

Sardar Swaran Singh: The arrangement, as the House is aware, is to make payments in rupees here which the Russians would normally utilise for purchasing Indian goods for the purpose of exports to the Soviet Union. But there is also a condition that to the extent the amount cannot be utilised for the purchase of Indian goods, the amount can be asked for in foreign currency.

Sardar Iqbal Singh: May I know the type of steel to be imported—whether it will be structural steel or other type steel?

Sardar Swaran Singh: There are a large number of categories: structural, non-structural, plates, etc.

Shri Tyagi: Sir, my question was not fully answered. I wanted to know the medium of payment. My hon. friend said that to the extent to which Russia can buy from India it will be in rupee, otherwise they can go in for sterling or any other foreign exchange. What is the proportion? To what extent have they undertaken to buy in India?

Sardar Swaran Singh: There is no such fixed proportion—subject, of course, to the final details being given by the Finance Ministry. But the general terms are that the payment is initially made in rupees. Those rupees can be utilised, or are normally utilised for purchase of Indian goods and being exported to the Soviet Union; but the condition, as I have already indicated, is that to the tune Indian goods cannot be purchased in foreign exchange—that is the undertaking—will be made available. But the point which the hon. Member is suggesting in his question is really agreed to.

Shri Joachim Alva: May I know what main considerations weighed with the Government in importing this steel; is it the vast Government building activities or is it the requirement of established licensed importers?

Sardar Swaran Singh: It is a fact, Sir, that our production of steel inside the country is less than our require-

ments. Our requirements are for public purposes as well as for building purposes, for industries and for a number of other things. Therefore, to make that shortfall we have been importing steel for a number of years.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There are still a number of hon. Members who want to ask supplementaries. We will go to the next question.

Accident at Cochin Naval Dockyard

*175. **Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two-civilian workers employed in the Naval Dockyard at Cochin died as a result of an accident on the 9th September, 1958;

(b) if so, whether any enquiry was held to ascertain the causes of the accident;

(c) if so, findings thereof; and

(d) the amount paid as compensation to their dependents?

The Deputy Minister of Defence (Shri Raghuramalah): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) A summary of the findings of the Board of Enquiry is placed on the Table of the Lok Sabha. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 75.]

(d) An amount of Rs. 3,000—has been sanctioned to the heirs of each of the two deceased labourers.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: May I know whether any arrangements have been made to avoid future accidents, because my information is that.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He has put his question. Why should he state what his information is? Let him hear the answer.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: My question is, what steps have been taken to avoid future accidents?

Shri Raghuramaiah: The Board of Enquiry has not been able to establish the reasons for this. However, they have suggested certain methods which are being considered.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: From the statement that is laid on the Table it is seen that normally the labourers working there are not allowed to go into the racks when unloading is done and, secondly, there was adequate supervision. Are we to understand that the three labourers who went into the rack when the steel plates were being loaded went inside when there was adequate supervision?

Shri Raghuramaiah: One man was a Mukadam, a supervisor of the labour force. Unfortunately, he is dead, and it is now very difficult to know the details. The Board of Enquiry also could not therefore come to any definite conclusion as to how this happened.

Shri Tangamani: In the statement it is said that no person or persons can be held responsible for the accident, and that all proper precaution was taken. If that is so, may I know why this particular accident has taken place?

Shri Raghuramaiah: The Board themselves could not answer that question.

Shri Hem Barua: From the statement we find that there are reasons to believe that the operation was done under good supervision and caution was exercised at every stage. May I know what are the data that constitute the basis of those "reasons to believe"?

Shri Raghuramaiah: The method of stacking steel plates was found to be quite regular, so far as the Board could see. The object was to remove one of the plates, cut it into proper size and put it back. So far as the Board could see, there was no lack of efficient supervision—that is their finding.

Shri Joachim Alva: These workers died at their posts of duty. Has Government got a liberal scheme for paying their dependants, especially

liberal provision for education of their children?

Shri Raghuramaiah: They are paid what they can get under the Workmen's Compensation Act, and I have already mentioned the figure in answer to the main question.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: It has been given in the statement that the rope that is used to tie up and lift the steel plates is of adequate strength. May I know whether the condition of the rope was examined by any responsible person before the lifting operations started there?

Shri Raghuramaiah: Off-hand I could not say exactly whether it was done or not; but the finding of the Board is that every precaution was taken, and I presume that it includes this also.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: May I know whether it is a fact that less men were employed on this job whereas more men are required for loading and unloading, and that is one of the reasons for this accident?

Shri Raghuramaiah: That is not my information.

Visit of Russian Team

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*176. { Pandit D. N. Tiwary:
Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadl:

Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Russian experts headed by Mr. E. S. Emlin who had visited Ranchi and other places in the country to investigate and advise about location of Central Workshop, Underground mines, Coal Washing Plants, etc., have finished their job and returned to Moscow;

(b) whether they have submitted their report; and

(c) if so, their main recommendations?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Shri Gajendra Prasad Shaha): (a) The Soviet experts have since returned