

MR. SPEAKER : Papers laid.

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA : I have given in writing that I want to raise an important matter—about finding Rs. 80 lakhs in a locker...

MR. SPEAKER : Without my permission you cannot raise it.

12.41 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REVIEW AND ANNUAL REPORT OF MADRAS FERTILIZERS LTD., MADRAS

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI P. C. SETHI) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

- (1) Review by the Government on the working of the Madras Fertilizers Limited, Madras, for the year 1969-70.
- (2) Annual Report of the Madras Fertilizers Limited, Madras, for the year 1969-70 along with the Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—684/71].

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

SECOND REPORT

SHRI K. N. TIWARY (Bettiah) : I present the second Report of the Estimates Committee on the Ministry of Shipping and Transport—Tuticorin and Mangalore Ports.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE FIFTH REPORT

DR. LAXMINARAIN PANDEY (Mandsaur) : I present the Fifth Report of

the Public Accounts Committee regarding Audit Report (Civil) 1970 relating to the Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development.

12.42 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. COLLAPSE OF A PORTION OF STEEL MELTING SHOP OF ROURKELA STEEL PLANT

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MOHAN KUMAR-MANGALAM) : Sir, I regret to have to report to the House a major mishap that occurred in the Rourkela Steel Plant on the night of the 11th/12th July, 1971. Following heavy and incessant rain for about two hours, a part of the roof structure of the Steel Melting Shop over a length of about 150 metres collapsed round that midnight. One worker lost his life and 13 workers received injuries.

I have personally been to the Steel Plant on the 17th instant to see the damage and discuss the problems direct with the Management.

The structure that has collapsed is part of the roof covering the pit side, the charging bay and the mixer bay of the L. D. Converters. Out of a total roof area of 38,000 sq. metres in the Steel Melting Shop the damage covers an area of about 10,000 sq. metres. The roof sheeting as well as the roof trusses and the roof legs in this area have collapsed but the main columns do not appear to have been damaged. Nine of the cranes in this area, the lime conveyor belt system, the oxygen line and the water and the steam lines have suffered damage and some of this is quite serious. There appears to be no damage to the converters themselves or to any other equipment in the Steel Melting Shop. The area covering the 4 open hearth furnaces is intact.

Production in the Steel Melting Shop came to an immediate halt as a result of the accident. In view of the consequent lack of off-take of hot metal, two blast furnaces were banked and only the other two continued to operate. Coke oven pushing also came down. Subsequently, coke oven

pushing has been stepped up with arrangements to move the coke produced in excess of the Plant's present requirements to other steel plants which need them.

The Plant Management took immediate steps to put the open hearth furnaces back into operation and one of them has been commissioned and is working from the 17th. All the open hearth furnaces are expected to be commissioned by the end of this week. This should give about 500 tonnes of steel a day for rolling purposes. The Plant has a stock of cold steel ingots which can supply another 500 tonnes a day for rolling.

Arrangements for immediate repair of the equipment that has been damaged have already been taken in hand. The CEDB has commenced the preparation of drawings and designs for the rebuilding work. Orders have been issued to provide steel for this work on overriding priority. The requirement of tools and tackle has been calculated and action is being taken to obtain these on an immediate basis. Arrangement have been made, on a priority basis for fabrication in the Plant of as much as possible of structural steel required for reconstruction and for supply of the remaining quantities from outside. It is expected that, out of about 1500 tonnes of structural steel required for reconstruction, about 570 tonnes can be fabricated in the Plant itself and the rest will have to be secured from outside.

A programme for the rebuilding of the roof structure and for the recommissioning of the Steel Melting Shop has been drawn up by the Plant. Production from the L.D. Convertors is not expected to start before the beginning of September when one Convertor is likely to be commissioned. According to present assessment, it is expected that the rebuilding of the roof structures and the recommissioning of all the L. D. Convertors will take about 6 months. Every effort will be made to reduce this period as much as possible. Meanwhile it is proposed to advance capital repair programmes in those sections of the Plant where work is expected to slow down during the reconstruction.

There will be a shortfall in the total production of steel as a result of this unfortunate accident. An assessment is being made of the likely shortfall and the

steps that have to be taken to make up the deficiencies for the essential users.

The Plant Management has already set up a fact finding Committee to collect all available evidence relating to the mishap. There is no obvious reason which can explain this accident. It is therefore considered important to have a detailed and independent enquiry. Government have accordingly decided to set up a high-level Technical Committee to go into the reasons for the accident. The Committee is also being requested to recommend methods which may be adopted to repair the damage in the minimum time. The Committee will consist of the following persons :—

- (1) Lt. General, R. A.—CHAIRMAN
Loomba, Engineer-in-chief, Army-Headquarters.
- (2) Shri Dinesh Mohan,—MEMBER
Director, Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee.
- (3) Shri H. P. Bodhan—MEMBER
wala, Technical Adviser, Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd., Jamshedpur.

It is extremely unfortunate that, at a time when production of Rourkela was showing signs of picking up, an accident of this type, which is unprecedented in the history of the steel industry in India, should have taken place. I would only like to assure the House that no effort will be spared to repair the damage as quickly as possible, to reduce the effect on steel supplies to the minimum, and to bring back the Plant to full production on the highest priority.

Fortunately, considering the magnitude of the accident, the loss of human life has been small. I am sure the House will join me in expressing heart felt sympathy for the members of the bereaved family of the one worker who lost his life.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS *ose*—

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : This is not the first time that such an accident has occurred.

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR (Quilon) : Allot a time for discussion.

SHRI P. K. DEO : This is a bungling of the management. (Interruption). No precaution is taken.

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. No question or remark can be made without my permission. Hon. Members should not defy the Chair.

SHRI D. K. PANDA (Bhanjanagar) : Sir, I have written to you about this and asked for time for discussion (Interruption).

MR. SPEAKER : Order, please. No question of giving names. According to the rules, no question can be asked.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra) : The statement should be circulated.

MR. SPEAKER : It will be circulated. It is laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI D. K. PANDA : I have made a request. (Interruption).

MR. SPEAKER : It is not permissible under the rules.

SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMANGLAM : Sir, may I be permitted to say this? As many copies as hon. Members want will be made of this statement, and circulated. I have myself come forward to make this statement, as soon as I know the accident on return from abroad. The hon. Speaker knows this. Obviously, on such a serious matter, nobody wishes to hide anything.

SOME HON. MEMBERS *rose*— (Interruption).

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order.

12.49 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. PUNCTUALITY OF TRAINS

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI HANUMANTHAIYA) : Sir, I am making a statement on the punctuality of trains.

Hon'ble Members will recall that on 1-6-71, I had stated in the House that steps would be taken to bring about an improvement in the punctuality of passenger trains.

I had to make an exception in the case of trains running in the Eastern Region for well-known reasons.

The campaign was launched with a circular D.O. letter No. 71-TTIV/24/4 dated 2nd June, 1971. Copies of this D.O. letter were sent to all the Members of Parliament.

The main point of the circular was to make it clear that promotional prospects of officers at all levels will be adjudged by their performance in running trains on time. Every train is being watched to fix responsibility on the concerned officials.

The performance of 19 important Express trains arriving Delhi is being specially watched. During the 10-day period immediately preceding the drive hardly 8 trains arrived on time and 11 trains were running abnormally late. The position now is that every day 15 out of the 19 trains arrive Delhi on time. The other 4 trains generally are No. 85 Assam Mail, No. 7 Toofan Express, No. 13 Upper India Express, and No. 11 Howrah-Delhi Express, all of which run through the Eastern Railway.

Out of the important long distance 102 trains on the system, 55 used to reach on time previously. The figure has now come up to 70. The balance 32 trains which run late are mostly those which run through the troubled Eastern region.

The percentage punctuality of Broad Gauge Mail and Express trains on the Central Railway was 61.5% during the 10-day period ending 10-6-71. It has now increased to 93.9%. On the Northern Railway, the percentage went up from 82.4 to 94.2%. The performance of the North-east Frontier Railway went up from 30% to 95%. The Southern Railway improved from 82.1% to 96.3%. The South Central showed an improvement from 77% to 95%. The Western Railway showed an improvement from 50.1% to 95.1%. The Eastern Railway improved from 24.8% to 47.5% and the South Eastern Railway from 61.9% to 69.5%. In respect of Metre Gauge, Northern Railway showed an improvement from 85% to 92.7%, Northeast Frontier Railway from 75% to 88.8%, Southern