

LOK SABHA DEBATES

1

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, April 21, 1982/Vaisakha
1, 1904 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आज प्रोफेसर इकट्ठे
हो गए ।

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
Why do you forget ? I was in fact
also a Professor.

MR. SPEAKER : Is it ?

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
I may not look like a Professor,
but once upon a time, I was.

MR. SPEAKER : Once upon a
time ?

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
Under the Communist conspiracy I
was removed from the Professorship.

AN. HON. MEMBER : So, he
is the culprit.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTER-
JEE : He is shown his own place.

MR. SPEAKER : Look here,
Professor comes first. Prof. Satya-
sadhan Chakraborty.

PROF. SATYASADHAN
CHAKRABORTY : Question No.
797.

MR. SPEAKER : Minister is
more prompt than you.

2

PROF. SATYASADHAN
CHAKRABORTY : These days old
people are very prompt.

AN HON. MEMBER : He is not
at all old. He is very young.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
Because you dye your hair.....

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

BBJ Construction Company,
Calcutta

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*797. SHRI SATYASADHAN.
CHAKRABORTY :
SHRI AJIT BAG :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY
be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have
received any communication from
the West Bengal Government regard-
ing the Braithwaite Burn and Jessop
Construction Company Ltd.,
Calcutta;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction to the
suggestions made in the said
communication ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY
AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI
NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) : (a)
Yes, Sir.

(b) The main points are :

(i) Loss of employment due
to closure of the Company
needs to be avoided.

(ii) Possibility of rehabilitation
of the Company should
be considered and until
this is done payment to the
workers should continue
in some manner on
humanitarian grounds.

(c) Since BBJ Construction Company in its present form has been found to be non-viable, its reorganisation is necessary. A final decision will be taken after further discussions with the Public Sector Undertaking concerned and the West Bengal Government.

PROF. SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister in his reply has stated that they are thinking of the closure of the Company and also they are thinking about the viability and also he has said that the payment to the workers should continue in some manner on humanitarian grounds. That is what he says. He has received a communication from the Government of West Bengal. But I would like to refer to the two letters written by the Chief Minister of West Bengal, one dated October 22, 1981 and the other of December 23, 1981; where he has emphasised that this BBJ Construction Company, and particularly Braithwaite Burn and Jessop, they are experts in cast iron foundry, fabrication engineering works. These are viable and he has stated that there should be no change in the status quo at least until the construction of the second Hooghly bridge was completed and this reorganisation is going to affect adversely the construction of the second Hooghly bridge. Also, the West Bengal Finance in his letter dated 10th September 1981 has given certain suggestions, as to how these Companies can be modernised and also how they can even be expanded.

Now, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, in view of the two letters of the Chief Minister and also in view of the letter from the Finance Minister of West Bengal, whether the Government is considering to revitalise and modernise these and not to think on the lines of reorganisation and closure of Victoria Workshops which they are contemplating and considering also this possibility

they are going to use the latent capacity of this organisation.

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI : The Hon. Member has referred to two communications, two letters written by the Chief Minister of West Bengal and also the Finance Minister. Both these letters of the Chief Minister have been appropriately answered. I myself wrote a letter on the 19th September in which I had also referred to the construction of the second Hooghly bridge and assured the West Bengal Government that the Department of Heavy Industry and the three constituent public undertakings of BBJ shall take all necessary steps to ensure that the work on the second Hooghly bridge project is not affected in any way by the proposed reorganisation. The basic problem with this BBJ is that it has been running into constant losses for the last 15 years or so. The cumulative loss is of the order of Rs. 4.53 crores. The current liabilities and provisions as on 31 March, 1981 are of the order of Rs. 7.88 crores. Most of its machinery is second hand, which was purchased perhaps in 1936. And most of it is obsolescent. They are not organisationally ready to take orders of modern structurals. It is not possible to reinvigorate it in the short term. Therefore, we have been, technically, advised that it is not possible to re-suscitate this BBJ concern, particularly the Victoria Works, written down value of whose capital, machinery and structures is about Rs. 3.5 lakh. The West Bengal Government itself rather the Chief Minister himself in his letter had mentioned this uneconomic condition of the Victoria Works. The Chief Minister's letter dated December 4, 1980 says : 'While Victoria Works of BBJ have relatively small contribution to make in regard to fabrication of structurals and steel works.....'. As I have said in my reply, we shall take a final decision after further discussion with the public sector

undertakings concerned and the West Bengal Government.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: I would refer to the letter from the Chief Minister of West Bengal addressed to you, dated October 22, 1981.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: How did you get it ?

SHRISATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: It is an open thing. There is nothing secret. It is an open Government (*Interruptions*) This is a very important thing. Because the elections are coming, things have to be sorted out.

In his letter dated October 22, 1981, the Chief Minister has made it amply clear that the Victoria Works of the BBJ have already started fabrication and this fabrication work is of the order of 1500 tonnes. Now the Company has started picking up; they have secured orders. In the midst of this, if you take the decision of closing the factory on the basis of technical advice—I do not know who are the technicians for you to judge—that will not be a correct decision. The fact is that the Company has started picking up and the Chief Minister has pointed out that the fabrication work is of the order of 1500 tonnes. If you try to close it now, you will actually kill a company which has started working and receiving orders. I have information that all of a sudden the imported steel for the work of the Company has been off-loaded. On what basis has this decision been taken ? The Chief Minister has clearly said that there is no question of non-viability. It was purely due to mismanagement. Because of managerial inefficiency, this BBJ has suffered. So, the question is not that of closure but increasing the managerial efficiency. And you are going to punish the workers for the fault

of the management. Are you going to revise this policy? Will you increase the managerial efficiency and not to think of closing this unit, which is vital for the economy of West Bengal ?

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI: I have already made it clear that, as far as the construction of the second Hooghly bridge is concerned, it is not going to be affected by any means. As I said, the final decision is yet to be taken after proper consultations, after consulting the West Bengal Government and the undertakings concerned. So we have kept the door open. I do not know why the Hon. Member is insisting upon raising a matter that has already been discussed. I have had the pleasure of discussing this matter at some length with the Chief Minister, Finance Minister and Industries Minister of West Bengal. After that, a group of officers was constituted, which went into all the details. The nominees of the Government of West Bengal in that Committee were in full agreement with the technical details that were made available by the BBJ. There is no difference of opinion, as far as basic facts are concerned. The only question is whether we can continue with the extremely uneconomic operation of the existing Victoria Works. The Chief Minister of West Bengal recognizes that this is an uneconomic unit. What we have proposed in the past is that BBJ continue as a legal entity. Further, it would continue to be legally responsible for the construction of the second Hooghly bridge. What does BBJ mean? As the Professor knows, BBJ stands for Burn Standard, Braithwaite and Jessup. This is a consortium of three public sector companies, which was created in 1934 or 1935 i.e. in thirties to construct the first Hooghly bridge. That consortium remains a legal entity. Now that legal entity would continue to remain and function as a legal entity. . The full responsibility for the functioning of the BBJ

would lie with Messrs Jessup & Company. The construction work for the erection of the Hooghly bridge will be the responsibility of each of the constituent companies—Burn Standard Company, Braithwaite and Jessup. I may assure the Hon. Member that BBJ's responsibility towards the construction and the safety of the Hooghly bridge will be honoured, accordingly to the time schedule. As far as the closure of the workshop is concerned, we are still considering the matter. A final decision will be taken after we had consultations with the West Bengal Government and the three public sector undertakings.

SHRI AJIT BAG : Shri Chakraborty has discussed the issue in detail. So, I do not want to waste the time of the House by giving the background. I will straightway put the question. Has the Hon. Minister received two letters, dated 11-2-82 and 19-2-82 respectively, from the General Secretary, BBJ Construction Company Limited Staff Union and, if so, what action has he taken on that? Secondly, may I know whether the report of the Enquiry Committee, set up by the Government to re-examine the matter, has been finalized and, if so, whether a copy of the same will be placed on the Table of the Lok Sabha?

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI : I do not, at the moment, recollect having received any representation on behalf of the union. I would request the Hon. Member to table another question for that purpose.

As far as the Enquiry Committee report is concerned, if that can be called a Committee Report, it is on the basis of the said Enquiry Committee report that this decision was taken to close down the uneconomic operations of the factory works. A summary of that was sent to the Chief Minister of West Bengal. I am sure

the Hon. Member has got a copy of that summary.

दिल्ली में फाइव स्टार होटल में चोरी

*799. श्री चन्द्रपाल शैलानी : क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :—

(क) दिल्ली में एक फाइव स्टार होटल में कुछ समय पूर्व हुई हीरो, जवाहरातों और डालरों की चोरी के सम्बन्ध में कितने व्यक्ति गिरफ्तार किये गये; और

(ख) इस मामले में पुलिस द्वारा अब तक क्या कार्यवाही की गई है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH) : (a) No person has so far been arrested in connection with a case of theft of jewellery of one Stefania Von Kories Zu Gaetze at Oberoi Intercontinental, which was reported to Nizamuddin Police Station on the 7th January, 1982. There has been no theft of dollars in this case.

(b) The investigation of the case was entrusted to the Crime Branch of Delhi Police on 11th January, 1982. The concerned hotel employees and other persons, with whom the complainant had come into contact, have been interrogated and the investigation is continuing.

श्री चन्द्रपाल शैलानी : अध्यक्ष जी, फाइव स्टार होटल में अधिकतर विदेशी पर्यटक आकर ठहरते हैं, जिनसे हमारे देश को बड़ी मात्रा में विदेशी मुद्रा मिलती है। जब उनके जान-माल की सुरक्षा नहीं होगी तो इससे हमारे होटल बिजनेस पर बुरा प्रभाव पड़ेगा, इसमें देश की भी बदनामी होती है।