

## COUNCIL OF STATES

Friday, 11th December 1953

The Council met at half past one of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

### SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

#### RETRENCHMENT OF PROGRAMME ASSISTANTS IN A.I.R.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Will the Minister for INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether 25 Class II officers serving as Programme Assistants in the All India Radio have been served with notices of discharge from service;

(b) whether any more such officers are likely to be served with similar notices; and

(c) what are the reasons for this retrenchment?

THE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (DR. B. V. KESKAR): (a) Yes, Sir. 22 Programme Assistants, who were employed in All India Radio, have been served with notices of termination of their services.

(b) and (c). I would like to state the circumstances under which this retrenchment had to take place. Programme Assistants in All India Radio have been recruited in various ways. The post has been converted into a Class II post, which means that recruitment must be made through the Union Public Service Commission. In order to regularise the cadre the Union Public Service Commission was asked to scrutinize the cases of all Programme Assistants. The Union Public Service Commission, after carefully going through the cases of all the employees, categorised them according to merits. The question of the permanent strength of the cadre at the various stations

was also examined in detail and it was found that the number of persons employed was much larger than the number required by All India Radio. The Union Public Service Commission was asked to examine the question of retrenching the surplus staff. This was done by a regular departmental promotion committee with a member of the Union Public Service Commission. In all 22 persons have been served with notices of termination of their services.

All these persons who have been served with notices are temporary employees. One of the reasons for the regularisation of the whole cadre was the necessity of putting on permanent or quasi-permanent basis the main staff and it was not possible to do so without complete examination of the strength of the cadre and the number of employees actually required to man it.

The question as to how many of these Programme Assistants can be continued in service is being carefully examined. I might however assure the House that no person will be retrenched unless this is absolutely essential.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: May I know, out of these 22 Programme Assistants how many have served for five years and over and if there are any, who have served for more than ten years?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I won't be able to say off-hand how many have served for how many years, but I do not think there is anybody who has served for more than ten years.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Are there any out of these 22 who have served for more than five years?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: There might be a few.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Is it a fact that, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs notification amended up to 14th June 1950, the practice ought

to have been that the cases of those who were in service for three years or more should have been sent to the Union Public Service Commission for confirmation and if they had not been sent, they should have been treated as quasi-permanent?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I am afraid, Sir, my hon. friend is rather stretching the rules of the Home Ministry. The rules are that a person, who has served already for three years, becomes eligible for quasi-permanency provided he fulfils certain conditions. The first condition is that he should otherwise be eligible to hold that post according to qualifications, etc.; secondly his record of service should be good; and thirdly after the case is submitted to the Home Ministry and the Union Public Service Commission, they should be satisfied with regard to the first two conditions. As far as the particular question raised by my friend here is concerned, the question was referred to the Home Ministry and in view of the fact that the whole cadre of the All India Radio was being regularised and placed on a definite and permanent footing, it was felt that until the total strength that we are going to have was not determined, it was no use trying to put those employees who are eligible on—what he calls—a quasi-permanent basis. I might also inform him that nobody automatically becomes eligible for quasi-permanency. In fact, cases have happened where, when they were referred to either the Home Ministry or the Union Public Service Commission, they have been rejected notwithstanding the fact that the candidates have put in more than three years' service.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: May I know if, among the 22, any have recently been informed in writing that the Union Public Service Commission after examining their cases had approved of their continuance in service? If so, how many of them have been so informed?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: That is entirely incorrect, Sir. In fact, I might inform my hon. friend that quite a number amongst these 22 had been informed in writing that the Union Public Service Commission had placed them in a certain category and according to that it was quite possible that their service might be terminated with one month's notice. Probably my hon. friend has been informed by certain persons who might apprehend that their services might be terminated. None of the persons who have been served with notices have been given any such assurance.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Sir, the hon. Minister said something which ought to have been said in answer to part (b). May I ask, Sir, whether he can give an answer to (b), that is, whether any more such officers are about to be retrenched?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I think I gave my reply which he probably did not hear. The reply is that the question as to how many of these Programme Assistants can be continued in service is being carefully examined. As I said, the question under examination is: Keeping in view the various stations of the All India Radio and the number of programmes in different languages, what is the strength of the permanent staff that we will require? Unfortunately, this has not been done up till now carefully, and we are going through this question now very carefully with the help of the Union Public Service Commission. I won't be able to say anything now, but I might assure him that very few persons will be retrenched. In this connection I might also say another thing, as he is likely to put that question. A great complication arises from the fact that the stations of the All India Radio are situated in various parts of the country and it is essential that an officer, to function effectively, should know well the language of the place; preferably it should be his mother tongue. Unfortunately, recruitment to this cadre

—I won't blame anybody—in a majority of cases has been done on an *ad hoc* basis, with certain languages having a predominant number of officers, while officers in languages like Oriya, Kanarese and others, are practically non-existent. It is very difficult for the different stations to function effectively, unless the whole thing is regularised and put on a more balanced basis.

**SHRI C. G. K. REDDY:** Sir, before the question of retrenchment was decided, may I know if the Government had in mind the expansion schemes that they have in hand now or which are about to be executed; and have they taken this decision to retrench only after careful consideration?

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** Yes, certainly. I may also say that the majority or a large number of those who have been served with notices have been rejected by the Union Public Service Commission and it was not possible for me to retain them in service even if I wanted to. I do not say all of them, but quite a large number of them.

**SHRI C. G. K. REDDY:** First of all the hon. Minister said that the Union Public Service Commission did not approve of their continuance in any case. Apart from that, have they crossed the efficiency bar which indicates that they have rendered good service to the Government, and have they also, in many cases, passed the five-year limit?

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** I won't be able to say anything about this off-hand, but if any particular case is in the mind of my hon. friend, I am prepared to look into it.

**SHRI C. G. K. REDDY:** I am not interested in any particular case. I am only interested in finding out from the Government as to why they retained in service young men, who have put in more than 5 years' service and who have crossed the effi-

ciency bar, and then gave them the notices of retrenchment now. I am not concerned with individual cases. I only want to have an assurance, if it is possible, from the Government that such things will not happen like young men taken and kept in service for five, seven and even ten years and later retrenched for no reason whatsoever.

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** May I say, Sir, that as far as the Government rules go, if I employ a person for six months and somehow or other continue him in employment for five years, that cannot give any justification for that person being made permanent or quasi-permanent. The rules are very clear. In fact, hon. Members of this House should come forward and help me, because off and on they come and criticise the Government for employing people by the back door. If my friend and other friends were to come forward and justify the continuance of a large number of such people who have been employed for temporary periods and who have been repeatedly reminded that they are temporary Government employees. I shall be very glad, because I would be able to employ a number of people. But afterwards my hon. friend must not come forward and say that.....

**SHRI C. G. K. REDDY:** I am also interested in seeing that persons are not employed by the back door. I only want to know from the Government why such people, who were recruited by the back door, should have been kept so long.

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** That was a mistake; that was a blunder—whatever you might like to call it.

**DR. P. C. MITRA:** May I know if, when any recruitment is made or when any expansion takes place, the claims of those people who are now retrenched will be given priority?

**DR. B. V. KESKAR:** Generally, the policy of Government is that when

such persons are retrenched, they are always given priority when alternative sources of employment offer themselves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Provided the Public Service Commission approves of their names,—that is your answer.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Yes, provided the Union Public Service Commission do not totally reject them.

PROF. G. RANGA: Is it not a fact, Sir, that all these years there has been expansion and expansion, and more and more people have been taken and their services have not been regularised? We have been asking for regularisation for years.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: Last year, I think, Sir, I was asked a lot of questions in the other House and Government was criticised that a large number of irregular appointments had been made and that I was guilty of corruption or something similar. Now that these appointments are sought to be regularised we are charged with retrenching of workers.

DR. S. K. BHUYAN: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is possible to deal with this question from another angle, the angle of equity, fairness and justice—the human angle? These hands were appointed, no doubt, on a temporary basis, but they have put in five, six or more years' service and they have planned their lives accordingly; and to be told now that they are no longer required, is certainly a matter of great hardship to them. Their retrenchment can be justified certainly on departmental grounds which are cogent and satisfactory, but there is another law, the law of humanity which, I hope the hon. Minister will take into consideration in this matter. Besides, India is trying to solve the problem of unemployment in the country. Some women, I am told, are affected by this retrenchment measure; and their case requires special consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not a question.

DR. B. V. KESKAR: I have to say one word with regard to this. A great deal of humanitarian quality has been shown by the Union Public Service Commission. I know this because when this question was referred to the Union Public Service Commission, if they had followed the rules, most of the people would not have been there. Now, on the staff, only 38 persons are permanent. If they had followed the rules applicable to other posts, it is possible that more than 50 per cent. of the people who are now temporary would have been thrown out. The Public Service Commission, I should say, have taken a sympathetic and a humanitarian view in these cases.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Sir, my last question is this. May I know whether Government have finally decided that only 22 posts are to be retrenched, or whether some more are about to come under the axe?

DR. B. V. KESKAR: It won't be possible for me to say that only 22 Programme Assistants would be retrenched. I might say this that there is no question of immediate axing. We are having requests for having more linguistic and other stations which are now under the consideration of Government. How many Programme Assistants will be required for manning these stations, I can't say. It is possible that a few more might have to be retrenched. I cannot, therefore, say how many will be finally retrenched.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: Sir, I would like to know what would have been the personal impression of the hon. the Minister for Information and Broadcasting if, after having served for five years, he were to be told that he was to be retrenched?

(No reply.)