

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

*869. **Shri S. N. Das:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) the nature of work done and the contribution made by the Indian representative on the Committee on Information from the Non-self-governing Territories of which India continues to be a member; and

(b) whether India is represented on this Committee by a permanent Representative for the whole term of the Committee or the Representatives are sent on *ad hoc* basis?

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chanda): (a) India has been represented on the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories since its inception and here representatives on this body have been taking a leading part in its deliberations by making constructive suggestions for the welfare of the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories so that these territories may achieve self-government as soon as possible. It was at the instance of the Indian representative that the life of this Committee has been extended to 1955. The Indian representative has also been making efforts to evolve a procedure by which indigenous representatives from Non-Self-Governing territories can take part in the deliberations of this Committee.

(b) The selection of the representative is made on the eve of each annual session.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know, Sir, the names of representatives sent by India during the period India has been a member of this Body?

Shri Anil K. Chanda: In 1947, Dr. P. P. Pillai was our representative; in 1948, '49, and '50, Mr. B. Shiva Rao; in 1951 Shri Appa D. Pant; in 1952, Mr. B. Shiva Rao and this year it is Mrs. Lakshmi Menon.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have received notice of a Short Notice Question relating to accident in Majri colliery given by Shri F. C. Bose, Shri K. P. Tripathi and Shri Vittal Rao. Shri Tripathi and Shri Vittal Rao have given notice, each separately, of a question on the same subject, which I have not allowed. I will, however, allow these Members to put supplementary questions.

I call upon Mr. Bose to put the main question.

Short Notice Question and Answer

ACCIDENT IN MAJRI COLLIERY

Shri F. C. Bose: Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a Press Trust of India report published in 8th August, 1953 newspapers to the effect that 11 miners perished in an accident in Majri Colliery in Chanda District being entrapped underground by flood water caved in by earth;

(b) whether there is a qualified mining engineer incharge of the Mine;

(c) whether attempts were made to rescue the miners; and

(d) whether an enquiry will be held into the causes of the accident?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) Yes.

(d) An enquiry has already been held into the accident by the Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines assisted by the Inspector of Mines stationed in Madhya Pradesh.

Shri F. C. Bose: Was there a second outlet from the mine, as required by the Indian Mines Act?

Shri Abid Ali: Yes, Sir; there was.

Shri F. C. Bose: Were the underground plan, the attendance register and other records connected with the

case immediately seized by Government for scrutiny and investigation?

Shri Abid Ali: Sir, the accident took place on the 5th and the inspector reached there on the 6th. He has held an enquiry and must have taken all the necessary action.

Shri Vittal Rao: May I know, Sir, if it is a fact that the rescue work was greatly hampered because there were no torches and safety lamps in this mine?

Shri Abid Ali: Sir, no coal mine is expected to keep a large stock of torches as use of torches alone in underground workings is not always safe, as it gives no indication of fone atmosphere, whereas flame lamps give warning of the presence of carbon dioxide in a most positive manner. I may add that this is an open lamp mine and sufficient number of open lamps were provided in it.

Shri Vittal Rao: Will the hon. Deputy Minister please place on the Table of the House a copy of the findings of the enquiry conducted by the Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines?

Shri Abid Ali: I will consider this matter.

Shri S. N. Das: What is the finding of this enquiry?

Shri Abid Ali: The finding says that because of inrush of a huge quantity of water through a cavity near the mine from Wardha river which was flooded, there was a seven foot deep sheet of water all round, the water went inside the colliery where 49 persons were working. Out of this 49, 38 could be saved; 11 could not come out. The manager, the supervisory staff and others did all that they could to save the workers, but 11 persons could not be brought out. The mine got full of water within fifteen minutes after the manager came out. The manager himself took the risk of going in with other workers. The district authorities have taken necessary steps to give

alternative employment to workers who have been rendered jobless because of the mine being flooded.

Shrimati A. Kale: May I know whether Government is insisting on adequate compensation being given to the relations of the deceased workers?

Shri Abid Ali: Yes, Sir. Compensation will be paid according to the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Shri Joachim Alva: Are the care, attention and protective measures underground in the mines up to recognised international standards?

Shri Abid Ali: According to the Indian Mines Act, all that was necessary was done: that is the report of the inspector.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: Is it a fact that there was no alarm arrangement from outside? Are Government satisfied that the alarm and other caution arrangements were there?

Shri Abid Ali: No question of alarm bell arises. The manager was on the spot. When the water was going towards the pit they rushed. Whether the alarm bells were there or not I do not know, but there was no necessity of it because they were alert. The 42 feet seam was affected; because of the volume of water the cavity also must have widened.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: May I request the hon. Minister to look into the report and say if the manager was on the spot?

Shri Abid Ali: Very definitely, he was on the spot.

Shri K. K. Basu: Is it a fact that the alarm bell was not fitted up to the level where the workers were working when the accident occurred and no communication could be sent to them because of this breach?

Shri Abid Ali: The pit is about 2,500 feet deep and it is presumed that the workers were in the deepest area. With regard to this parti-

cular question as to whether the alarm bell was fitted up to their place, I will have to check up.

Shri Sarangadhar Das: The hon. Deputy Minister said that the manager and others were alert and there was no necessity for the alarm. May I know if it is provided in the Indian Mines Act that there must be alarm bell arrangements. Irrespective of the fact that the manager was alert and was there, may we know whether the alarm bell arrangement was there or not?

Shri Abid Ali: I have already replied to this question.

Shri Mohiuddin: What was the level of the water round or near the colliery before the workers entered the pit for work and did not the management see the danger coming from the level of the water round about it before they allowed the workers to go into the colliery?

Shri Abid Ali: I have already stated that a seven feet deep sheet of water was surrounding the colliery and that the manager did not expect any danger. The manager is there for the past twenty-one years. He is a qualified and experienced officer.

Shri P. C. Bose: May I know what was the type of the mine—pit, incline or open-cut mine?

Shri Abid Ali: Incline, Sir.

Shri Syed Ahmed: I want to know the name of the owners of the colliery and the name of the manager?

Shri Abid Ali: I have said that the manager of the colliery is the holder of a first class Coal Mines Managers' certificate of competency and he has had 21 years' experience.

Shri Syed Ahmed: We would like to know the name of the owners and manager.

Shri Abid Ali: If hon. Members are very particular about having the names of the manager and the owner of the colliery, they might give notice of a separate question.

Shri Joachim Alva: In view of this tragedy, do Government propose to send out a team of inspectors to rectify these gaps, or deficiencies in the mines?

Shri Abid Ali: The Inspector of Mines has visited the area and has made an enquiry. The Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines who is stationed at Dhanbad also went to the place and has gone into the matter very thoroughly. He was there till the 12th. of August and has submitted his report which we have considered. We find that at present no further action in the matter is necessary excepting, finding alternative employment for the workers which is being done, and providing for compensation to the relations of the deceased.

Shri Punnoose: Ten years ago the earth had caved in slightly on the same spot. Is it a fact that in spite of several representations by the workers—once through Shri Vittal Rao, Member of Parliament,—primitive conditions are still existing in that colliery?

Shri Abid Ali: Sir, accidents did take place in this mine in 1933 and 1936, if I remember correctly, and whatever representations have been received were given due consideration.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: The hon. Minister was saying that the manager of that particular Colliery is holding a very good certificate and is having 21 years experience of work. May I know, Sir, why the hon. Minister is not in a position to disclose the name of that manager.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He says he does not know.

Shri Abid Ali: I am not hesitating to answer this question but I do not know the name.

Shri Mohiuddin: May I know, Sir, what was the depth of water in the pit at the time when the workers went

into it for work and what was the rate of the leakage by which the water was accumulating in the pit when the work began?

Shri Abid Ali: I will have to check up with regard to that question. I do not know the position when the workers went in but the rate of rise was at about 1 in 6.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SURCHARGE ON COAL

***849. Shri M. L. Dwivedi:** Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons which led to the imposition of surcharge on coal when it was first levied;

(b) whether the reasons then existing are in existence even now;

(c) if not, whether the question of abolition of surcharge on coal has been considered by Government; and

(d) what is the total loss likely to be caused as a result of the abolition of surcharge on coal and how, if at all, it is likely to be adjusted?

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) The system of commercial charge on coal exports was introduced for revenue purposes at a time when Indian coal was much in demand in foreign markets.

(b) No.

(c) Yes, the commercial charge has since been abolished.

(d) It is difficult to say that there has been any loss. Even after the removal of the charge, the competitive position of Indian Coal has been so affected by present day conditions, that there has been a drop in exports. The revenue from this source, however, was about Rs. 1.6 crores in 1952-53.

FILMS

***870. Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** Will the Minister of Planning be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that films suitable for rural audience are ex-

pected to be organised on a large scale; and

(b) whether projectors will be installed in all the Community Project Areas under this scheme?

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Hathi): (a) A proposal is under consideration.

(b) Yes.

SALT

***871. Shri Sanganna:** Will the Minister of Production be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that salt imported into Orissa from the neighbouring States makes salt manufactured in the Orissa State unmarketable;

(b) if so, the reasons for importing salt from neighbouring States; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to safeguard the interests of salt manufacturers in Orissa?

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): (a) All the salt manufactured in Orissa is actually marketed. It is not therefore correct to say that Orissa salt is unmarketable. Salt imported from other States, however, is much easier to sell.

(b) and (c). Orissa produces only about 50 per cent. of her requirements of salt and the rest has to be imported. The quota for import into Orissa is fixed after taking into account the production and stock in the State and after consulting the State Government. The imports are regulated under the "Zonal Scheme" for the movement of salt and now imports from Madras only are allowed. The quota for import is also being gradually decreased.

"SOLVENT EXTRACTION" METHOD

***872. Shri Jhulan Sinha:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in the scheme of "Solvent Extraction" method and installation of Solvent Extraction