

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : I request the hon. Member to give me the particulars and then certainly we will look into the matter on merits and decide it.

RACKETEERING IN NON-ISSUE OF TICKETS

*682. **SHRI A. C. GILBERT :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that racketeering in non-issue of long journey tickets was detected in August, 1967 at the Booking Office of Mirzapur on the Northern Railway ;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the racketeering is going on since 1964;

(c) the details thereof and the total loss of revenue to the Railways during the period from 1964 to August 20, 1967;

(d) whether it is a fact that these malpractices occur due to keeping staff on the same seat for a long time ;

(e) whether Government received complaints by some of the staff of Mirzapur against non-transfer of the staff and corruption; and

(f) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH) : (a) A few cases of irregular "non-issue" of long journey tickets at Mirzapur were detected in August, 1967.

(b) and (c) Records are under examination to find out if there were other cases of this kind.

(d) The period of stay of staff at a station has no bearing on this type of malpractice.

(e) A joint representation from some of the staff of different stations of the Allahabad Division including Mirzapur complaining of non-transfer of Union officials against their long stay at a station was received but there was no representation about corruption.

(f) The question of transfer of staff who are officials of the recognised Unions is guided by certain principles and the Northern Railway is pursuing the subject of their transfer accordingly.

SHRI A. C. GILBERT : Sir, the standing orders are that staff dealing with public and money be transferred or seats changed periodically. I feel that due to longer stay of staff dealing with public and money such corruption takes place. Some time back the staff of Mirzapur dealing with public and Money in the Parcel and Booking Offices were interchanged simply to fulfil the requirements of the standing orders but again restored to their original seats within a couple of days. May I know, Sir, under whose orders this was done and whether the Government proposes to take action against the Officer responsible and whether the Government are also aware that standing orders in this regard are not strictly followed in the Allahabad Division?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH : Sir, instructions are already in force in this matter that where the staff have to deal with the public, they should be periodically transferred. This transfer means that the staff should not be there for more than a period of five years. Only in one case in Mirzapur, the staff has remained there for more than 5 years, but he was not connected with the public.

SHRI A. C. GILBERT : There are four or five such people who are staying for more than five years. Sir, the Railway Board issues instructions but does not prescribe the time limit for implementation of instructions, with the result that they are not carried out for years together. The P.A.C. in their 32nd Report of 1964-65 remarked at two places as follows :

"1. The Committee feel that Railway Board should prescribe a time limit for implementation of their instructions.

2. The Committee feel that mere issue of instructions will serve no purpose until their compliance is insisted upon in all cases and defaulters are suitably dealt with. They would further watch the implementation of the assurance given by the Ministry in this regard."

Sir, may I know whether the Government would ensure that staff dealing with public and money are not allowed to continue on the same seat for a period longer than that prescribed by the standing orders?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH : Sir, I have already stated that instructions are already there that the staff should not be there for more than a period of 5 years.

They are not instructions simply; it is being seen that these are implemented. There may be one or two cases where the transfer could not be effected due to various reasons like paucity of quarters but in that case also we have made sure that the staff who are connected with the public may not remain there for more than the prescribed period, though they may be retained in that station on some other duty.

SHRI A. C. GILBERT : I might tell you, Sir, that the then hon. Minister of State in the year 1966 wrote to me—I have not brought that letter—that orders have been issued that even in the Commercial Branch the staff dealing with public money and contractors will be transferred and their seats changed after five years.

No such transfer has yet been made in spite of my writing to the Ministry on several occasions.

(No reply)

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN : Is it not a fact, Sir, in the experience of the Railway administration, that Members of Parliament do also often interfere in the day to day affairs of the Railway administration causing thereby delay in the execution of certain orders issued by the Railway Ministry?

(No reply)

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Is the hon. Minister aware that some Members of the Congress Party, when they ask questions, are briefed by the General Managers of the Railways in the matters of such questions, rather than by the Workers or passengers?

(No reply)

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : May I know, Sir, if the Government has made provision that those Railway employees, transferred merely because they have been in one station for three years will, if they are transferred to another station, be provided with residential accommodation and be helped in getting admissions of their children in proper schools and that, unless that is done, they will not be transferred merely because they deal with money?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH : Normally, in the case of transfers, we do consider this kind of thing, but it is also a point that it is not always possible to transfer

a person only to a place where the necessary accommodation is available. So far as educational facilities are concerned, it is our practice that as far as possible nobody should be transferred to a zone where he might find educational difficulties so far as the regional languages are concerned.

श्री विमलकुमार मन्नालालजी चौरङ्गिया : क्या श्रीमान् यह बतलायेंगे कि यह जो शिकायतें आई थीं उनकी जांच हो रही है तो कहां तक उसकी जांच अभी तक हुई और उससे यह पाया अथवा नहीं कि जो यह शिकायत है "नान इश्यू आफ लांग जर्नी टिकट्स" तो उसमें कहां तक सत्यता है और जिनके खिलाफ शिकायत थी उनको अभी तक ट्रांसफर किया गया या नहीं किया गया और नहीं किया तो क्यों?

SHRI PARIMAL GHOSH : Sir, we have certain information, and in Mirzapur station there were a few clerks who were treating tickets as non-issued and committing fraud. They were taking the money and misappropriating the money, and these tickets, recorded in their daily trains cash book as non-issued but, as a matter of fact, nobody had returned these tickets. Now this practice has been found out, and after the investigation it is also revealed that similar cases are also going on. So we are investigating into that matter. Necessary steps have been taken and the staff concerned have been put under suspension now.

TAKE-OVER OF TEA PLANTATIONS

*683. SHRI A. D. MANI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any suggestions have been made by concerned interests asking the Government to acquire powers to take over control of closed and mis-managed tea plantations; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction to this suggestion?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH) : (a) Yes, sir.

(b) The matter is under the consideration of Government.

SHRI A. D. MANI : May I ask the Minister, as some of these interests have incorporated associations in Britain,