

COUNCIL OF STATES

Saturday, 20th December 1952

The Council met at ten of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

AGREEMENT WITH A FRENCH FIRM

15. SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have entered into an agreement with a French firm to set up a factory for the manufacture of wireless products for the use of the three Defence Services, Broadcasting, Communications and other Ministries ; and

(b) if so, the name of the French firm ?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU) :
(a) Yes.

(b) Campagnie Generale de Telegraphie Sans Fil (C. S. F.) France.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : The Prime Minister said some days ago in this House that the prevailing conditions in the French pockets in India were deteriorating. There were two alternative approaches, one is pressure at the diplomatic level and the other, war. May I know, Sir, whether the diplomatic level permits us to enter into an agreement with a French firm, especially in the case of the three Defence Services ?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : I do not think, Sir, that has anything to do with this. This is a big firm dealing with it. We have been carrying on negotiations with them for the past three years on an expert level. We are not putting them on the same level as the French possessions in India. It

has nothing to do with the French Government as such.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : Sir, did we negotiate with any firms in England and Germany before concluding this agreement ?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : Yes, various firms were contacted, offers were made and some were considered by us at the expert level again and again. This process has been going on for the last three years or more.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : Is the contract revocable ?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : I do not know what the hon. Member means by asking whether it is revocable. It has been signed by us.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : May I know about the terms of this contract concluded with this French firm ?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : I am sorry I cannot go into the details of the contracts. They are complicated contracts.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : May I know whether this particular French firm which the Prime Minister mentioned has not had a good reputation with regard to research and resources as the German and British firms ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is a matter of opinion whether it is better or worse.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : May I know whether it is advisable, at a time when our relations with France are deteriorating in this fashion, to go on entering into contracts with French manufacturers, especially in regard to the Defence Services ? What sort of moral pressure are we bringing to bear on France ?

(No answer.)

DELHI TRANSPORT SERVICE

22. SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the Minister for TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government have any proposal for improving the service rendered by the Delhi Transport Service ; and

(b) the constitution of the Delhi Road Transport Authority ?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI LAL BAHADUR) : (a) The Delhi Transport Service is run by a statutory body known as the Delhi Road Transport Authority established under the Delhi Road Transport Authority Act, 1950. In July 1952, the Authority appointed a Committee to inquire into the working of the Service and suggest measures for improvement. The Committee submitted its report on the 26th July 1952 and a copy has been placed in the Library of Parliament. Shortly after, a new General Manager was appointed. The Authority is taking several steps to improve the service in the light of the recommendations of the Committee. Among the more important improvements are increased earnings, reduced number of breakdowns, better maintenance of vehicles and introduction of a rate contract system for purchase of spare parts. The construction of two new bus depots has been sanctioned and work is proceeding. 34 new vehicles are expected to be added to the fleet early next year.

(b) The Delhi Road Transport Authority consists of seven members, with the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, as Chairman, three officials nominated by the Central Government and three non-officials, one elected by the members of the Delhi Municipal Committee, one elected by the members of the Delhi District Board and the third nominated by the Central Government.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Has the service rendered by the Delhi Transport Service to the public in any way improved since July ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Yes, it has.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is the hon.

Minister aware that people have to wait for half an hour and one hour to get a bus to go to any place in Delhi ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : The number of buses is being increased, and if the hon. Member so desires, I shall give him a few points which will show that we have made improvements. For example, the mileage performed in Nov. 1951 was 5,68,000 and in Nov. 1952 it was 6,19,000. The daily earnings—one of the Members enquired about it—have also increased from Rs. 18,275 in November 1951 to Rs. 20,350 in November 1952. The average number of vehicles on the road has also increased from 168 to 195, i.e., it was 168 in November 1951 and we have increased it to 195, in November 1952.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : What is the number of buses that the Government considers necessary to ensure a good service in this matter to the public ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : If the present number of buses on the road is increased to about 300 or 350, it should meet the normal requirements.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the hon. Minister please state what he considers should be the normal interval between the services on the routes which are fairly popular ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : It depends on the route and on the traffic.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I said on the routes which are popular, which the public frequently take recourse to.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : There are normal hours and peak hours. During the peak hours, I think about 15 minutes' interval will be quite sufficient.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Do the Government feel that a 15 minutes' interval is satisfactory and are Government

aware that in any city the usual interval is between one and 2 minutes. In Bombay, I do not know what it is, but in Calcutta, it is about half a minute to one minute.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I do not know, but a Member from Bombay Province has said that the interval there is 15 minutes.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is the Government aware that in Calcutta the interval is half a minute to one minute ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : It may not be so. I have also travelled in buses in Calcutta.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : It is so. I have travelled in Calcutta buses.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : May I know whether the Service is running at a loss, and if it is so, what steps Government are taking to make it profitable and to run it on commercial lines ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : The Service was running at a loss, and the loss was enormous last year. It was about Rs. 10 lakhs. Now, the position has improved and we expect to get a profit of Rs. 3,87,000 in this year.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : To what extent has it improved ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I have just now said that there was a loss of Rs. 10 lakhs last year and that we expect to get a profit of about Rs. 3½ lakhs this year.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Are Government aware that people have to wait long, inordinately long for a bus between the hours of twelve and three or four ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : We are aware of it. These are not the peak hours. Still, the conditions are not satisfactory. I am prepared to admit

it, but we are making improvements and we hope that there will be no such delays after the next four or five months. Before that time, I do not think any improvement is possible.

SHRI RAMA RAO : Is the hon. Minister aware that bus drivers do not stop even at the statutory stops when they have been signalled, even when there is accommodation in the bus ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I shall look into the matter, if the hon. Member brings any specific case to my notice.

SHRI RAMA RAO : To the notice of the Minister or the Department's notice ? It happened to me day before yesterday in North Avenue.

MR. CHAIRMAN : To the notice of the Ministry.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE : Has the hon. Minister had any chance to travel by these buses to ensure that the efficiency of the Service has improved since July 1952 ?

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI : I have had experience. I think it has improved.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I have not travelled, but if I have to travel, I shall travel quietly and silently. I will do so during the next few months.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE : Will the hon. Minister try to benefit his Department by the experience gained by the Members of both Houses of Parliament who have been travelling by these buses ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : But they are conflicting.

PROF. G. RANGA : Not conflicting at all.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : Will the hon. Minister please state the number of buses that go out of action every day and how this interferes with efficient service ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I can give you one figure. I cannot tell you the number of breakdowns every day, but the position has certainly improved. The average daily breakdowns in 1951 were 54. Now, they have been reduced to 40.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND : Will the hon. Minister kindly see that some of the Ministers occasionally have a bus ride as a first step towards introducing a classless travel and a classless society ?

(No answer.)

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I want to make a submission. As you know I had given notice of a motion and therefore will you kindly allow me to ask a few questions ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : He said that he will not put any supplementaries.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Conditions change.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : That is not true.

Is the hon. Minister aware that bus fares charged in Delhi are about the highest ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : That is so.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the Minister state as to why this should be so ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : There is a difference of only a pie or two.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Between what services ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : Between Bombay and Calcutta.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Between Delhi on the one side and Calcutta on the other.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is the Minister aware that for a run of about 6 miles in Calcutta they charge 2 annas ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : That may be so but we cannot reduce the rate just at present.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the Minister consider the desirability of introducing services at an interval of 5 minutes in the peak hours and at an interval of 15 minutes in other hours ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I shall certainly consider that but I cannot give any promise just now.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the Minister kindly state as to whether the previous General Manager was dismissed as he stated that a new Manager was appointed in July ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : He has not been dismissed. He belonged to the Railway Services and he has gone back.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is the Minister aware of all the irregularities that were revealed in the audit report of 1950-51 of this Service ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : I am aware of that.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Has Government taken any action on that report in regard to the management of this concern and if so, what ?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR : The audit report is still under consideration and we do propose to take action against any person who has been found guilty. In fact there is no doubt that the accounts were in a very unsatisfactory position. We are trying to clear up the mess and put it on a regular basis.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO SHRI ALLADI KRISHNASWAMI

MR. CHAIRMAN : We will pass on to the next item.

I have to inform hon. Members that the following letter has been received: