the D.D.A.

(b) and (c) It is understood from the DDA that there are some court cases in this connection and the matter is *sub judice*.

श्री संयद रहमत अली : क्या यह सही है कि लैंड यूज के चेंज करने में बी० डी० ए० ने इन मसलहतों को काम में लाया है और यह जानता चाहता हूँ कि

क्रिमिनल कंप्लेंट्स जो कोर्ट में कम्पनी के खिलाफ फाइल किये गये हैं, उसमें बी० डी० ए० की जानिब से रिलेवेंट डाक्यूमेंट्स पेश करना पब्लिक मफाद के खिलाफ जाहिर किया गया है ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any privilege claimed about the document in the court?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I do not have any such information that the DDA has claimed any privilege. To the best possible extent I will take the information from them and pass it on to the hon. House through the supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any further supplementary?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: The hon. Minister has not answered part (c) of the question, namely, what steps Government propose to take to safeguard the money deposited by public as earnest money? I know this being a matter for DDA, the Government may not directly come into the picture. But has the Government any indirect way of protecting the interest of the public?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a very important question.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Yes, Sir. You have guided me and, therefore, it has become much more important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have said it very correctly. Now, what is the answer?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: This is a deal between the company and those who have paid the money to them. If they have given more money to the company, then on that issue both of them are in the court. That is a court case between them and the party. Therefore, the DDA on their part cannot protect those who have paid more money. What the DDA can do and what they are trying to do is that in terms of the original lease deed if the person has not completed the building within three years and if he has not