

properly examined. So far as individual allegations are concerned, each one of them has to be carefully examined and then only a finding arrived at and some action taken.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In the interest of the House, I have a suggestion to make Mr. Shanti Bhushan said that he did not remember when the Union people met him. As far as I know, he is a man who has got a good memory and a very alert mind. I would not like him to be scandalised by this statement. Therefore, I request you to expunge this statement because I would not like our colleague to be scandalised.

MR. CHAIRMAN": Mr. Kalyan Roy.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: This question was raised by me last year and the year previous to that. I also requested the then Minister of Company Affairs to institute inquiries. Will you kindly tell us how much money did the present management get from the I.R.C.I.? When he inquires into the affairs of the **I.R.C.I.** and takes a decision, would he also inquire into this aspect as to whether this mismanagement and corruption was possible because of collusion between the I.R.C.I. and the management of Bengal Chemicals?

SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN: Every aspect of the matter would be examined because the **I.R.C.I.** has been concerned with the management of this company for several years now. Every aspect of the matter will be taken care of.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: How much money did the I.R.C.I. give?

SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN: I would require notice to make a statement about the exact amount.

B. Light Railway Workers' Union .. Bihar..

*306. SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: f SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: SHRI BHOLA PRASAD;

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received any representation from the Bihar B. B. Light Railway Workers' Union regarding continuity of service and seniority of the ex-B. B. Light Railway employees; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what is Government's decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Shri Sibnath Banerjee, Founder and President, Bekar Bhata Dabi Committee. Howrah and former President of Light Railwaymen's Union, in his letter dated 20th April 1977, addressed to Minister for Railways, had forwarded a representation dated 10th May, 1976 from Shri Prakash Kumar Sanyal, Secretary. Ex-Barasat-Basirhat Light Railway Union. The representation contained the follow-demands:

(a) Past service of the former employees of Barasat-Basirhat Light Railway, should be counted for the purpose of pension, including family pension and gratuity; and

(ii) the service should also be counted for post-retirement complimentary passes.

The request was considered in depth. Since the employees of ex-Barasat-Basirhat Light Railway were

tThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Indradeep Sinha.

taken as fresh entrants on the Railways it was decided that the benefit of past service for purpose of pension and/or passes could not be extended to them. A reply was accordingly sent to Shri Banerjee on 24th May, 1977 by Minister for Railways.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: Sir, the question relates to B. B. Light Railway Workers' Union,, Bihar. In the body of the question, it has been asked whether a representation from the Bihar B. B. Light Railway Workers' Union regarding continuity of service and seniority of the ex-B. B. Light Railway employees has been received. In the statement laid on the Table of the House, the re-ference is to the B.B. Light Railways in Bengal and not in Bihar and the statement refers to a representation received from the President of the Light Railwaymen's Union in Bengal and the reply relates to that. First, I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has received any representation from the B. B. Light Railway Workers' Union in Bihar.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: In addition to the reference that has been made in the written statement, we have also received a memorandum and a statement from the Union concerned. I am sorry for this lapse, anyway, both of them are almost on identical lines. Therefore, the reply to the question would remain identical.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA: Coming to the statement, it has been stated that the employees of the B. B. Light Railway were taken as fresh entrants on the Railways, and, therefore, it was decided that the benefit of past service for the purpose of pension and passes would not be extended to them. Will the Minister be pleased to state whether the Government proposes to review that decision? Was it just that those who had served the Railways for a number of years should be treated as fresh entrants when the Government takes over the management?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, there are three categories under which the question can be devided and our attitude to the three categories will be different. I would like the hon. Member to note that. The first is the staff rating to the company railways which were closed or ceased to exist. The second is the company railways which were purchased by the Government and the third is the company railways taken over to run as going concerns as part of the Indian Railway Administration. Sir, I do not want to take the time of the House by narrating the history and the mystery of this company. There was a public demand that the Union Railways should take over the entire railway company because of the manner in which the affairs of this company were conducted. The matter was discussed threadbare and in depth and it was found that it was not advisable at that stage to resort to that particular step.

Then, at a later stage, it was found that the situation had deteriorated. The West Bengal Government also requested that the Central Government should intervene. But the Government felt that it is better that we develop a more rational motor transport system. Ultimately what was done was that at the suggestion of the West Bengal Government, a committee was appointed and that committee went into the problem. And thereafter a new board of management was set up with the consent of the West Bengal Government. Of course, prior to this, a necessary ordinance was issued. When this was gone through, even after the exercise, it was found out that the situation of the Company started deteriorating. The situation could not be improved in spite of the fact that the Railways were spending a lot of amount. At a later stage, if I remember correctly on 1-7-1955 that Company had to be closed down. Since the Company was not taken over hut it was actually closed down, at that time, it was made explicitly clear to all *the* employees that their

entry to the Railways was afresh. And, therefore, since they are newly admitted or appointed to the Railways, they will not be able to get the benefits as in the case of employees of those railway-lines taken over by the Government. And there is a precedent for that. That is why we adopted this attitude. And under the present financial constraints, it will not be possible for us to change this basic attitude.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I did not expect this written reply from Professor Madhu Dandavate. He does not seem to be brain washed by the Railway Board yet. I expected a more reasonable reply.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, I object to this particular statement. You might be accustomed to getting brain washed...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I said, you do not.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I do not get my brain washed either by the Railway Board or by anybody.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: That is what I have said. I am in agreement with you. That is my happiness that you are not that Madhu Dandavate. I hope you will not be. Sir, he said that the request was considered in depth. 'Since the employees of ex. Barasat-Basirhat Light Railway were taken as fresh entrants on the Railways, it was decided...' etc. etc., Sir, this is only a technical argument. Mr. Madhu Dandavate, you know very well that this is a technical argument. In view of the fact that the B.B. Light Railway was closed down and they suffered, very reasonably they were taken. It stands to reason as to why you should not sympathetically consider with a little elasticity in this and why they should not be entitled to bonus and other benefits. You could easily do it. You have the power to do so. The Railway was closed down not because of the employees. The management closed it down. And this representation

has been made by one of your esteemed colleague, Mr. Sibnath Banerjee, You know him very well. We also know him, an old figure in the trade union and the socialist movement. Why are you not accepting that? This is what I ask you, Mr. Madhu Dandavate. Generally, I do not say anything against you. I did not say that your brain has been washed. I repeat it. I hope it will remain free.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I can assure the hon. Member that my brain will continue to be what it is. It will not be washed in any direction.

Sir, I would like to point out to the hon. Member that because of the colossal failure of a number of companies in this country which were running the railways, particularly the Martin Burns, you will find that if we make one exception in one particular case. I think the same will have to be applied in all the cases throughout the country.

We have on our hand today a few more cases, and we had discussed the problems with the trade unions. And the hon. Member will be very happy to know that in some of the cases of the Martin Burns where the old lines are running in losses—they have as alleged by the workers, misused the funds that had been given by the Union Ministry—in all those cases, even the workers are demanding that if the contract is ended and if the companies are no more there and have closed down their work, in that case, unconditionally they are prepared to be absorbed into the Union Railways. That is the attitude even the Railways are taking. If there had been an isolated case, probably, I would have completely accepted the point of view of the hon. Member. It is only a question of financial constraint. And, we want to see that when the financial constraint exceeds, we should not accept certain obligations and at a

later stage say that our treasury does not permit and therefore we will not be prepared to respect the obligations that we have accepted. That is the only reason, and not because we have no sympathy. There are financial constraints and certain norms have been set up, and we are following them.

*307. [Withdrawn]

*308. [The questioner (Shri C. P. Majhi) was absent. For answer, Vide col. 49 infra.]

Compensation paid by the Railways

♦309. SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN: t
SHRI N. K. BHATT: SHRI
YOGENDRA MAKWANA: SHRI
IBRAHIM KALANIYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the amount of compensation for loss or damage to goods consigned to the Railways for transportation had gone up substantially during 1974-75 as compared to the previous years;

(b) what was the percentage of the compensation so paid to the total freight earnings of the Railways during that year; and

(c) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to minimise the expenditure on this account?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS
(PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 1.28 per cent.

(c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

tThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Khurshed Alam Khan.

Statement

The Government has been taking several preventive measures to minimise the incidence of claims for compensation and these are being continued and intensified.

The important claims prevention measures adopted by the Railways are as under:—

(i) Escorting of goods trains carrying iron and steel, foodgrains, sugar, oilseeds etc. by Railway Protection Force armed personnel in vulnerable goods;

(ii) Patrolling by armed Railway Protection Force personnel in vulnerable yards;

(iii) Collection of crime intelligence and conducting of surprise raids by the staff of the Crime Intelligence of the Railways as well as Central Crime Bureau, Railway Board, with a view to tracking down criminals and receivers of stolen goods;

(iv) Guiding and educating the staff to make them more and more conscious of the need to prevent loss of and damage to consignments;

(v) Insistence on provision of dunnage to protect flap doors in case of wagon load consignments of sugar, grains, pulses, oilseeds, etc.;

(vi) Proper marking, addressing and labelling to prevent the consignment from going astray;

(vii) Use of nuts and bolts for rivetting wagons loaded with valuable goods;

(viii) Proper maintenance of wagons so that incidence of sickness of wagons resulting in detention and transshipment is minimised, and also damage by wet and pilferage through doors and body-holes is reduced;

(ix) Patching of panel-cuts of wagons in sick-lines, yards and