

"That in pursuance of clause (s) of section 4 of the Indian Oilseeds Committee Act, 1946, this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Chairman may direct, one member from among themselves to be a member of the Indian Central Oilseeds Committee vice Shri Nawab Singh Chauhan, who retired from the membership of the Rajya Sabha on the 2nd April, 1958."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That in pursuance of clause (s) of section 4 of the Indian Oilseeds Committee Act, 1946, this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Chairman may direct, one member from among themselves to be a member of the Indian Central Oilseeds Committee vice Shri Nawab Singh Chauhan, who retired from the membership of the Rajya Sabha on the 2nd April, 1958."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that the following dates have been fixed for receiving nominations and for holding election, if necessary, to the Central Oilseeds Committee:—

1. Number of members to be elected. One.
2. Last date and time for receiving nominations. 7th May, 1958. (Up to 3 P.M.)
3. Last date and time for withdrawal of candidature. 8th May, 1958. (Up to 11 A.M.)
4. Date and time of election. 8th May, 1958. (Between 3 P.M. and 5 P.M.)
5. Place of election. Room No. 29, Ground Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.
6. Method of election. Proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

NOMINATIONS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE FOR MAKING RULES UNDER THE (SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ACT, 1954.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The following Members have retired from the Joint Committee of the Houses for making rules under sub-section (1) of section 9 of the Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament Act, 1954:—

- (1) Dr. Shrimati Seeta Parmanand.
- (2) Shri Santosh Kumar Basu.
- (3) Shri T. J. M. Wilson.

In their places, the following Members are nominated:

- (1) Shrimati Ammu Swaminadhan.
- (2) Shri Santosh Kumar Basu.
- (3) Dr. R. P. Dube.

STATEMENT RE DEATHS IN LOK SAHAYAK SENA CAMP AT SAS-THAMKOTTA, FROM SUSPECTED FOOD-POISONING

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the statement made in this House on the 30th April 1958 about the tragedy at the Lok Sahayak Sena Camp at Sasthamkotta, Government undertook to make a further statement.

From the information now available and statistics collected, I am to inform the House that the Lok Sahayak Sena Camp which commenced on the 10th April, 1958 was composed as follows:—

Officer-in-charge, Captain	1
JCOs	4
Other ranks	52
Civilian personnel	31
Trainees	525

[Shri V. K. Krishna Menon.]

Food provisions were supplied to the Camp, for reasons of distance previously stated in the House, by a local contractor who is also the President of the local Panchayat Board. The food was cooked by the staff of the Lok Sahayak Sena Training Team. On the 29th April 1958, poories, vegetables and tea were served for breakfast at about 0815 hours. Some of the trainees complained that the taste of the poories was bitter. The Officer-in-Charge of the Camp and one of the JCOs tried the food themselves and found it to be bitter. They also noticed that some crows and monkeys had earlier some portions of the food which had been thrown away and had died soon after eating the same. Further consumption of all food was immediately stopped and prompt measures for medical aid and to remove the affected persons to hospitals were initiated.

The time of the appearance of some symptoms of food poisoning varied from individual to individual. The affected persons were removed to four different hospitals located at Mavelikara, Chowarah, Quilon and Kadampanad. Several children and one adult of the locality who were not in any way attached to the LSS Camp but were hanging around also ate some of this food and were affected. They were also removed to hospitals along with the inmates of the Camp. The persons who were then admitted to hospitals from the Camp on the 30th April 1958 were:—

Officer-in-Charge	1
JCOs	2
Other Ranks	8
Civilian personnel	5
Trainees	89
Adult other than LSS personnel	1
Children not attached to the Camp	27
TOTAL	133

Persons who have died as a result of food poisoning are:—

JCO	1
Other Ranks	1
Civilian personnel	3
Trainees	45
Adult other than LSS personnel	1
Children not attached to the Camp	14
TOTAL	65

Of the remaining 68 persons, by 1900 hours on the 3rd May 1958, 59 had already been discharged and only the following persons had remained in hospitals:

Other Rank	1
Trainees	8
TOTAL	9

In the statement made in the House on the 30th April, it was stated that a large proportion of those who had died were military personnel. This does not now appear to be strictly correct. The error in the despatch of that information seems to have occurred because the Officer-in-Charge of the Camp had become a casualty and information regarding the dead had therefore to be collected principally through the civilian doctors at the various hospitals. They reported the number of dead as that of military personnel on the assumption that the LSS trainees who were in uniform belonged to the Army.

On receiving the news of the tragedy, the Chief Minister of Kerala, who happened to be in the locality, accompanied by local State officials visited the Camp. Several Lok Sahayak Sena personnel who wished to go home to their families were allowed to do so under the advice of the Chief Minister, Kerala.

The Government of Kerala paid Rs. 25 per dead persons for funeral expenses and Rs. 7 per head to the trainees who returned home. Return of the total amount of money thus

disbursed by the Kerala Government has been asked by the Chief Secretary. Government will therefore fully reimburse the Kerala Government.

All cooked food and uncooked foodstuffs at the Camp were sealed. All items in use at the Camp are being checked by a medical officer of the Army Medical Corps and supplies are now being obtained direct from Army sources.

Samples of food taken on the day have been sent for analysis to Trivandrum, Madras and Calcutta. They have also been sent for analysis to the Armed Forces Medical College, Poona. The analysis at the Armed Forces Medical College, Poona, by the Pathologist has not been completed and we have so far not officially been informed of the result of the analysis from Trivandrum, Madras or Calcutta.

Although a large proportion of the trainees have already left the Camp, the Camp has not been formally dissolved. Some 50 trainees are in the Camp, and some of the trainees who had gone away are returning to the Camp. The training course will be completed. It has been decided to issue certificates of training even in the case of those who have not completed the full period as a major portion of the training had been completed before the tragedy.

A court of enquiry under the provisions of the Army Act has been convened and has assembled on the morning of the 5th April. An officer of the State Government has been co-opted on the court of enquiry.

Government have sanctioned an *ad hoc* grant of Rs. 200 to the family of each trainee or civilian employee who died in this tragedy. The families of the JCOs and the other Ranks who have died will receive their family pensions according to their entitlements. Pending enquiry, steps are being taken to sanction provisional family pensions immediately.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): May I know, Sir, from the hon. Minister whether any officer from the Defence Department in New Delhi had been sent to the spot on receipt of the information with regard to this great tragedy for examining the situation there, and if so, whether he had sent any report?

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: Mr. Chairman, I regret that the hon. Member was not present the other day when I made the statement. I gave full account to the House of the senior officers of the military and the medical officers who had been despatched to that place immediately on receipt of the information, and they had been there by the earliest possible time—by air—to look into the affairs.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO (Andhra Pradesh): May I know, Sir, why this Camp was not closed and why it has been continuing so far, when the State Government had recommended the immediate closure of this Camp?

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: Because it was not considered necessary to close the Camp. Those who wanted to go home were allowed to go home. Others did not want to go home. The training continues and there has been no difficulty in regard to this matter, Sir.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: When it had been specifically stated by the State Government officials, after a *prima facie* enquiry, that the foodstuffs there had been contaminated and it was not proper to continue the Camp, may I know, Sir, what is the basis for the Central Government. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The point is that the polluted things have been sealed. That is what he has said, and that food is not being supplied any more.* It is now coming from the Army sources. That is what the Minister has stated.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: Sir, it has not been found out to what extent that food had been contaminated.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: And how that contamination took place?

MR. CHAIRMAN: But that food has been kept aside.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): Mr. Chairman, I am glad to learn that the Government is giving Rs. 200 to the family of each trainee who died in this tragedy. I would also like to know whether the Government is making any arrangements for those who have suffered and for those who have either been discharged from the hospitals or are still in the hospitals to be given some payment till they are restored to their normal health.

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: Sir, the Government have already done that by way of providing treatment for them, and if there is any justifiable reason for doing anything more for them, that will be duly taken into consideration.

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: Sir, when it is a question of somebody's health being damaged. I submit that the Government should look into the question of giving him some compensation.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Bombay): Sir, it is six days now that the Government have sent some samples for investigation etc., and they have not received any report from them so far. May I know whether, in the meanwhile, they have come to know as to why this food poisoning had taken place? There were some reports that had appeared in the press also.

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: I can only answer that question by saying that we have seen these reports in the press. But Government do not feel justified to make any statement in the House on the basis of these reports. All that we know is that the *post mortem* examination result of one individual by the Pathologist of the Kerala Medical College has been received. A Southern Command message states that the Pathologist is

reported to have stated that the death was due to the ingestion of rat poison, etc. but this report is unconfirmed. While I am on this subject, I might tell the House that it is not possible for the Pathological Department at Poona to make an earlier report, for the simple reason that it takes about two days or so for the samples to go there for examination, and all this involves some passage of time for the purpose of tests. However, it is expected that the tests are likely to be completed in about three or four days' time.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Sir, may I know whether the Government have made any arrangement to have the press report, that this food poisoning has taken place because of some rat poison in the ships etc., examined? What have they done to get this report verified?

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: I thought I gave the answer. We have taken samples and sent them to the various laboratories. It has gone to the Poona laboratory and I submit that with the responsibility of Government one cannot make any conclusive statement on this until these reports are received.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The hon. Minister said that Rs. 200 will be paid as compensation to the families of the deceased. It is clear that they have died in the course of their employment and so the responsibility of the Government is all the greater. May I know what is the basis on which this amount of compensation has been computed, and whether the compensation should not have been made according to the normal rules according to which such compensations are fixed?

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: Sir, I did not use the word "compensation". I said Rs. 200 has been paid *ad hoc* to these people. If they have claims they will be considered by the Government in the usual way. Public

money cannot be paid out in any other way.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Rajasthan): Only one question I would like to put, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So many of you?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: There are still reports in the press that the contamination continues and such deaths are taking place. So in continuing this camp we are taking a very grave responsibility. Therefore, I would like to know with regard to the provisions that were obtained, whether full precautions were taken and whether they were obtained locally or were they ordered from outside for the camp?

SHRI V. K. KRISHNA MENON: I submit that I do not accept the position that this unfortunate incident is due to any lack of care on the part of the camp authorities. These provisions were supplied in the normal way that obtains in any camp. Here it had to be done through local contractor because of the location of the camp. As soon as anything was discovered every precaution has been taken to isolate the food and to allow people to go who wanted to go home in order to give comfort to their families. And the fact that they voluntarily came back when even without coming back they could get the certificate shows that there has been no lack of care. And the occurrence of this tragedy is sufficient incentive to take sufficient precautions.

RESIGNATION OF SHRI R. P. TAMTA

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform hon. Members that Shri Ram Prasad Tamta a Member representing the State of Uttar Pradesh, has resigned his seat in the Rajya Sabha with effect from the 1st May, 1958.

RESULT OF ELECTION TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE INDIAN SCHOOL OF MINES AND APPLIED GEOLOGY, DHANBAD

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Maheswar Naik, being the only candidate nominated for election to the Governing Council of the Indian School of Mines and Applied Geology, Dhanbad, I declare him to be duly elected to be a member of the said Council.

RESULT OF ELECTION TO THE COURT OF THE BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Tarkeshwar Pande, being the only candidate nominated for election to the Court of the Banaras Hindu University, I declare him to be duly elected to be a member of the said Court.

THE INDIAN OATHS (AMEND- MENT) BILL, 1958—continued

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we get back to the Third Reading of the Indian Oaths (Amendment) Bill. The Deputy Minister has already moved the motion. Anybody desirous of speaking?

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh): Yes, Sir. I will take only two minutes.

[**MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** in the Chair]

Sir, ordinarily it should be the usual practice of any government whatsoever, of a civilized government, I mean, to employ all its employees under some form of affirmation or oath or declaration to the effect that they will bear allegiance to the government and to the Constitution. Some time back, when my hon. friend Shri Lal Bahadur Sastri was the Minister of Railways, I suggested to him in so many words that since the Railways are the best and the biggest employers in India, it would be well on the part