

14.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till fifteen of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER: Without understanding the procedure, you are creating the difficulties. Please sit down now...

(Interruptions)

15.04 hrs.

The Lok Sabha reassembled after lunch at four minutes past Fifteen of the Clock.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, you do not allow the introduction of the Bill...

(Interruptions)

(MR. SPEAKER in the Chair)

PUBLIC SECTOR IRON AND STEEL COMPANIES RESTRUCTURING AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Referring the Bill before introduction to the Standing Committee

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Minister, what have you got to say?

MR. SPEAKER: Why don't you understand that there is a procedure to be followed. Yes, Mr. Minister, please.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the very outset I convey my total respect for the views expressed by the hon. Members of this august House. Today we have come with Bill about a sick industry. Privatisation is a decision which is always a very painful decision, whether it is for the Government or for the employees or specially for the public sector.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): Is that being introduced, Sir?...
(Interruptions). Don't introduce...
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let us hear the Minister.

AN HON. MEMBER: He will not be allowed to introduce it. Sir...
(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Sir, we will not allow the introduction of the Bill... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You, as a Member, should know that there is a procedure to be followed for introduction of a Bill. First of all, he has to seek leave and if one of you objects, I have to put it to the vote. It cannot be done like that...

As regards the point that whether the Bill should be introduced or not and what will be the fate of the Bill, this will be decided by this august House or by yourself and I will abide by the decision that is given by you. I am totally at your disposal and the disposal of the House. The instruction from my leader, the Prime Minister was that we should not go into any confrontation on this issue and anything that is being done should be done with a view that the basic thing modernisation of the plant is achieved. But in view of the fact that some Members have placed certain things, I am not going to go on any individual issues. I will be too pleased to put straight some of the record so that we do not carry a wrong message to the nation by this debate today.

(Interruptions)

[Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev]

One of the things that has been raised by Shri Indrajit Guptaji is that the Financial Memorandum has not been given along with the statement. I would like to say that this particular Bill is just about the shares and the Bill itself does not envisage any expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapur): That is what he has to say in the Financial Memorandum.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Please let me finish. I have not interrupted you.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: You must say this does not involve any expenditure. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: It is upto the Speaker to decide. At the moment let me submit that the Bill does not propose handing over of the Company to any particular party. It is only an enabling provision.

Kumari Mamata Banerjee has said that it should not go to B.I.F.R. Going to B.I.F.R. is decided by an Act which is prevailing in the country. Neither I nor anybody can save it. The Members who are involved in trade-unionism know better as to what B.I.F.R. is and what the amendments coming are. I can say this much that it is not a pact from me. I am equally interested to see that IISCO is modernised and modernised in a manner which as many Members have very correctly raised with some points. We have decided that whoever takes it, not a single employee can be retrenched. We have decided that during the time of moderni-

sation expansion to 1.5 million tonne, no property can be sold. We have also decided that whatever the perquisites or salaries that are being received by the employees, the private party which will not be allowed to pay lesser than that. They have to continue to pay it.

About the discussions with the Unions, as I mentioned earlier, I called them and I discussed with them. On that day they came only with one memorandum signed by all the unions and told that they would not accept anything other than modernisation by the SAIL. I was not given a chance to explain. They said that in the past I had already explained to them on these points and they did not want to be explained any more and if I were ready to discuss the modernisation methodology to be adopted by SAIL, then only they would discuss with me and otherwise they would not discuss it. So, there was no point. They feel that I have closed my mind and I feel that they are also with a closed mind. But their interest is the workers and my interest is also the workers and modernisation. We have many things in common except for the fact that we are doing it through private participation and they want it under SAIL.

On the question about the modernisation, whether the technology is good, whether the party is good, according to the circular and guidelines that we have issued, we have been given to understand that if it goes to the Standing Committee of Parliament, it has got every right to discuss. It can call any official or any trade union or any other leader for discussion.

They can debilitate upon it and they can send their recommendation. We have no objection to what Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has said. A question has been

raised as to what is the position of the State Government and of the Central Government is. I do not want to go into this because this is not a subject matter to be discussed today. All that I can say is that I have kept the State Government and its Chief Minister informed about it. I have met the West Bengal Assembly All-Party delegation. I have met the Members of Parliament and we are trying to come to a situation which it does not lead to this confrontation. What has happened today in the House is they have ventilated their strong feelings.

I, on behalf of the Government, can tell you this much that we will be absolutely guided by whatever decision is taken by the august House, with your concurrence and we have nothing to say that we must do it right now. But the consequences which will follow, are up to the Parliament to decide and to take the follow-up action.

As a Minister, I want modernisation. I want time. If it is referred to the Standing Committee, kindly make it time-bound so that we can introduce or discuss this in the next session which will be the Budget Session.

I have heard some passing remarks by some Members, specially by Shri Tarit Baran Topdar who is a good friend of mine. I would like to say that my interest in workers is as good as theirs.

Lastly, I would like to draw the attention of Shri Somnath Chatterjee to a Bengali paper to know what the trade union leaders are thinking and to see their statement. Kindly go through it, the Ananda Bazar Patrika. You will know then what is happening. As I said, we are not making it a prestige issue. Our main concern is about the plant. It was taken over

by Government in 1972. It is now 1993. It is going to complete 22 years. Various Governments have come in the Centre, Congress and non-Congress Governments. But due to some reason or the other, it is not being implemented. In the past, except this time, the question of privatisation was not there. The nation might put a question to the trade union leaders as to why it was not done for 21 years. Let us have patience. Our interest is to see that the plant is modernised. I fully appreciate the feelings of the West Bengal Members. We have also got similar sympathy for the workers and I hope that we will not be unsuccessful to modernise it. Let it be decided by the House. A Standing Committee is represented by all Parties and I am sure they will have a useful dialogue and guidance. (*Interruptions*). I beg to take leave of the House to introduce the Bill. (*Interruptions*). I have to beg since it is in the Agenda. (*Interruptions*).

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): May I suggest that this Bill may be referred to the Standing Committee without being introduced in the House? Kindly agree to that procedure.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it can be done both ways. It can be referred before its introduction as well as after its introduction.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: I think that they are too much concerned about it. Therefore it will be better if it is referred before its introduction.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): Sir, we must congratulate you and the hon. Minister also for that.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to congratulate the hon. Members for making the points very effectively and strongly; the hon. Minister and also the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs for taking into consideration the feelings of the Members and trying to create a congenial atmosphere; the Leaders of all the parties; the Leader of Opposition; Shri Somnath Chatterjee and Shri Indrajit Gupta also. Well, this matter was going to be referred to the Standing Committee after its introduction. But now that the entire House thinks that it should be referred—even without being introduced—to the Standing Committee, we will do that. We will refer it to the Standing Committee.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Sir, I must express our sincere thanks to you for accommodating our views.

MR. SPEAKER: It will be referred to the Standing Committee. I think that the report should be given within one month's time after it is introduced. It will create an atmosphere in which if it is necessary, even the Minister, the Government, the Leaders of the parties, the trade union leaders can have a dialogue among themselves and try to find out a solution to this.

Next we take up item No. 28.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): I have to say something here. My point is that the Item No. 30 in the Revised List of Business could be postponed and the Item Nos. 31 and 32, that is, Supplementary Demands, could be discussed and disposed of by the House before this item No. 30 which was taken up earlier. This Statutory Resolution also should be taken up. Further, the Bill—which was moved by Dr. Abrar Ahmed—to amend the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, could be taken up after the Ordinance has been enacted and the Supplementary Demands have been disposed of.

MR. SPEAKER: I think all the Members are cooperating on this point. It will be done as per the suggestions made by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Yes. Let the financial business be taken up first.

15.16 hrs.

BANKING COMPANIES (ACQUISITION AND TRANSFER OF UNDERTAKINGS) AMENDMENT BILL

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the