

**AMENDMENTS TO DISPLACED PERSONS  
(COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION)  
RULES**

The Deputy Minister of Rehabilitation (Shri P. S. Naskar): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, under sub-section (3) of Section 40 of the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954, a copy of Notification No. G.S.R. 1249 dated the 14th November, 1959 making certain further amendments to the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Rules, 1955. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-1757/59.]

Shri Mahanty (Dhenkanal): May I request the Government, Sir, through you, to provide this House with an early opportunity to discuss the Tariff Commission's Report on the levy of interest on special advances to the Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited and the Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited? This is a very important matter.

Mr. Speaker: He cannot interrupt the proceedings like this. Hon. Members know how such matters can be brought up before the House. If they send a motion, and if I consider it proper, I will allow it. To interrupt the proceedings of the House and bring up such matters on the spur of the moment is not right.

12.30 hrs.

**MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA**

Secretary: Sir, I have to report the following message received from the Secretary of Rajya Sabha:—

"I accordance with the provisions of rule 125 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 2nd December, 1959, agreed without any amendment to the Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1959, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 24th November, 1959".

12.32 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER  
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**EXPLOSION IN JAMURIA BAZAR**

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Works, Housing and Supply to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Explosion in a godown in Jamuria Bazar on November 29, 1959, resulting in the death of some persons and injuries to many others."

The Minister of Works, Housing and Supply (Shri K. C. Reddy): The statement runs to about 4½ pages. If I have your permission to read it, I shall read it; or, with your permission, shall I lay it on the Table of the House?

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): The figures may be mentioned.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): He may be asked to read it so that we can put questions.

Mr. Speaker: On important matters which have been brought up before the House, if the hon. Minister says he will make enquiries and make a statement before the House, he may give a summary of the long statement that he might have prepared. The House is not anxious to know every detail that may find place in the statement. The hon. Minister can give a summary of what has happened.

Shri K. C. Reddy: It will take about five or six minutes to read it. I shall read it.

There has been, naturally, very deep concern expressed over the tragedy that happened on the 29th November when a serious accident took place in Jamuria Bazar about 12 miles from Asansol resulting in a heavy toll of human life. Soon after the occurrence, the local authorities

cordoned off the area where the accident took place and rushed the injured persons to the hospitals. The Inspector of Explosives from Calcutta proceeded to Asansol at the earliest possible time and the Chief Inspector of Explosives from Nagpur also left for Asansol by the earliest available plane. He has now returned to Delhi after his preliminary enquiries. I would like to place before the House broadly the facts as have emerged from the preliminary enquiries.

The explosion followed by fire took place between 16.20 and 16.30 hours on the 29th November at Jamuria. The room in which the explosion occurred forms part of a building belonging to one Shri Sarju Prasad Shau and located in Jamuria Bazar. The building consists of four rooms including the one in which the explosion took place. There is a small pan shop in a wooden cabin in a corner of the verandah in front of this room. From the information gathered, it appears that the explosion was followed by a fire of some magnitude. As a result of the explosion, the front door of the room was blown off and the back door badly damaged. One side wall of the room was cracked in a number of places but the rest of the building was found to be almost intact. When the front door was blown off, a torch of flame shot out and streaked across the road, hitting a tailor shop and a cloth shop behind it on the opposite side of the road. It was the weekly market day when large number of persons were on the road and quite a few in the tailor shop and the cloth shop. In the close vicinity of the scene of occurrence is a bus stop. There was, therefore, a large crowd in the street in front of the room at the time of the accident. 98 persons who were injured as a result of the accident, were removed to various nearby hospitals. Eight of them were found dead when they were brought to the hospitals. The fire did not spread to any adjoining buildings and the damage to property was confined mainly to the room in which the explosion took place and the cloth shop

across the road. According to the latest information from the local authorities, 45 out of the injured admitted to the hospitals, succumbed to the injuries thus bringing the total number of deaths to 53.

The chemical examination of the scrappings collected from the room of the explosion goes to show that the explosion and fire were caused by the ignition of gunpowder. As gunpowder does not ignite spontaneously, spark from some source must have ignited the gunpowder and caused the explosion and fire. Spark from a faulty electrical connection or lighted bidi or matchstick could readily ignite and explode gunpowder. What actually started the ignition and explosion of the gunpowder can be ascertained precisely only by a detailed enquiry. It was observed that no crater was formed on the floor of the room nor were the roof and walls blown off. A torch of flame shot out through the door and flared across the road inflicting severe burns on all the persons who were hit by the streaking flame. As indicated earlier, there was a large crowd on the road at the time of the accident who were caught unawares.

The manufacture, possession and sale of gunpowder is controlled by the rules framed under the Indian Explosives Act. Under the rules, a District Authority has power to issue licence for the possession and sale of gunpowder not exceeding 50 lbs. and for the manufacture of gunpowder not exceeding 25 lbs. Licence in respect of any quantities exceeding those indicated above could be granted only by the Inspector of Explosives. Normally under the rules, no licence is necessary for the possession by any person for his own private use and not for sale, of gunpowder not exceeding 30 lbs. This concession has, however, been restricted in the States of West Bengal, Bombay and Madras. In West Bengal, gunpowder even for private use can be possessed only under a licence issued under the Explosives Rules.

[Shri K. C. Reddy]

It was disclosed during the preliminary enquiry that Shri Sarju Prasad Shau, the owner of the premises where the explosion took place, holds a licence under the Arms Act, from the District Authority for the possession and sale of 15 tons of sulphur and 12,000 coils of safety fuse. He has no licence to manufacture, possess or sell any quantity of gunpowder. His brother, Shri Sitaram Prasad Shau, however, holds a licence in Form I under the Explosives Rules, issued by the Inspector of Explosives, East Circle, for the manufacture, possession and sale of gunpowder not exceeding 200 lbs. at any time in a factory which is situated at a distance of about three miles from Jamuria Bazar. It is learnt that both the brothers were living together in a house adjacent to the building where the explosion took place. Sarvashri Sarju Prasad and Sitaram Prasad Shau could not be traced by the police after the accident. Nor any members of their family could be found anywhere in the premises.

It has been ascertained that no licence has been issued by the Inspector of Explosives or the District Magistrate for the manufacture, possession and/or sale of gunpowder in respect of the premises where the explosion took place. It would, therefore, appear that the gunpowder which exploded and caught fire was unauthorisedly stored in the premises.

Whenever an accident occurs which is caused by explosives resulting in the loss of human lives, the District Magistrate or a Magistrate subordinate to him is required under Section 9 of the Indian Explosives Act, to hold an inquiry into the causes of the accident and to make a report to the Central Government. Under Section 9A, the Central Government may, where it is of opinion, whether or not it has received the report of an enquiry under Section 9, that an enquiry of a more formal character should be held into the causes of the acci-

dent appoint the Chief Inspector of Explosives or any other competent persons to hold such an inquiry and may also appoint one or more persons possessing legal or special knowledge as assessor and when the Central Government orders such an inquiry, it may also direct that an inquiry under Section 9 pending at the time shall be discontinued.

The Chief Minister, West Bengal has written acquainting us with the basic facts of the incident and the steps taken by the District Authorities in respect of the inquiry as envisaged under Section 9 of the Explosives Act. Having regard, however, to the immensity of the tragedy, the Government of India have decided to hold an inquiry under Section 9A of the Act and have appointed, in consultation with the Chief Minister, West Bengal, Shri I. B. S. R. Surita, I.A.S., Commissioner, Burdwan Division, West Bengal to hold the inquiry with Shri T. K. Lahiri, Deputy Chief Inspector of Explosives as an assessor. The Commissioner, Burdwan Division has been directed to hold the inquiry with the utmost expedition. Shri T. K. Lahiri, Deputy Chief Inspector of Explosives, has already reached Asansol.

It is obvious that we have to await the findings of this inquiry to be fully seized of the causes and circumstances of this grievous accident.

This tragedy has been an extremely distressing and regrettable one and I would like to express on behalf of the Government our deepest condolences to the bereaved families.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): What was the date on which the Inspector of Explosives from Calcutta reached the place, and what was the date when the Chief Inspector of Explosives reached the place from Nagpur?

Mr. Speaker: After the accident?

**Shrimati Bhas Chakravarty:** Yes; the accident occurred on the 29th.

**Shri K. C. Reddy:** The explosion took place on the 29th—late in the evening. The Inspector of Explosives was there on the 30th. The Chief Inspector of Explosives left Nagpur on the 30th by the night plane and he was at the place on the 1st morning.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** After the enquiry into the accident, something will be decided. May I know whether the State Government or the Central Government has given any relief to the members of the bereaved families?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is the normal practice to give some relief on such occasions. Again and again, such questions are put. If they are entitled, they will be given.

**Shri K. C. Reddy:** If there are entitled under the rules, they will be given. But I have no definite information on the point.

**Mr. Speaker:** Very well; if hon. Members find the existing law on the subject defective, they can introduce a Bill.

12.40 hrs.

#### CORRECTION OF RESULT OF DIVISION

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to inform the House that in the two divisions held on the Constitution (Eighth Amendment) Bill, 1959 on the 1st December, 1959, there were two errors in the announcement of the figures of the division. The House has already taken a decision and this error has absolutely no effect on it. However, I consider that the correct position should be on record. The facts are as follows:

The House will recollect that before I announced the result of the division on the motion for adoption of clause 2 of the Bill, Shri Ram Dhani Das got up and stated that his number was 330 and that he was for 'Ayes'. He stated only this much without speci-

fically pointing out that he had wrongly voted for 'Noes', with the result that while I added one more vote to the figures for the 'Ayes', I did not subtract one vote from the 'Noes'. I accordingly announced the figure for 'Noes' as 24 which is incorrect. The correct figure for 'Noes' should be 23. This, however, does not affect the division.

The second error was in the result on the motion that the Bill, with the omission of clause 2, be passed. Here again before I announced the result, Dr. M. S. Aney got up and stated that his vote had not been recorded and that he wanted to vote for the 'Ayes'. Accordingly I added one vote to the figures recorded for 'Ayes' and announced the figure for 'Ayes' as 285.

From the photograph copy of the division result, it now transpires that Dr. M. S. Aney did in fact press the button and voted for 'Ayes'. The correct figure for 'Ayes' should therefore be not 285, but 284; i.e. one less.

12.43 hrs.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha):** With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business in this House for the week commencing 7th December, 1959, will consist of:

- (1) Further consideration and passing of the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1959, as reported by Joint Committee.
- (2) Consideration and passing of the Mines (Amendment) Bill, 1959.
- (3) Discussion and voting of the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for 1959-60.
- (4) Consideration of a motion for the reference of the Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Bill, 1959 to a Joint Committee.