

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: For the North-Eastern Railway, of course, we have got other workshops and we propose to set up a workshop at Bongai-gaon which is going to be quite a big workshop. That will serve the needs of the North-Eastern Railway, especially of the North Bengal area up to Amin-gaon. As regards the Tindharia Work-shop we do not propose to reorganise, because the capacity is already quite enough.

SHRIMATI MAYA DEVI CHETTRY: What are the reasons for not reorganising this workshop, which is a very old workshop?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: The work-shop caters to the needs of the narrow-gauge engines, coaches and wagons, and at present the capacity is quite sufficient to meet the needs of the narrow-gauge rolling stock.

CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS

*530. **DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND:** Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of catering establishments which the Railways could not take over after serving notices of termination because of injunctions from Courts and High Courts; and

(b) the amount of expenditure involved so far on litigation by way of (i) lawyers' fee and (ii) officers' daily allowance and travelling allowance?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (DR. MONO MOHAN DAS): (a) The total number of catering establishments which could not be taken over for departmental working after service of notices, on account of court injunctions, was 25.

Of these, suits in respect of 10 establishments have since been either withdrawn by the parties concerned, or dismissed by the courts.

(b) (i) It is not possible to indicate the amount involved as the lawyers' bills have not been received.

(ii) Rs. 693.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND: Is it a fact that the Bombay High Court has severely criticised the Government's action of giving insufficient notice and discharging established

caterers of standing, lock, stock and barrel?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: It may be that what the hon. Member says is correct.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND: Even if the complete bills of the lawyers are not available, what is the highest amount paid to any single individual lawyer in any of these cases per day?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: Per day I cannot say, but it may go up to Rs. 25,000—Rs. 30,000 for conducting the whole case, but it is not of our seeking. The contractors had engaged the best lawyers available and we had to fight them and we had also to appoint eminent lawyers.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND: What is the total estimated expenditure on the litigation, apart from the lawyers' fees by way of officers' daily allowances and travelling allowances?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: The figure has been mentioned. They have to give some time to these cases. As regards the travelling allowances and daily allowances, it has been said that the amount is Rs. 693.

SHRI PURNA CHANDRA SHARMA: Is it not a fact that the Railways have departmental lawyers for conducting railway cases?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: That is so, but in special cases, we appoint other lawyers also.

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: I would like to know for how long the catering establishments have remained closed and what alternative arrangement is made for catering to the needs of the public?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: Either we run these establishments on behalf of the Railways, or at some places we have to tender it or ask some other contractors to take them over. In case it has to be done departmentally, we do take some time, but we are trying to expedite, and we have so far established departmental catering at a number of places.

SHRI K. S. HEGDE: Will the Government consider the advisability of blacklisting those contractors who have contumaciously gone to the courts with a malicious object?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: I am somewhat inclined to agree with the hon. Member, but I do not want to be so hard on them.

ASSURANCES GIVEN TO STAFF OF RAILWAYS MERGING WITH THE EAST PUNJAB RAILWAY

*531. **SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE:** Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assurances were given to the staff of Railways merging with the East Punjab Railway at the time of the formation of the present Northern Railway and if so, what were those assurances; and

(b) whether extension of service has been granted to any superannuated ministerial staff of the Northern Railway since its formation and if so, the total number of such cases and the Railways they served before merger?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (DR. MONO MOHAN DAS): (a) It is not clear from the question as to what 'assurances' the hon. Member is referring to. However, certain assurances were given by the Minister for Railways at the time of the inauguration of the Northern Railway. The staff were assured that there would be no retrenchment on account of the regrouping and that every effort would be made to ensure that the legitimate position and prospects of railway staff were protected.

(b) No, Sir.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: In regard to part (a), assurances were given that the prospects of the workers would be protected. May I know how those assurances have been implemented, and may I know also whether there is any list of seniority made up till now to safeguard their interests?

DR. MONO MOHAN DAS: Those interests of the workers were not infringed in any way.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: When people from various other Railways came and were integrated with the E.P.

Railway, without a seniority list being prepared, how are we to know what their positions are when the question of promotion comes?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: It took some time to prepare all this seniority list, and the staff were put to some inconvenience no doubt, but the seniority list is now ready, and I do not think there is any grievance on the part of the staff in regard to the seniority list. If there is any objection felt, they can certainly come up either to the Railway Board or their Unions can take it up with the General Manager.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: Is it not a fact that victimisation is rampant on this Railway and that the E. P. Railway staff get all the privileges and promotions, ignoring the rights and claims of people who were integrated from other Railways?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: That is a very general charge. I would request the hon. Member to give me a few specific cases, and I am prepared to look into them thoroughly.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: At the time of the integration of the former Indian State Railways like the Bikaner-Jodhpur and other Railways, was not a guarantee given by Government that their service conditions will not be adversely affected?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: That is so.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: As regards part (b), may I know what the source of information for the Ministry is with regard to the extension of service of superannuated staff?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: The reply is 'No', because no regular extension has been given. The rules forbid us to allow a person to continue in service until the age of 60, unless he is medically fit. So, when any person in the staff is allowed to continue in service beyond 55, that case is reviewed year after year, and if he is found medically fit, he is permitted to continue till the age of 60. Therefore, technically we do not want to call it, 'extension'. Under the rules that were made for the staff, it has been decided to keep them till the age of 60 provided they are found medically fit and efficient in their work.