

**DISASTER IN MODEL DHARMABAD
COLLIERY**

*126. **Shri Tushar Chatterjea:** Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether any enquiry has been made into the disaster that occurred in the Model Dharmabad Colliery near Jharia on the 2nd February, 1955;

(b) if so, the findings of the enquiry; and

(c) whether any compensation has been paid to the families affected by the disaster?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) and (b). The accident is at present being enquired into by a senior Officer of the Mines Department and his findings have not yet been received.

(c) No information is available but compensation will be paid as admissible under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: In reply to part (f) of question No. 115, the hon. Minister said that it was inspected in May, 1954. May I know whether that is the usual procedure that it should be inspected once in about six months ago and when the Dharmabad coal field was inspected by the Mines Inspector last?

Shri Abid Ali: About the latter part of the question, I have no information here. With regard to the former part, generally once a year the mines are inspected.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know whether the Dharmabad coal field was inspected within a year or was it inspected in 1953? What is the truth?

Shri Abid Ali: That was, unfortunately, inspected in 1953, not in 1954.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: My point is this. Is it the regular procedure according to the Coal Mines Stowing Act and the Coal Mines, Rescue Rules that these collieries

should be inspected once in about 18 months or two years and not regularly?

Shri Abid Ali: Generally, the larger mines are inspected more frequently. This is a small mine employing only 25 persons. Therefore, the inspection there is not so frequent.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know whether the owner of the mine, or as a matter of fact, the Inspector of Mines has recommended the giving of any compensation to the dependents of these workers in Dharmabad as has been done in the Am-labad case? I want to know whether that recommendation has been made or not.

Shri Abid Ali: Compensation, of course, will be paid according to rules.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Whether that recommendation has been made or not, I want to know.

Shri Abid Ali: It seems that the owner is absconding.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: May I know whether permission was obtained from the Chief Inspector of mines before constructing these quarters in view of the fact that these quarters were constructed over coal bearing surface?

Shri Abid Ali: I require notice for that.

Shri T. S. A. Chettiar: May I know what is the law on the point? When the owner is absconding, how is compensation to be paid to the victims. Does the Government pay compensation and collect it from the estate of the owner?

Shri Abid Ali: Generally, we give some help to the family of the deceased through the Coal Mine Welfare Fund. With regard to compensation, of course, it is a liability on the owner and an attempt will be made by the Inspectorate to collect it from the assets.

Shri P. C. Bose: The hon. Minister said that the accident was due to reduction in the size of underground pillars. May I know when it was found that the pillars had been reduced to a size which would result in a collapse? Was it before the actual collapse of the houses?

Shri Abid Ali: This information will be available after the fuller enquiry report is with us.

Shri Bansal: May I know if the Government have any statistics at their disposal showing the incidence of these accidents in the larger and smaller mines?

Shri Abid Ali: Yes; we have information.

Shri S. N. Das: Arising out of the answers to Q. 137, may I know whether it is a fact that the management of this colliery changed and some retrenchment was made with regard to the security measures to be taken in the mine?

Shri Abid Ali: About retrenchment we have no information.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: In reply to part (c) and (d) of Question No. 53, the hon. Minister said that there was a time-lag of practically three hours in rescue operations. May I know, Sir, when the dead bodies of Amlabad coalfields were rescued? Were they rescued after a time-lag of about 12 hours on the 6th February, and not on the 5th when the accident occurred?

Shri Abid Ali: The rescue operations were, as I stated, started within three hours of the accident, and the bodies were removed when it was possible for the rescue party to go inside and remove the bodies. These were not removed all of a sudden. The process went on for some time.

Shri Kelappan: May I know, Sir, if the Chief Inspector of Mines has recommended compensation in the case of the Dharmabad Colliery?

Shri Abid Ali: There is no recommendation from the Chief Inspector

of mines. This matter is attended to by the Coal Mines Welfare Commission.

Shri Chattopadhyaya: What were the findings of the Chief Inspector of Mines in the Amlabad accident?

Shri Abid Ali: I have already stated the result of the preliminary enquiry. We are awaiting the fuller enquiry report.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know, Sir, whether the number of miners who were found on duty on 5th of this month has actually been ascertained because, so far as the reports go, it has been stated that the mine owner has given a different figure and the Inspector of Mines is having different records in regard to the number of persons who were working there.

Shri Abid Ali: The figure that I have mentioned is on the basis of the check-up by the Inspector and believed to be true.

Shri Bansal: The hon. Minister replied to my question that he has got statistics of the incidents. Is it a fact that the incidence is greater in smaller mines than in the larger mines, and if it is so, why the inspection is so relax in smaller mines.

Shri Abid Ali: I said that I have got the figures. So far as the break-up is concerned, it is not available here. If the hon. Member gives notice, I will certainly supply.

सेठ अचल सिंह : क्या मंत्री महोदय बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि जो मजदूर कोलियरीज में काम करते हैं उन की लाइफ एन्शर कराने की कोई व्यवस्था की जा रही है ?

श्री आनंद जली : अभी तां नहीं की जा रही है ।

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: May I know, Sir, whether these inspections are not being done due to the fact that the inspectorate is completely understaffed?

Shri Abid Ali: We are strengthening the staff and also revising the rules so that the inspection may be more regular, oftener and also effective.

Shri P. C. Bose: With regard to the Amlabad colliery accident, I want to know whether the new company which purchased this colliery changed the supervisory staff who were in charge of the gassy section of the mine or whether they changed the mode of operation underground?

Shri Abid Ali: I require notice.

Shri K. K. Basu: May we know whether as the result of the preliminary enquiry in this Amlabad colliery *prima facie* case has been made for negligence against the supervisory officer and the manager, and if so, whether any steps have been taken against them?

Shri Abid Ali: Not yet. We could not come to that conclusion. The decision of the Government will be taken after the receipt of the fuller enquiry report.

Shri Namblar: When are the rules going to be finalised under the Mines Act?

Shri Abid Ali: Very soon.

Shri Namblar: What will be the time-lag? What does very soon mean?

STEAMER SERVICE

*54. **Shri S. N. Das:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Bihar have requested the Central Government to introduce Power Ferry Service between Mahendrughat and Palezaghat for quicker service;

(b) if so, whether the proposal has been examined by Government; and

(c) the estimated expenditure to be incurred thereon?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a) The Bihar Government have made a proposal for the installation and operation of a power ferry by the Central Government on behalf of the State Government, between Patna and

Banwarchak, in addition to the already existing railway ferry services between Mahendrughat, Dighaghat and Palezaghat.

(b) and (c). The proposal is still under examination.

Shri S. N. Das: When was this proposal made by the Bihar Government?

Shri Alagesan: I do not have the date of the proposal. It is, I think, a year or two ago. I do not know exactly just now.

Shri S. N. Das: What time will Government take in coming to a decision in this matter?

Shri Alagesan: It is not as if there is no ferry service now. The Railway itself is operating a ferry service and carrying about 5,000 passengers. It is only the bank to bank passengers who are not carried, and their number also appears to be small, and there should be no difficulty if the railway ferry service carries these passengers too. I am just now not able to indicate the time by which we will be able to reach a decision on this matter.

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: May I know whether the Government have examined the possibility of constructing a pontoon bridge instead of a ferry service between Mahendrughat and Palezaghat?

Shri Alagesan: No.

THEFT OF TELEPHONE WIRE

*55. **Sardar Hukam Singh:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of cutting of telephone wires registered with the police during 1954; and

(b) the length of wire and the value thereof which has been stolen and not recovered so far?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) 3,290.