

Legislative Assembly.

(to be answered on the 13th September 1939)

Reply to Mr. S. Satyamurti's starred question No. regarding using of Andamans as a convict settlement.

The Hon'ble Mr. J.A. Thorne. (a) and (e).

Convicts are now not deported to the Andamans compulsorily as a matter of ~~course~~ course, but only those convicts who volunteer for the Islands are sent there provided they fulfil certain conditions. On account of shortage of volunteer convicts during the last two years, certain conditions of transfer of volunteer convicts were recently relaxed and brought to the notice of the Provincial Governments ^{who} and they were asked to bring these ~~conditions~~ conditions to the notice of the jail authorities and the prisoners.

(b). The question of allowing a convict to go on his own ticket as a cultivator ~~for~~ three months after release from jail and to import his family at Govt. cost as soon as he has settled on land is under

Reply not given

linked file

X

page 8/k

D

Please see our resolution No. F. 20/26-Jails, dated the 27th February 1926, which explains our policy regarding transfer of convicts to the Andamans. Prisoners are now not deported to the Islands compulsorily but only those convicts who volunteer for the Islands are sent there provided they fulfil certain conditons. On account of shortage of volunteer convicts from India and Burma during the last two years, the conditions of transfer were relaxed and the Provl. Governments were asked in our letter No. 86/38-Jails, dated 20-5-39, to bring these modifications to the notice of the jail authorities and of the prisoners.

linked file

The question of allowing a convict to go on his own ticket as a cultivator three months after his release from jail instead of after one year as at present and to import his family at Govt. cost as soon ^{as} ~~after~~ he has settled on land ~~is~~ is under consideration. Part (b) may therefore be replied in the affirmative.

Part (c). By 'charges for convicts', Mr. Satyamurti presumably means the pay which a talabdar convict get. No such question is at present under consideration.

A draft reply is submitted.

(linked file for reference only)

21-8-39

(Congress Part.) Await when I

MS(P)

admission

P. A. H. M.

LI-838

Mark Arjun
 A.S.
 21.8.39.

3

The policy of the Government of India regarding the A & N Islands, is explained in the Home Department resolution No. F.20/26-Jails, dated the 27th February 1926. Following changes have since then taken place:-

(1) ~~the Chathan Saw mill has been closed,~~ (2) Mappillas have been repatriated to India, (2) swamps lying within the residential areas have been reclaimed and (3) the Land Tenure Regulation of 1926 has been brought into force.

There is, however, no change in our policy regarding the colonization of the Islands as a free settlement and the transfer of volunteer convicts to the Islands to supply labour. The Hon'ble Member may be referred to the resolution. A draft reply is submitted.

*Papers will be put
if reqd.*

J.P.
31.7.39

U.S.P.

T. A. M. M.

1-9-39

D. S. (7)

K

The policy of the Govt. of India as to the future of the Andamans is stated in the Home Department Resolution, dated the 27th Feby. 1926. The policy in brief is to abandon the islands as a penal settlement and to convert the colony into a self-supporting community. This policy was first enunciated in 1921, and for this purpose transfer of convicts from British India was almost completely stopped (Punjab continued to send prisoners for some time), and the gradual repatriation of the existing convicts to Indian jails was undertaken. As attempts to attract free population

4-
-2-

from outside to make good the shortage in the labour force failed (paragraph 6 of the Resolution), convicts were induced to remain in the islands by granting more liberal terms as to their release, etc. Further, to augment the supply of the labour force convicts from Indian jails are encouraged to come to the islands as volunteers, and after a period of parole are allowed to import their families and settle on land or adopt other professions. Although the volunteer convicts remain as the main source for colonisation, the Govt. of India are not opposed to free settlers from India (please see para. 12 of the Resolution).

2. Therefore, the reply to part (a) of the question is "Yes" and to (b) and (c) "Do not arise".

J. Taluwan
2. 8. 39.

Sey

Although the reply suggested by D.S. is strictly correct as an answer to the question, it would be preferable to refer the Hon. Member to the H.D. Resolution as in the draft put up.

A 2. I have placed below the latest report from the C.C. which shows (para. 2 of the letter) that the number of convicts has again risen slightly but that the intake is still not enough to maintain the convict population at its present level.

3. Part (b) of the question is badly phrased but presumably ^{the} M.L.A. is suggesting that if the Andamans ceased to be a penal settlement, free settlers would flock there. Experience so far has not supported that assumption.

W. S. S. (M.L.A.)

3.8.39.

H.M.

I prefer:-

"(a) to (c) - The settlement at Port Blair is not a penal settlement in the ordinary sense, since no convict is sent there from India except at his own wish. The Government have no intention of abandoning the present arrangement by which suitable volunteers from Indian jails are received there."

2. The press note of May 1936 is really more informative of present conditions than the Resolution of 1926. I should like to have both at hand when the question comes up.

Mr

4.8.39

~~Secretary~~

Seth Govind Das has withdrawn all *pieces of* Questions, Resolutions, etc. given by him.

Record.

As.
24.8.39.

P. A. M. *Chauhan*
24.8.39

US(P).

505
718

DS(P)

for
9/8

8-
9-8-39
Mark *delivered*
10.8.39

B(5)
24.8.39.

7.6/14/39 Jails.