

COUNCIL OF STATES

Friday, 19th December 1952

The Council met at a quarter to eleven of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

DISTURBANCES IN ANDHRA SECTION OF SOUTHERN RAILWAY

19. SHRI T. S. PATTABIRAMAN : Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) Whether it is a fact that serious disturbance has broken out on all railway stations in the Andhra Section of Southern Railway ;

(b) whether considerable damage has been caused to railway property and if so, what is the extent of damage ; and

(c) whether through running of trains has been suspended in that section ?

THE MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYANARAYAN SINHA) : (a), (b) and (c). Trouble in sporadic form started on the 8th instant, with demonstrations at a number of railway stations, such as Guntur, Narasapur, Tadepalli, Muddanuru, Palakol. The mobs principally of students held up trains by standing on the track and pulling up alarm chains.

The position deteriorated further on the 13th and the 14th, particularly on the Bezwada-Rajahmundry Section. In almost all the cases, trains had to run non-vacuum, as the demonstrators after stopping the trains uncoupled the hose-pipes and removed all rubber washers. This necessitated severe speed restrictions being imposed, with the result that goods trains had to be stabled, and the passenger trains reached Bezwada or Rajahmundry

At Bezwada on 15th December 1952, after about 6.30 P.M., the public mobbed the station and did not let the Delhi bound Grand Trunk Express proceed and extended their activities to station office, and the carriages. They forced the Railway staff out from their places of work and did not allow any work to be done or trains to pass for about 24 hours.

The disturbances reached the climax on the 16th. At about 9.30 A.M., the mob went into the Control Office and the office of the Assistant Transportation Superintendent, Movement, and stopped the staff from working. Goods sheds, parcel offices, etc., were looted. Section 144 C.P.C. has been promulgated and the situation is reported to be under control. The Grand Trunk Express mentioned earlier left at about 7.30 P.M. on the 17th.

At Anakappalle wagons were looted, cabins were set on fire and the track was interfered with. The police had to open fire and a few casualties have been reported.

At Nellore one passenger bogie coach was set on fire. Rails on Pennar bridge were removed. They have since been restored by the Railway.

At Bhimavaram, level crossing gates were smashed; telegraph, signal and electric wires were cut; windows and name board were smashed; the pumping engine was slightly damaged; the overhead water tank was emptied; and passenger vehicles were damaged.

At Guntur, the goods shed and the parcel office were looted and damage to railway property was caused. The position is improving and is under control.

At Godavari, the mob attempted to set fire to the station building. The Police had to open fire. Casualties are not known.

At Ongole signals were pulled

track. Track keys were removed for about three-fourth of a mile.

At Waltair, heavy damages were caused to track and Railway equipment and Loco Shed stores were damaged. D.T.S.'s office and control offices were mobbed twice. Control and telephone wires were cut. Interlocking gears of cabins were tampered with. Signal lamps and wheels were broken. Canteen stores were looted. A Railway officer on his way to the Loco Shed was lifted in a truck and left a couple of miles away.

Arson, looting at stations and from loaded wagons, damage to railway equipments such as signals and track, interference with rolling stock and telegraph wires on varying scale were indulged in at many other stations such as Pithapuram, Kovvur, Tadepalligudam, Tenali, Tanuku, Palakol, Gudivada, Palasa and also on the branch lines connecting with the North-East main line.

*Train services (Southern Railway).—*Train services were disrupted badly on the North-East Line between Bezwada and Waltair and also on its branches. The Calcutta Mail ex-Madras on the 15th was held up at Tenali, but after some difficulty it was taken to Bezwada and had to be brought back to Madras. The Calcutta Mail due in Madras on the 16th was held up at Bezwada and was diverted *via* Kazipet, Wadi and Raichur. On the 16th the Grand Trunk Expresses were diverted *via* Raichur, Wadi, Secunderabad and Balharshah.

*Train services (Eastern Railway).—*There was considerable dislocation of train services on the Waltair-Cuttack section also. The Puri Passenger was cancelled, the Khurda Road-Waltair passenger trains were cancelled between Waltair and Berhampur; the Calcutta-Madras Mail and Janata Express, which left Calcutta on the 16th were terminated at Berhampur and Khurda Road respectively and their rakes were

trains. The running of through trains from Madras towards Calcutta was suspended or inordinately delayed.

General remarks.—The morale of the staff is reported to have remained satisfactory. No injuries to any staff have so far been reported. Owing to the local officers and staff being fully occupied with the emergency; it has not been possible to make a reasonable assessment of the extent of damages to the railway and public property. At a very rough estimate, it may be anything up to Rs. 50 lakhs. Very close liaison is being maintained between the Railway Administrations, the local Government and the local and Railway Police. The Eastern Railway has been able to depute 200 Watch and Ward staff in the affected areas to assist the Police. Protection of vulnerable points according to the schemes to be enforced in emergencies has been taken in hand and patrolling of the affected areas by trains and otherwise has been introduced. Special trains were run to carry armed Police from Madras to Bezwada and Bezwada to Godavari. The position is reported to be under control and coming back to normal. It is hoped that with effect from the 19th instant some of the important through trains, viz., Madras-Calcutta Mails, Grand Trunk Expresses and the Madras-Puri Passengers will resume running by the normal routes. These trains will carry armed escorts.

SHRI T. S. PATTABIRAMAN : May I know how much foodgrain was lost in the looting ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : About 2,000 bags.

SHRI T. S. PATTABIRAMAN : May I know whether it is a fact that a political party which has violence as its creed went on carrying on propaganda at Bezwada, shouting in the streets to loot railway stations, and that looting of the wagons was carried on systematically by them, the loot being carried in lorries ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : We have received no official report on these

SHRI G. RAJAGOPALAN : Is the Government aware that the District Superintendent of Police and two lorryloads of armed police were within 20 yards of Vijayawada railway station when the looting was going on ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : It hardly concerns us. It concerns the State Government, and we have not heard so far from the Madras Government about how the situation worsened there and took this turn.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : Is it a fact that kidnapping took place in the houses of railway staff in some of these stations ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : We are not aware.

SHRI K. L. NARASIMHAM : Is it a fact that this situation arose because of the policy of the Government of India in not conceding the demand of the Andhra people for an Andhra State ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is a matter about disturbances on railways. We are not concerned about the causes which led to those disturbances.

SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY : Is it not a fact that some big officers were locked in in their rooms in Rajahmundry station ? We read that in the papers.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Yes, Sir. That is somewhat correct. In fact they were asked to clear out and most of them had to go away from the station.

SHRI T. S. PATTABIRAMAN : Is it not a fact that the Students Federation which is affiliated to a political body carried on and led the agitation on Vijayawada railway station ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : We will have to wait for the report from the Madras Government. It is just possible that what the hon. Member

SHRI K. L. NARASIMHAM : Is it not a fact that one pointsman in Nellore was beaten by the Police ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I think he may have been beaten by the demonstrators.

SHRI P.-SUNDARAYYA : Is it not a fact that the pointsman was shot dead by the Police in Nellore ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : From 'beaten' it is coming to 'shot dead'.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : If he got into the crowds, he might have been.

SHRI B. RATH : It is a fact that certain interested sections in the country are trying to cook up stories and manage it in such a way as to create the impression that the Communist Party and Students' Federation and Kisan Sabhas, they are all behind these disturbances.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. I don't think that they have any more reasonable questions.

Now, so far as No. 2 Short Notice Question is concerned, I have just heard from the Prime Minister that he will come here in the afternoon—after lunch—to make a statement on the Andhra issue.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MEMBERS

- I. SHRI K. L. SHRIMALI.
- II. DR. MURARI LAL.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have to inform hon. Members that the following letter has been received from Shri K. L. Shrimali :

“ As I have been busy with the work of the Secondary Education Commission, I regret I have not been able to attend any meetings of the Council of States during this session. I shall, therefore, feel grateful if you will kindly grant me leave for the days I have been absent