

Minister during the last session that the existing rights of the labour would be safeguarded ?

SHRI ABID ALI : Government will do all that is possible to safeguard the interests of the workers.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He wants to know whether the Government will stand by the assurance that the privileges they now have will not in any way be curtailed.

SHRI ABID ALI : As I have said, under the present circumstances some change may be necessary but Government will do all that is possible to safeguard their interests.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Some change for the better.

SHRI B. RATH : Why is the Act which was passed not going to be enforced ?

SHRI ABID ALI : There is no question of not enforcing the Act. It was passed last year and necessary rules had to be framed and the work is in progress. We have not decided not to enforce the Act.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA : May I know to which particular industry in Assam and Bengal this particular Act will apply ?

SHRI ABID ALI : In the first place it will apply to tea, coffee and rubber plantations but any State Government may, subject to previous approval of the Central Government, by notification in the official Gazette, apply it to any other class of plantations within the State.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA : Are there plantations other than tea in Assam and Bengal ?

SHRI ABID ALI : There are some.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : What are they ?

SHRI ABID ALI : In the States of Bengal and Assam, of course there is tea and cinchona.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : Is there no other plantation to which this Act will be applicable ? Because there are only these—tea, coffee and rubber in Bengal and Assam.

SHRI ABID ALI : The Act has not been applied to any plantation as yet.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR : Is the Government aware that the Government own the cinchona plantations in West Bengal ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Apart from these tea gardens, he is giving information that there are cinchona plantations.

ABOLITION OF FIRST CLASS ON INDIAN RAILWAYS

*197. SHRI H. C. MATHUR : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state what progress has been made in the implementation of the scheme for the abolition of first class on Indian Railways ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN) : A statement showing the sections on which first class accommodation has been withdrawn from 1st October 1952 has been placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix III, Annexure No. 50.]

SHRI H. C. MATHUR : What are the advantages ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : They were fully explained during the budget discussion last year.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR : Have the administrative and financial aspects of this been examined by the Government ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : The financial aspect does not arise because

as a matter of policy the first class was decided to be abolished and so the financial question as such does not arise.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : How many more years will it take for Government to abolish the first class ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : It will be abolished completely by October next.

II. A.M.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Do I understand that the Government will pursue this scheme even if it entails financial loss ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : It will not entail us in any financial loss.

SHRI R. U. AGNIBHOJ : What is the reason for adopting this policy ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : As I said before, the reason was fully explained by the hon. Minister when he announced the policy.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Do Government realise that even after the first class is abolished there will be one class which will be a higher class, i.e., the air-conditioned class—and how will there be any reduction in the number of classes in the Indian Railways ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : In the sense that the air-conditioned class is already there, it will certainly be a reduction.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the Government then kindly state in what way there will be a reduction in the number of classes ? What is the advantage we get out of the elimination of the first class ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : There have been complaints and representations from hon. Members both in this House and also in the other House that these first class compartments were mostly going empty. Therefore, as a result of such representations and forceful expression of views on the floor of the House, this decision was taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Dr. Sceta Parmanand.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : How does the abolition of.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order, order. I have called Dr. Sceta Parmanand.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND : Is the hon. Minister aware that air-conditioned coaches are provided only once a week and that therefore there cannot be any reduction in the number of classes from that point of view ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : It differs on different lines.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Are not air-conditioned coaches provided every day on certain lines ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Yes, that is what I said ; it differs from line to line.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : Are they also going to be empty ?

PROF. G. RANGA : Sir, is there no answer to that question ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Are they going empty ? Yes, sometimes empty, sometimes not.

PROF. G. RANGA : It is possible for you to say that ; but it is not possible for the hon. Minister to do so.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I don't know that.

SHRI M. P. N. SINHA : Were the public consulted about this scheme to abolish the first class before the scheme was given effect to ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Both Houses of Parliament represent fully the public.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : May I know whether it is Government's view that first class coaches go empty on all lines ; or do they mean that they are usually unoccupied only on branch lines ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Although it may be that comparatively they are more unoccupied in the branch lines, even on the main lines they were going, more or less, empty.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Is the hon. Minister aware that on several lines, for instance, the Delhi-Bombay line and the Delhi-Calcutta line, the first class coaches are usually almost full ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : The entire railway system was taken into consideration when this decision was taken.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Was any discrimination made between different lines or were they all treated in the same manner ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : I don't think any discrimination has been made in this respect.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Why not ? If Government finds that on certain lines the number of first class passengers is small while on other railway lines the number of such passengers is adequate, is that not adequate reason for differentiating between different lines on this ground ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Maybe ; but then there will be the question of discrimination on certain other lines and there will be representations that on those lines the same class should be provided and so on. So we will be nowhere near the abolishing of first classes in that case.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : Is it with a desire to effect economy in public expenditure that the first class in railways is being abolished ? And if it is going to be finally abolished, what will be the denomination of the classes that will be left behind ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : I did not follow the question completely, Sir.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : It is clear as crystal, Sir. I asked is it with a desire to effect economy in public expenditure that first class travel is being abolished ; and also if it is abolished

finally, what will be the denomination of the classes of travel that will be left back ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : This is done with a view to the better utilisation of the existing coaching stock. And as for the denomination, the hon. Member has asked, I cannot, at the present moment, say anything.

SHRI M. P. N. SINHA : Have any records been maintained, showing the periods during which these particular lines have been having these compartments going empty or relatively full ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : I could not hear the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He asks, are there any records kept of the periods during which these compartments were relatively unoccupied and of those when they were full.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : I am unable to answer the question, Sir,

(Several hon. Members rose.)

MR. CHAIRMAN : How many stand up ! So much of interest.

Mr. Mathur put the question. Let him complete it.

AN HON. MEMBER : There is no completion.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR : Is there any material before the Government which can be placed before the House to satisfy the House that this scheme is not going to end in as big a scandal or clog as the previous one ?

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Quite right.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : We are completely alive to that and we are assured that there will be no such bad result.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR : But I ask whether there is any material before Government which can be placed before this House.]

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : It is on that basis that we have proceeded.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : But will the information be placed before the House ? Will it be placed on the Table of the House ? That is the question. The hon. Minister does not understand any question that is put.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : I may not be as quick in understanding as the hon. Member, but yet I am doing my best to understand the questions and answer them.

PROF. G. RANGA : In view of the fact that this House has, right up till now—the interim Parliament and also during the recent Budget Session—been in favour of the abolition of the first class, may I suggest that this question may be taken up for separate discussion, instead of going on in this manner ?

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : It was decided that this system should be put an end to, because of the dissatisfaction created in this House ; Prof. Ranga should note that.

DR. D. H. VARIAVA : I understand that the abolition of the first class was taken on hand to produce a classless society. Even in the first session of this Council Mr. Kher suggested that. But I would like to know why the Railways have been selected for producing a classless society and not any other branch of life.

(No answer.)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question, Mr. Reddy.

ASIAN MARITIME CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

*198. SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether an Asian Maritime Conference of the International Labour

Organisation is to be held shortly, if so, when and where ; and

(b) whether Government propose to send a delegation to that conference ; if so what will be the size and composition of the delegation ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Shri ABID ALI : (a) so far no intimation has been received by the Government of India about the date and place of the Asian Maritime Conference of the I. L. O.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Sir, on a point of information. Here it is put down as the Minister for Transport, but the reply has been given by the Deputy Minister for Labour.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It has been corrected here as "Minister for Labour".

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Is there any report published in newspapers or in the I. L. O. Journal that the meeting will be held in Singapore in May 1953 ?

SHRI ABID ALI : According to our information, the conference is to be held between February and May 1953 ; venue and the date have not yet been settled.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : May I know whether the department of which the hon. Minister is in charge will be responsible for the selection of the delegation, or any other Ministry ?

SHRI ABID ALI : This Ministry, Sir.

RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN OLD SILIGURI STATION AND SILIGURI JUNCTION

*199. SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that (i) the strip of the narrow gauge railway line between the old Siliguri Station and