

ties for everything because we have got to keep a watch on this public sector working.

EMPLOYMENT OF *Laskars* ON DAILY WAGES ON THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY

*212. **SHRI A. D. MANI:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether *Laskars* are being employed on daily wages on the Southern Railway; and

(b) if so, the number thereof and the rate of daily wages paid to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 777 at rates varying from Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.90 Paise.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Is it a fact that some of these *Laskars* have been employed for a period of 10 years and that under the Railway rules if a person is employed for six months, he is entitled to look forward to a permanent appointment?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: I shall look into the matter and see that the whole thing is straightened out.

SHRI A. D. MANI: This is a question which concerns quite 700 hapless people. I have received information from them that some of them have been employed for 10 years and still have not been made permanent. I do expect that the Minister would be ready to meet these supplementaries.

Sir, I would further ask whether these *Laskars* are not even given free railway passes to go from their homes to their places of work.

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Actually, Sir, all the concessions that are supposed to be given to these *Laskars*, that is, *Khalasis*, are available to them. And regarding the *Laskars*, who are

reportedly working for a term of ten years or more, it is open to them to apply for the vacancies that occur in Class IV, and whenever they apply, they are recruited as *Khalasis*, and there we give them age preference because there we do not consider what their age is.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Sir, I would like to contradict the Minister on a statement of fact. I have received a representation which has been sent to a large number of people including Shri Kamaraj, President of the All-India Congress, and a number of M.Ps. They say that the free medical aid which is available to other railway employees is not available to them and that they do not get railway passes, and the Minister says that all the usual facilities available to railway employees are available to the *Laskars*. I think the Minister is not correct in making this statement.

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Actually, Sir, what the hon. Member says is totally incorrect, because he has completely misunderstood me, and when he says that he contradicts me, I say that he is trying to contradict me due to that lack of information, because what I said was that whatever concessions should be given to these *Laskars*, they are available to them. And he says "permanent railway employees" and that is a wrong thing.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Sir, I have got to pursue this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You probaly said "those which are available to the *Khalasis*"

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: And I defined that also, that by '*Laskars*' we mean '*Khalasis*' and that they are temporary. So whatever facilities are supposed to be given to these *Laskars* are available to them.

SHRI A. D. MANI: What are the facilities available to the *Khalasis*?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: "Las-kars", they are called "Khalasis" also.

SHRI A. D. MANI: What are the facilities available to the *Khalasis*?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: There are two types, because those who are engaged on Projects, well, they do not get so many facilities. But the casual labourers, that is, those *Laskars*, who are employed on works other than a Project, will be entitled to the grant of temporary status and other attendant benefits on their completion of six months of continuous service, while the labour engaged in a Project continue to remain on casual labour terms irrespective of its duration. Casual labour, whether employed on the open line or on Projects, are however allowed to apply for selection against regular Class IV vacancies as and when they are advertised, and are also given preference over outsiders in addition to the concession regarding relaxation of age.

SHRI G. M. MIR: I would like to have from the hon. Minister a categorical reply with regard to those *Khalasis* who have been working in the department for the last about ten years, whether their services would be made permanent or not.

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: I should check up the fact and then say, because I cannot accept what Mr. Mani said, that they are working there for the last ten years or more.

PANDIT S. S. N. TANKHA: If the Railways need the services of these *Khalasis* regularly, why are they not taken as permanent hands, and why are they retained as temporary men?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: For instance, if any breach occurs due to floods, etc., we require a large number of people for temporary construction, and there we cannot employ them as permanent hands, and there are so many works like this that compel the Government to employ temporary peo-

ple, and that is the usual feature everywhere.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: The Minister said in answering a question, "the amenities which are supposed to be available to certain categories of staff". What does he mean by "supposed to be available"? It is much too vague.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has read that out.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: What exactly does he mean by "supposed to be available"?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Actually I had read it out.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: May I know if the Government have a firm policy of making these *Khalasis* permanent where they have served for more than six months?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: About that, those who have worked for more than six months, well, they are entitled to a particular type of concession.

SHRI FARIDUL HAQ ANSARI: May I know, Sir, what is the actual duty these people have to do, and what is the difference between a *Khalasi* and a *Laskar*?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: 'Laskar' is not the authorised designation. The authorised designation is 'Khalasi'. That is the difference.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: May I know, Sir, if the attention of the hon. Minister has been drawn by certain railway associations to the fact that the railway officers make it a policy to bring to an end the services of these workers after five months and twenty-nine days only not to give them the benefit of permanent service?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: If there is anything like this, we shall see that they are not victimised.