

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.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: May I know if there is any discrimination in the selection of staff to be retained after 55 by the E. P. Railway against those people who came from other Railways?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: I do not think it is proper to put a question like that.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: In view of the fact that the delay in the preparation of a combined seniority list in the various zones is leading to misunderstanding among the different sections of the employees themselves, is Government going to expedite it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He said that it was ready.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: It is ready.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Have they not taken a long time?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: It is almost ready everywhere, and we have said that, if there is any lacuna anywhere, because the conditions differ in different Railways, the Railways can slightly alter the scheme in consultation with the Unions.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Apropos the answer to my question by the hon. Minister just now, I would like to ask whether some of the clerical staff, especially of the former Bikaner State Railway, have now been reverted to a junior grade in spite of the assurance given by the Government that their conditions of service will not be affected. Has not such a representation been received by the Railway Ministry?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: These representations are considered on their merits. I do not think that any injustice has been done in any case.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE: May I know the approximate date of the publication of the seniority list?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: I cannot say about every Railway, but in most of the Railways they have already been announced. Probably on the date on which it was made public, it was also announced, but I am not quite sure.

COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS PER MILE

*532. **SHRI M. VALIULLA:** Will the Minister for TRANSPORT be pleased to state the average cost per mile of construction of national highways in each State as per estimates in the year 1955-56?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (DR. MONO MOHAN DAS): A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix XIV, Annexure No. 87.]

SHRI M. VALIULLA: May I know what the meaning of this B.T. pavement is? What does B.T. stand for?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: It stands for bitumen and tar. 'B' means bitumen, and 'T' means tar. I got myself specially ready for this.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: In the statement it is said that the average rate per mile is Rs. 2,75,000 in Jammu and Kashmir and Rs. 80,000 in Mysore. Am I to understand that the contribution of the State is less in one case and more in the other? Is the cost of the national highways entirely borne by the Central Government or is any contribution made by the States and, if so, on what basis?

DR. MONO MOHAN DAS: Because it is a national highway, the whole expenditure is borne by the Central Government.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: Have we not recently passed the National Highways Bill in this House? It is provided there. It is the responsibility of the Central Government.

SHRI MAHESWAR NAIK: What is the maintenance cost per mile in the different States?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: It differs from State to State and I cannot give the exact figure.

MANUFACTURE OF GLIDERS IN INDIA

*533. **SHRI M. VALIULLA:** Will the Minister for COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of places in India where gliders are being manufactured at present;

(b) in what number they are manufactured; and

(c) what is the cost per glider?

THE MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR): (a) So far as Government is aware, no gliders are yet being manufactured on a commercial scale in India.