

RAJYA SABHA

Saturday, the 3rd September, 1966/the 12th Bhadra, 1888 (Saka).

The House met at eleven of the clock,
Mr. CHAIRMAN in the CHAIR.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

REVERSION OF ENGINEERS IN C.P.W.D.

3. SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY.†
SHRI K. SUNDARAM :

Will the Minister of WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether several Engineers have recently been reverted as Assistant Engineers in the Central Public Works Department;

(b) if so, the reasons for the reversion; and

(c) whether several representations from the Officers concerned have been received by the Government of India in this regard and if so, what is Government's reaction there-of ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI B. BHAGAVATI) : (a) Seven officiating Executive Engineers have been recently reverted as Assistant Engineers.

(b) Three officers were reverted on account of the return to the parent department of officers sent out on deputation; two officers were reverted on account of the return from leave of regular incumbents; one officer was reverted owing to the abolition of a Division on completion of the work and one more officer was reverted to provide for an Assistant Executive Engineer (Class I Direct Recruit) who has become due for promotion as Executive Engineer in accordance with the quota prescribed for Assistant Executive Engineers.

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

(c) No. Some references have however been received from a number of Members of Parliament. There are no grounds for re-consideration of the decision already taken.

SHRI B. BHAGAVATI : I may add, Sir, that yesterday my senior colleague has received a letter from the General Secretary of the C.P.W.D. Engineers' Association seeking an interview and saying that they want to submit a memorandum. This memorandum, when received, will receive due consideration.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY. Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that this has become an annual feature of this Ministry? Last year they reverted nearly 30 Executive Engineers who had put in 5 to 15 years' service and subsequently they have given promotion to some of the Engineers. Those people who enjoyed the promotion for some period are now reverted. Last year they were promoted and now they are demoted. Now again they are indulging in the same game with the result that many people who were promoted and posted to various parts of the country have to come back, after reversion, leaving their families and other things. Is it not putting them to inconvenience?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : Sir, this insinuation is very unfair. These two questions have no relevance. One concerns Class II officers and the other concerns Class I officers. As regards Class II officers, I replied to this question in detail in this very House last year. I am talking from memory. The number of officers involved was 200 or so. Every case was looked into by a Committee called the Departmental Committee presided over by a Member of the U.P.S.C. and only in the case of 25 or 30 it was decided that they should be reverted. No action was taken in regard to the remaining 170 or so. That will prove our *bona fides* that we do not deal with these cases in a sort of lukewarm or haphazard manner. As far as these officers are concerned, my colleague has made it clear that out of these seven cases six cases pertain to the officers coming back from the departments where they had gone on deputation, some have come back from leave and one officer was reverted owing to the abolition of a certain Division. So Sir, there is no question of any

[Shri Mehr Chand Khanna] victimisation or dealing with these officers in any haphazard manner

SHRI A. D. MANI: May I ask the Minister to state all the facts about this question? Sir, there was a Committee appointed some time back called the Govinda Reddy Committee presided over by my hon friend, Shri Govinda Reddy. That Committee recommended that at least 5 years should elapse before the person is confirmed. Now what has happened is that the Ministry has promoted people recently recruited even though they have not fulfilled the requirements of the Govinda Reddy Committee's recommendation. May I ask the Minister whether an element of injustice is involved in these transfers? These persons have received higher salaries for some months as Executive Engineers and suddenly they are told 'You go back to lower salaries; you are reverted' and in their places juniors who have been recently recruited by the system of direct recruitment have been promoted. As the *bona fides* of these transfers are seriously questioned by the persons concerned, I would like the Minister to place all the details before this House.

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: It is very serious

SHRI B. BHAGAVATI: Sir, . . .

SHRI A. D. MANI: May I request the Minister to answer this question because he knows all the facts.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Sir, it is a fact that the Govinda Reddy Committee has recommended that the period of relaxation which was brought down from 5 to 3 in the case of Class I officers and from 8 to 5 in the case of Class II officers, that relaxation should be done away with and we should revert to the normal period of 5 and 8 years. That recommendation has been accepted and we propose to implement it from the 1st of next year, i.e. the 1st of January, 1967 (*Inter-ruption*). My friend, Mr Mani I have nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of. Now, Sir, this rule of 3 to 5 and 5 to 8 cuts both ways. If the rule of 8 years had been applied to Class II officers, not one of them would have been promoted. The benefit of five years they get and the benefit of three years others get.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: Is it a fact that the U.P.S.C. is made simply a tool of the Department, because the last entry made counts before the U.P.S.C. and as a result of this one Superintending Engineer who had 30 brilliant entries, simply because the last entry was fair, may resign and you will be losing one of the most brilliant Superintending Engineers in your Department?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: If the names are given to me, I would certainly look into them.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: I give his name. He is Mr Pathak.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Sir, we follow a certain system. To say that a Member of the U.P.S.C. or the U.P.S.C. becomes a tool of an administrative Department is casting a very serious reflection on that august body.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: No, Sir. It is because the system followed is that the last entry is looked into.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I am not against anybody nor am I in favour of anybody.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: I did not say they have become a tool, but it is the system which makes them a tool.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I am replying to a question, Sir. He makes an insinuation.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: I have not made any insinuation. I say that the system followed makes him a tool.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: I have inherited that system and I am still following it till it is changed. Now, Sir, there are senior officers and they do comment upon the confidential records of their junior officers and we attach importance to them. That is No. 1.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: What about the first 30 good entries earned by him?

MR CHAIRMAN: Mr Shah, will you allow him to finish?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA: Sir, it is no use getting excited.

SHRI K. K. SHAH: Sir, it is not a question of getting excited.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : I am also a Member of the House and I do not want to be treated in that manner. I am trying to reply to that question. (*Inter-ruption*) I have great regard for my friend.

SHRI K. K. SHAH : I have also equal regard for you but I want it to be brought to your notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have amply brought to his notice. Let him reply to the question now.

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : Now, Sir, as far as the case of Mr. Pathak is concerned, if the hon. Member tables a question, I am prepared to answer it. If he were to write to me, I am prepared to give him a detailed reply.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : Is it not a fact that the workload for the present Executive Engineers is beyond their capacity to execute and, if so, why could these people not have been absorbed as Executive Engineers, instead of reverting them ?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : I know you have given a lot of time and thought to this Committee for which I have expressed my thanks to you in writing and also I do so on the floor of this House. But there is a system under which two Class I officers are recruited and one Class II officer is recruited. That proportion has to be maintained and as long as Class I officers do not become available, we promote them. The moment Class I officers become available, that reversion has to take place because that proportion of 2 : 1 has to be maintained according to the present procedure and rules.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of a case where an officer was promoted thrice and demoted twice during the last three years at the sweet will of the highest officers ?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : If this case is brought to my notice, I am prepared to look into it.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN : May I know why, instead of performing this annual exercise of promotions and reversions and in the process doing favouritism to some and concealed victimisation for certain

others, an actual estimate of the requirements of different categories of Engineers is not made by the Department and then promotions made accordingly ?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : Sir, the word 'favouritism' is very often used by my friends opposite and I certainly do not subscribe to it. That is No. 1. Secondly, Sir, I have just stated that the proportion is 2 : 1 for Class I and Class II officers and the moment the officers of the requisite class and the number become available, the proportion has to be maintained.

श्री विमलकुमार मन्नालालजी चौरङ्गिया :

क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बतलायेंगे कि जैसा केम श्री शाह साहब ने प्रस्तुत किया है उसको दृष्टिगत रखते हुए रूल्स की वजह से यदि किसी अधिकारी की लास्ट एन्ट्री उसके पक्ष या विपक्ष में होने की वजह से उसका प्रमोशन रुक जाता है, उसकी उन्नति में बाधा होता है, तो क्या रूल्स में इस तरह का संशोधन किया जायेगा जिसकी वजह से अगर मेजरिटी एन्ट्री उसके पक्ष या विपक्ष में हों, तो उसके आधार पर उसके प्रमोशन का निर्णय किया जायेगा ? क्या इस तरह से रूल्स में संशोधन करने के बारे में विचार करेंगे अथवा नहीं ?

श्री मेहर चन्द खन्ना : जहां तक श्री शाह साहब का ताल्लुक है, मैंने जवाब दे दिया है। मेरे दिल में उनके लिए बहुत इज्जत है, लेकिन जहां तक आफिसरों का ताल्लुक है, जिन्हें वापस आना पड़ा उन्हें यह कभी नहीं सोचना चाहिये कि दूसरे आफिसर भी उनकी जगह लगे हुए हैं और वे भी उसी डिपार्टमेंट में काम करते हैं। मैं दोनों का मिनिस्टर हूं और मैंने दोनों के ही लिए न्याय करना है।

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : In view of the fact that the present system has not been able to inspire confidence amongst Class II officers and Assistant Engineers, is the Government thinking to reconsider the present system and may I know whether the hon. Minister would adopt a system whereby these cadres will feel that they

[Shri M. M. Dharia.]

will necessarily get justice and that they will not be the victims of the whims of the higher officers or superiors?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA :

There is no question of being a victim of higher officers. The moment you have Class I and Class II officers you accept the proposition that there is some kind of technical knowledge and qualification. There are people who are directly recruited; there are people who have higher qualifications and if you say today that between Class I and Class II officers there should be no distinction, then the best thing for the Government of India would be not to have any categorisation at all. You have Class I, Class II, Class III and Class IV officers in the Government of India. That system has been there. It is entirely a separate question that one might say that the proportion should be 50-50; it may be stated that once a man from Class II has been promoted to Class I no one from Class I should be asked to take his place or no one from Class I should be reverted. That is entirely a separate question. But I personally feel that it would not be a very desirable or correct step.

SHRI D. THENGARI : May I know what is particularly sacrosanct about the date 1st January 1967 and since there is injustice done, will the hon. Minister assure us that instead of having a closed mind he would reconsider the case?

SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA : We can have any date—1st October, 1st December or 1st January. It is only an administrative decision but it has to be appreciated that the moment I step up Class II from 5 to 8 years and Class I from 3 to 5 years they are not going to benefit. What I am being told is this that in the case of Class II you keep it from 8 to 5 and in the case of Class I please step it up from 3 to 5. This cannot be done.

FLOODS IN NORTH BIHAR

8. SHRI AWADSHWAR PRASAD SINHA : Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the serious and wide-spread havoc caused

by the heavy floods in North Bihar resulting in large-scale damage to crops, destruction of a large number of houses and uprooting of several hundreds of families along with their cattle; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take or are taking to assist the Government of Bihar to alleviate the sufferings of the people caused by the floods?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Floods in North Bihar

There had been heavy rains in Nepal Hills bordering Bihar and in the north-eastern districts of Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Champaran and Saran in the last week of August. This resulted in a rush of large quantities of water in the rivers of these districts, causing submersion of large tracts of land. The rivers mainly affected are Kamla Balan, Bhutahi Balan, Bagmati, Lakhandei, Burhi Gandak and the Gandak. Breaches have been reported in the Kamla Balan and Khirai embankments in Darbhanga district, Adhwara embankments in Sitamarhi sub-Division of Muzaffarpur, Bherihari embankment in Champaran and Saran embankment of Chapra. Serious erosion has taken place in the area adjoining Sikhanderpur in Muzaffarpur town on the Burhi Gandak river, causing a breach. The floods have disrupted road and rail communications in the area.

The assessment of the damage due to these floods is still being made, but according to information collected so far by the State Government, an area of 23.7 lakh acres has been affected, including a cropped area of about 15.5 lakh acres. The approximate value of the crops damaged is estimated by the State Govt. at Rs. 25 crores. A population of 3.6 million is reported to have been affected. Four persons are reported to have lost their lives.

The State Government have opened a number of relief Centres. A large number of boats has been deployed for rescue operations. Cash grants and loans are being given to the people affected by floods. Fair