

Shri Muniswamy: May I know, Sir, whether Government are prepared to accept all the views expressed by the Technical Adviser, and whether they will be implemented?

Sardar Swaran Singh: That is exactly the matter which is under consideration, Sir.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: In view of the fact that neither the stationery supplied to us here nor the debates have yet improved either in quality or in the timing, does the hon. Minister propose to look into the whole matter and see if anything can be done?

Sardar Swaran Singh: I am prepared to look into it. I have already been looking into it, and that is the reason why it was referred to a Technical Adviser.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: How long will it take for the hon. Minister to consider this matter, since it has been pending for a considerably long time?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Two and a half years.

Sardar Swaran Singh: I do not know whether I can prescribe any time limit. I am doing my best, and steps have already been taken in this connection.

OPENING OF NEW COLLIERIES

*1350. **Dr. M. M. Das:** Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently the Coal Board has banned the opening of new collieries in the Jharia and Raniganj fields; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the main reason for taking the above decision is the transport difficulties for carrying the coal from the mines?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Production (Shri R. G. Dubey): (a) and (b). The power to grant or refuse permission for the opening of new collieries vests in the Coal Commissioner and not in the Coal

Board. In view of the high level of production in the Raniganj and Jharia fields and the disparity between it and the availability of transport, the Coal Commissioner considered that no further applications for the opening of new collieries should be entertained for the present. The intention was not to add to the existing number of producing units and thereby lead to serious over-production in the particular region. Where adequate justification exists, cases are considered on their own merits, subject, of course, to the policy of conservation in the case of coking coal.

Dr. M. M. Das: The hon. Minister has said in his reply that coal production has gone up. May I know whether our present output of coal has reached the target fixed by the Planning Commission?

Shri R. G. Dubey: Yes, Sir. It is nearing the target fixed by the Planning Commission.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know, Sir, whether it is a fact that the present policy of the Government regarding issue of new licences is that permission for new collieries will only be given if the transport facilities in that particular region where the mine is situated are available?

Shri R. G. Dubey: The position is not exactly so. The impression has been wrongly created that there is a total ban on the opening of new collieries, whereas there is a Committee, and the Coal Commissioner is guided by the advice of this Committee. Apart from the factor of transport, other factors are also considered, for example siding facilities.

Dr. M. M. Das: May I know, Sir, whether it is a fact that a few days ago one of the Members of the Planning Commission went to Calcutta to discuss with the West Bengal Government regarding providing transport facilities to the coal mines in this area of Jharia and Raniganj.

Shri R. G. Dubey: I am not aware.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Was not that question put yesterday or a few days ago?

Shri K. P. Tripathi: May I know if it is a fact that all the collieries are not running to full capacity, and therefore there is under-employment of labour there?

Shri R. G. Dubey: No, Sir. Actually, the figures belie this assertion because the production is going up, and it has reached a high level.

Dr. M. M. Das: One more question, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have allowed three questions.

Next question.

EXTRACTION OF PETROL FROM INDIAN COAL

***1351. Shri Sarangadhar Das:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to refer to reply to starred question No. 562 asked on 6th March, 1953 and state:

(a) whether Sri Bijayananda Patnaik had submitted in 1948, a scheme to extract petrol from Indian coal;

(b) whether the scheme was examined by the Synthetic Petrol Committee of the then Industry and Supply Ministry, and whether certain French experts were called in with a view to elicit further information; and

(c) what were the conclusions of the Committee as to the soundness and the commercial feasibility of the scheme?

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):
(a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) The Committee did not make any recommendation regarding the technical soundness or the economic feasibility of the scheme, but they stated that the Government would be justified in granting permission to the com-

pany to go ahead with their scheme at their own risk.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know, Sir, if the same scheme was later on submitted to the Government of Orissa, and if so, did the Government of Orissa seek any advice as to the feasibility and economic possibility of the scheme?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I am at a slight disadvantage in this matter in that much of what my hon. friend refers to is in the womb of the past, but according to the files that I have with me here I do see that there has been correspondence between the Government of Orissa and the Government of India in this matter and all that the Government of India have indicated to the Government of Orissa is the opinion given by the special committee, viz., that while they are not prepared to certify that the scheme is technically sound or otherwise feasible, they do not mind if private enterprise takes a hand in it.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know, Sir, if in spite of that advice the scheme was sponsored by the Government of Orissa and a sum of £ 50,000 was advanced to the party for preliminary investigations and preparation of the scheme?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I cannot give any definite information though the sum of £ 50,000 does occur in the correspondence. It was suggested that the sponsor of the scheme would require about £ 50,000 for investigation. I am not exactly sure in my mind whether the entire money was to be found by the Government of Orissa or only a portion of it.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: May I know, Sir, if the Government of India had wanted an accounting of the £50,000 as to how it was spent?

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I do not know how the Government of India can call upon anybody to account for any money which they have not given.