

12 NOON

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

WITHDRAWAL OF WESTERN COURT FROM M P S RESIDENTIAL POOL

1 DR M M S SIDDHU †
KUMARI SHANTA
VASISHT.
SHRI B K P SINHA.
SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP
SINHA

Will the Minister of WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that the Western Court has been withdrawn from the residential pool of accommodation for Members of Parliament;

(b) whether it is also a fact that certain bungalows are also being withdrawn in the like manner from the Parliamentary Pool of residences;

(c) if the reply to parts (a) and (b) above, be in the affirmative, the circumstances which led the Government to take such an arbitrary decision thereby departing from the normal practice and causing injury to the feelings of the Members of Parliament, and

(d) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to demolish the Western Court and build some other building there?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SHRI JAGANNATH RAO) (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. M. M. S. Siddhu.

STATEMENT

(a) to (c) When there was shortage of accommodation in the Pool for Members of Parliament, 53 rooms in the Western Court, 31 flats and 15 bungalows from the General Pool were made available to the M P Pool. The Vithalbhai Patel House was constructed as desired by the General Purposes Committee of Parliament after the plans had been approved by the Committee and with the completion of this hostel in 1965 100 per cent accommodation became available for Members of Parliament within the M P Pool. As Members of Parliament occupying accommodation in Western Court and in flats and houses of the General Pool did not like to move to the Vithalbhai Patel House Hostel on the completion of that building it was decided that they need not be disturbed during the term of the 3rd Lok Sabha. Consequent upon the General Elections it was felt that those Members who had been returned to Parliament and who were occupying accommodation in Western Court or in General Pool houses or flats need not be disturbed if they wished to continue in their old accommodation. New Members should be allotted accommodation only from the M. P Pool including the Vithalbhai Patel House. Accommodation in the M P Pool having become more than the number of Members of Parliament it was felt that rooms in the Western Court and bungalows and flats of the General Pool which had been rendered surplus could be returned to the General Pool for the use of Government servants for whom there is a great shortage in Delhi.

(d) No

DR M M S SIDDHU May I know whether it is not a fact that when the Vithalbhai Patel House Hostel was constructed the general consensus of Members of Parliament of both Houses was that the flats or rather the tenements and rooms were not fit for M. Ps. and, therefore, they refused to go there

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: It is a disgrace.

SHRI A D MANI: Pigeon-holes.

DR M M S SIDDHU At that time the Speaker of the other House had remarked that Members of Parliament would not be compelled to go from the Western Court to the Patel Hostel and now taking advantage of the elections, the accommodation in the Western Court has been denied to Members of Parliament and thereby forcing the Members not to remain in the Western Court. May I know, Sir, whether the House Committee was consulted in the matter and, if so, when and what was its recommendation? Secondly, I would like to know, in view of the fact that the Patel Hostel accommodation was not considered fit for Members of Parliament, why the Vithalbhai Patel Hostel is still being included in the residential pool of Members of Parliament?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Sir, it is not correct to say that all the Members of Parliament did not like the Vithalbhai Patel Hostel. (*Interruptions*) Some Members of Parliament actually resided in the Vithalbhai Patel Hostel. It is also true . . . (*Interruptions*) I have a right to reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put the question and you must listen to his reply.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: The House has to listen to me. It is true that some Members objected to the Vithalbhai Patel Hostel on the ground that the rooms there were very small. It is also true that some Members of Parliament actually resided in Vithalbhai Patel Hostel.

HON MEMBERS: How many? Give us the number.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Some rooms were vacant, because all the rooms were not occupied by the MPs. Those rooms were let out to Government servants. Now that a demand is made by Members of Parliament

that they be allowed to have the facility of Western Court, I am agreeable. I am responsive to their request. I am agreeable to accommodate to the extent of 53 rooms, which were originally available in Western Court.

SHRI B K P SINHA Sir, may I know who was responsible for the decision according to which Members are being confined to certain hostels or certain streets or bungalows? When was this decision taken and by whom? Was this decision taken by the Cabinet or by the particular Ministry which the hon Minister now represents? That is No. 1 No 2, is this MPs pool a divine dispensation descending from heaven or is this pool fixed or determined by human beings? Ministers should not only be responsive, but should also realise that they are in office because of the confidence that Members repose in them and as soon as that confidence is withdrawn, they cease to hold their office. Therefore, in the formation of the pool, may I know why some better understanding of the sentiments of the Members was not shown? Why is the pool so fixed now that these bungalows and the Western Court are taken out of the parliamentary pool? So far as Vithalbhai Patel House is concerned, may I know if the Minister is aware that this is a fashionable, dignified slum? I have lived there for one year and I had to leave that because no gentleman could live there. The rooms are not only small. They are one-room tenements or two-room tenements. If the lavatory is to be attended to, the scavenger has to go through the bedroom to clean the lavatory. The cook has to pass through the bedroom and the drawing room and while the Members are sitting there or are receiving their guests, the nice smell of the foodstuffs that are being cooked there comes out. Very often the water fails, light fails, and it is usual that none of the lifts that have been installed there works. I had, for six months, to get up five floors and get down five floors at least half a dozen times every day. The lifts do not work because they have given the work to

some firm in Madras who do not know to instal lifts. May I know why, without consulting us, without ascertaining the opinion of Members of Parliament, Members are expected to go and live in the Vithalbhair Patel House? Members are not a flock of sheep and let the hon. Minister realise that the Ministers are not shepherds. Will you even now care to consult the Members and change the whole scheme?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: The hon. Member has made a long speech.

SHRI SHANTILAL KOTHARI: It is not a speech, it is a statement of fact.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Let me answer. This construction of the building was completed some time in 1965.

SHRI SHANTILAL KOTHARI: Punish the officers.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: The hon. Member himself stayed some time in the hostel. I saw him when he resided there. He left the hostel, I do not know for what reason. I have already stated that I have not withdrawn any rooms from the Western Court. Fifty-three rooms were originally intended . . .

(Interruption)

DR. M. M. S. SIDDHU: May I know whether any information was given to the Chairman of the House Committee of the Rajya Sabha that no further allotment for M. Ps. in the Western Court will be allowed? Is this a fact?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: There are 15 bungalows. I am not withdrawing any bungalows from the pool. I am prepared to reserve 53 rooms, I have not withdrawn any facilities for M. Ps. in the Western Court.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: In view of the fact that there never has been such astonishing unity among all sections of the House and also in view of the fact that a Minister is

exhibiting the same kind of temper which we sometimes see on the other side, in view of all these facts, will the Minister undertake to thoroughly revise this arrangement in order that Members may be satisfied?

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: May I ask the hon. Minister who seems to be so much enamoured of these pigeon-holes which he calls by the glorified name of Vithalbhair Patel House to recommend to all the Ministers to go and stay in that hostel for a change and set up an example in austerity without the use of free electricity or free water or other perquisites they enjoy today?

DR. M. M. S. SIDDHU: Sir, I shall ask one last question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have put several questions.

DR. M. M. S. SIDDHU: Just one question. I want to ask whether the residential accommodation, bungalows and all that will be placed before the House Committee and the decision taken by the House Committee will be taken into consideration by the Minister?

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: I have no objection. Both the House Committees can allot the bungalows and the rooms in Western Court. I do not want to have that privilege with me. I am prepared to leave that with the House Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hope that will not disappoint the House.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CONSTITUTION OF AN ALL INDIA ELECTRICITY COUNCIL

*140. **SHRI S. K. VAIŞHAMPAYEN:** Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state: