KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH: May I know, Sir, if the Government have circulated this scheme among Members of Parliament?

(No answer.)

RAILWAY PLATFORM PASSES FOR PRESS REPRESENTATIVES

*466 SHRI G RAJAGOPALAN. Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) whether free platform passes used to be issued to representatives of newspapers in the city of Madras and the correspondents in the mofussil by the ex-South Indian and Madras and Southern Maratha Railways,

(b) whether that practice still continues, and

(c) if not, what is the reason for the withdrawal of that privilege to journalists?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): (a) The old South Indian Railway used to issue free platform passes to Press correspondents both in the city of Madras and at stations in the mofussil, while the old M. & S. M Railway allowed such passes only at Madras Central and that too for one reporter each of only four daily newspapers published there.

(b) and (c) The practice continues in a modified form. Free platform passes are issued to one representative each of the various dailies, giving a minimum freight revenue of Rs. 2,000 per annum on newspaper packets booked, the use of the passes being limited to the station from which the newspaper is published. In addition, platform permits for Press representatives at a concession rate of Rs 10 per annum as against Rs 20 payable by public on production of a certificate signed by the manager of the newspaper concerned that the applicant is a representative of the newspaper, are issued This modification was considered desirable in order to ensure uniformity of procedure on the entire Southern Railway after integration.

SHRI G RAJAGOPALAN: Have Government received any representation from the South Indian Journalists Federation to the effect that this privilege should be extended to the mofussil correspondents also?

SHRI O V ALAGESAN: Sir, this privilege is there in a modified form. They are required to pay only Rs 10 whereas the public are required to pay Rs 20.

SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN Is it a fact that previously the ex-South Indian Railway used to issue this privilege free of cost, that there was no question of any payment of money?

SHRI O V ALAGESAN: Yes As I have stated in my answer on the ex-South Indian Railway these passes were issued free even to mofussil correspondents The practice was not the same on the ex-Mysore and the ex-M & S M Railways. After the integration, this uniform practice is being followed in a modified form.

SHRI G RAJAGOPALAN My question was whether Government have received a representation from the South Indian Journalists Federation and if so what action has been taken on it.

SHRI O V ALAGESAN There were representations received from the Federation that my friend has referred to and a Member of Parliament also represented about this matter. It was considered and the present arrangement has been considered satisfactory.

SHRI RAMA RAO: Is it not extraordinary that journalists should be charged anything at all when they are on public duty? Is it done anywhere in the world?

SHRI O. V ALAGESAN: I do not know whether people going on public

duty should not be charged. They are charged everywhere in the world, I think.

SHRI RAMA RAO. Should they not be allowed to go free when engaged on this public duty? And is it not true that you are exercising a sort of discrimination between paper and paper? To some you give free platform passes and from other papers you receive payment according to your own answer. Is that done anywhere in the world?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN No, it has been decided to issue these passes to papers if they give a minimum freight revenue of Rs. 2,000 per year. That shows that the papers are of sufficient importance and they require a person to go to the platform every day, not so the other papers.

SHRI V. K DHAGE Are there any other classes of people who enjoy such a concession as this?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I would require notice, Sir

SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN: Have Government come to the final conclusion on this question or is it still under their consideration?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: As far as the present time is concerned, we think the present arrangements meet the situation.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: Have press correspondents any personal duties to perform?

(No answer.)

SHRI D. NARAYAN: Are such free platform passes issued on the railway lines of other regions also?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Yes. This question came up in the Southern Railway It has not come up on the others But this procedure should be followed in other Railways also.

ACTION TAKEN BY A STATE GOVERNMENT ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

*467. SHRI M. MANJURAN: Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Shri Mody of Tata and Sons, Ltd. (Tata Oil Mills Co., Ltd.) lodged a complaint with the Government of India in respect of action taken by the Government of Travancore-Cochin on a judgment of the Appellate Tribunal in an industrial dispute between the Tata Oil Mills Co., Ltd , Tatapuram, Ernakulam and the Staff Union;

(b) what was the cause of the complaint and what action has been taken by the Government of India thereon; and

(c) whether similar action has been taken by any other State Government before or after this incident?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI ABID ALI): (a) Shri H. P. Mody, President, the Employers' Federation of India, submitted a representation to the Government of India.

(b) The complaint was against an order of the Government of Travancore-Cochin rejecting the decision of the Labour Appellate Tribunal which, reversing an award of the Industrial Tribunal, Ernakulam, allowed retrenchment in Tata Oil Mills Co., Ltd., Tatapuram Shri Mody was informed that the action taken by the State Government was one solely within their discretion and that the Central Government had no right to intervene in the matter

(c) No, so far as the Government of India are aware of.

SHRI M MANJURAN: Is it a fact that the Labour Minister of Travancore-Cochin was the President of the Staff Union when this matter was originally referred for adjudication?