

refer the decision under article 143. Therefore, I humbly ask whether the Government will consider the desirability of getting an authoritative pronouncement on that matter by the Supreme Court. That is what I want.

Pandit G. B. Pant: It is a matter of opinion whether it is an administrative or judicial matter. But, I think it cannot be denied that it comes within the jurisdiction of the High Court. We do not want to interfere with the jurisdiction of the High Court or with its discretion if it be a discretionary power vested in the High Court.

Shri Easwara Iyer: May I ask one more question?

Mr. Speaker: He is going into arguments.

Shri Easwara Iyer: It is a question; not an argument. May I know whether any representation has been received from the State of Kerala?

Pandit G. B. Pant: I do not know what is exactly meant by State of Kerala.

Shri Easwara Iyer: State Government.

Pandit G. B. Pant: I do not exactly remember if any official representation has been made or received from the Government of Kerala.

Supply of Coal to Bhadravati Works

*344. **Shri Shankaraiya:** Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bhadravati Iron and Steel Works have been asking for a long time for the supply of coal by all rail route from Calcutta area instead of through shipping and rail;

(b) if so, the action taken; and

(c) the estimated difference in cost to the works by the present system of supply?

The Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Sardar Swaran Singh): (a) Yes.

(b) The request could not be acceded to on account of lack of adequate rail transport facilities.

(c) It is estimated that incidence of cost of fuel could be reduced by the Steel Works by about Rs. 45/- per ton if the total requirements could be moved by the all rail route, but in effect it is physically impossible to move all the coal requirements by the all rail route.

Shri Shankaraiya: May I know whether it has come to the notice of the Government that much of the pilferage is passed on as wastage and more loss is due to pilferage also? What is the percentage of pilferage?

Sardar Swaran Singh: I am afraid I could not say what is pilferage and what is the percentage of loss on account of pilferage. If my hon. friend who comes from that area, presumably, knows something, I would be happy to become wiser on that score.

Shri Shankaraiya: In view of the improvement in the situation of wagons after the construction of wagons, will the Railway authorities make available an adequate number of wagons?

Sardar Swaran Singh: This point about the non-availability of wagons for movement of coal or for the matter of that, other goods to the south is well known to the House. It has been discussed here from time to time. I only want to add that this is the case not only with the Bhadravati Steel works, but affects the Railways themselves as also some of the other industries. They are moving a considerable part of their requirements of coal by sea.

Shri Dasappa: May I know whether the absence of railway communication between the nearest port and Bhadravati is accounting for a large part of this high price of coal?

Sardar Swaran Singh: Obviously, if there is inadequate rail capacity for movement whether from the port or by the direct all rail route, that would have an effect upon the supply position and supply and prices are linked.

Shri Dasappa: The question is not one of want of rail communication

from the coal head to the Bhadravati works. I am referring to the want of railway communication between the port by which it comes now—sea cum rail route—and the Steel works.

The Minister of Finance (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): May I answer this question, Sir? My hon. friend wants us now to admit that there are ports near about Bhadravati which have no rail communication to Bhadravati. It is a geographical fact. My hon. friend need not admit it.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: May I know if the coal that is supplied to Bhadravati Iron Works is metallurgical coal and if not, why could not they draw their supply from nearer coal fields at Singareni, etc.?

Sardar Swaran Singh: This is coal and hard coke. I think there is no nearer source of availability.

Shri Dasappa: May I ask.....

Mr. Speaker: What is the good of asking indirectly that a railway line or rail link ought to be established with the port? Next question.

Neo-Buddhists

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*345. { Shri B. C. Kamble:
Shri D. C. Sharma:
Shri Raghunath Singh:

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the question as to whether a member of Scheduled Caste on conversion to Buddhism, should be entitled to the constitutional safeguards admissible to him formerly as Scheduled Caste; and

(b) if so, the decision taken in the matter?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant): (a) Yes.

(b) A member of a Scheduled Caste on conversion to Buddhism will not be entitled under the Constitution to

the facilities provided exclusively for Scheduled Castes.

Shri B. C. Kamble: May I know what are the principles on which this decision of the Government is based?

Pandit G. B. Pant: The basis is this. Government's activities are controlled and guided by this House. This House, last year, passed a law to the effect that no one who professes any religion other than Hinduism or Sikkism will be regarded as a member of the Scheduled Castes.

Shri B. C. Kamble: In view of the definition which is given in article 366 sub-clause 24 of the Constitution of India where there is no mention whatever of any religion, can religion be made the basis for taking such decision or making such enactment?

Mr. Speaker: These are opinion on matters of law.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad: May I know whether it is a fact that the Central Government have informed all State Governments that the facilities as regards education and economic aid which were provided to the Scheduled Castes people should be continued even after their conversion to Buddhism?

Pandit G. B. Pant: Government have advised the State Governments to assist persons who have been or who may be converted to Buddhism wherever they deserve such assistance as other backward class members are treated on the same footing.

Raja Mahendra Pratap: May I know whether this question is religious, social or economic? What does the Government think about it?

Pandit G. B. Pant: All the three.

Raja Mahendra Pratap: I am interested in religion. Is a religious question.....

Shri D. C. Sharma: You don't call persons who have tabled questions.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members who have tabled questions will kindly rise in their seats one after the other.