

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: Starred question No. 11 was answered on 14-9-1958. A view was put forward by certain hon. Members of the Lok Sabha that when diversion of passenger traffic is due to accidents, natural calamities such as breaches etc., even passengers who are booked after the notification of the restriction in booking on the interrupted route should be charged fare by the booked route although carried by the longer diverted route. The matter is under the consideration of the Board.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: For well over a year?

Shri Tangamani: He has not answered whether that route has been restored.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member can know. He comes from that area.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: I said this line will be restored on the 10th, that is today. The Vriddhachalam-Puvanur route has been restored on the 3rd instant. The Vriddhachalam-Salem route will be restored today. Skeleton service has been maintained on these two routes, Vriddhachalam-Ulundurpet and Trichy-Ariyalur. So far as Trichy-Madura route is concerned, that has been restored on the 7th itself.

12.16 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: CHINAKURI MINE DISASTER

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abd Ali): During the discussion in the Lok Sabha on the 2nd April, 1959 regarding the Chinakuri accident, certain allegations of a personal nature were made against the Chief Inspector of Mines. I wish to place before the House the correct position in this regard.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty observed that the Chief Inspector gave a good chit to the colliery and that this

statement appeared in the "Statesman" after he was appointed as an assessor in the Court of Inquiry. The Chief Inspector has denied that he ever made such a statement.

Again, she said that the Regional Inspector had stated that he had sent various notes to the Chief Inspector but that he never got any reply. This was in accordance with the usual procedure, under which the Chief Inspector would record his observations—and convey them to the Inspecting Officers only where he considers their action to be inadequate. There was, therefore, no default on his part.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty alleged that the Chief Inspector had gone about telling people personal things about her. The Chief Inspector has denied this.

She further mentioned that according to the Mines Act, the Chief Inspector should not, directly or indirectly, be interested in any person or relation employed in any mining area, but that a large number of relations of the present Chief Inspector were so employed. The Mines Act does not contain any such provision. A specific allegation was that the Chief Inspector's brothers, brother-in-law etc. are employed in mining concerns or near mining areas. The correct position is that the Chief Inspector has no such brother-in-law and he has only one brother employed in a non-coal mine. Other allegations were that his brother is the General Manager of the Raniganj Coal Association, that his brother-in-law is a Welfare Officer in a mine, that one of his brothers is an agent of Shaw Wallace Collieries, and that a very large number of his relations are in the mining areas. All this is incorrect, the position being, that there is a cousin of the Chief Inspector employed in the Raniganj Coal Association, and a distant relation in a mine. I may add that the Chief Inspector had taken the permission of Government whenever such permission was necessary.

Another Hon'ble Member, Shri S. M. Banerjee, observed that the Chief Inspector might make the Mines Department his family affair but that he (Shri Banerjee) was concerned only with the latter's becoming a member of the Indian Mine Managers' Association. But the fact is that none of his relations is in the Mines Department and that he is not a member of the Association.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty and Shri Banerjee were requested to correct their incorrect statements but they have not done so. I may urge upon these Members, possessing privileged position, not to make incorrect and wholly wrong statements particularly against persons who are precluded from defending themselves here. It is all the more unfortunate that the Hon'ble Members concerned have not shown ordinary courtesy to rectify the mistake even when it was pointed out to them.

Shri Punasee (Ambalapuzha): On a point of order. I want to know whether the hon. Minister was placing before us the results of certain investigations that he has made. If that is so, then the entire results may be placed before us. I do not understand how he could get up and say that certain allegations made against a certain officer were not correct, and so on. I can understand if he places all the facts before us.

Mr. Speaker: I do not find that there is any point of order. Have the hon. Members who made the allegations placed before the House the detailed information? How did they get this information?

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): Yes.....

Mr. Speaker: Very well. Let them place all that. What I would say with respect to such matters is this. I have always held that so far as officers are concerned, if any hon. Member wants to make any allegation, he should

give previous notice that he is going to make allegations against particular officers, in which case, then and there, the hon. Minister would be in a position to reply. If, without doing so, they make allegations, then the Minister makes inquiries, and he places the facts before the House.

As a matter of fact, in this case, I wanted to have both the parties before me and then try to bring about a reconciliation between the two, and find out whether the statement made by the hon. Members is correct or requires any modification. Instead of doing that myself I requested the hon. Deputy-Speaker to invite both these hon. Members to his Chamber, and have this matter thrashed out as to which statement is correct. He ultimately reported to me that Shri Abid Ali must be allowed to make his statement. Therefore, I have permitted him to make this statement.

In such cases as this, where any hon. Member makes a statement against any hon. Minister or any officer in his Ministry, then the Minister is given an opportunity to give his own version of it, and there the matter ends. We are not a High Court here to go into this matter. We are not going to appoint a court of inquiry here and then decide this matter. Both the statements stand on record. No further proceedings would be allowed in this connection.

Shri Abid Ali: With regard to what you have just stated, I may submit that after these statements were made, we made investigation, not with a view to contradict, but to know what the correct position was. And after it was known to us, we brought the facts to the notice of both the hon. Members with the request that they may themselves like to correct the statement and correct the position here. But the hon. lady Member said that she had made some corrections in the reports subsequently. That was checked up. Barring that, the point was discussed further in the presence of the Deputy-Speaker. I would have

{Shri Abid Ali}

been very much happy if they themselves would have made this statement, but as they refused and they preferred to follow this procedure, therefore, this statement has been made.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: May I make this point clear. As for the names of the various people that he has mentioned, we again gave him the names. I say again that it is an incorrect statement which he has made. He has made it on the basis of what the Chief Inspector of Mines has told him, not on the basis of his having enquired into the matter.....

Shri Abid Ali: That is incorrect.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: ...in these very mines about which we have mentioned. First, there is Shri Grewal, who calls the Chief Inspector of Mines 'Mera Chacha', and who is associated with the Madhya Pradesh mining interests. Then, there is his brother, Shri Ikbal Singh, who has a key position in the Barajamda area owned by the main mining interests of the area, Messrs. Bird & Co. Then, there is his cousin Shri Jagat Singh Grewal, who is general manager of Kastore group of collieries. There is another relation of his, Shri Balbir Singh, who is an agent of Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Co. Then, his son is in Messrs. Bird and Co., which has mining interests. Then, his brother-in-law is in the Bengal Coals.

They are all there. We maintain that. There is nothing wrong in what we had stated.

Shri Abid Ali: There may always be common names; they are not family names.

Shri Tangamani (Madurai): Probably, they disown the brother.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): I did not mention any names of the relations. I simply said this I have

no objection if Shri Grewal makes the Mining Department his family affair; I am only concerned with the fact that he should not become a member of this association. The hon. Deputy Minister said before the Deputy-Speaker in his chamber, that he did apply for membership, but today, by making this statement, he denies everything. This is most unfair. *** **

Shri Abid Ali: No.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members need not take this opportunity to make further allegations. That portion may be withdrawn by the hon. Member. Is he prepared to withdraw it? Otherwise, it would have to be expunged.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: The hon. Minister has stated that we have not shown ordinary courtesy to rectify the mistake even when it was pointed out to us, and he has given us advice. He should also withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker: Advice is all right. But that does not mean that aspersions should be cast against a Minister.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: He has done that. In the name of correction, he has cast aspersions. I did not object, but normally, it should never have been allowed.

Mr. Speaker: Anyhow, that portion would be expunged. I would not allow any further discussions. I have heard enough already. There cannot be questions and cross-questions now.

The only procedure is this. Let it be clearly understood. If any hon. Member makes a statement or if any hon. Minister makes a statement, which, according to the hon. Minister or according to the hon. Member, as the case may be, is not correct, I send it to the other side which takes

exception to it and then ask him or her to correct; and if that is done, the matter ends there. No further discussion will be allowed on the floor of the House on that. I do not know what further remedies there will be. The matter will be there on the records.

Now, we shall proceed with further consideration.....

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): May I make one submission?

Mr. Speaker: I think it is not in this connection. The hon. Member is not concerned in this.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Not in respect of this, but I want to make a submission.....

Mr. Speaker: If any hon. Member wants to make a statement, let not the work of the House be interrupted. This is not a public meeting where anybody can get up at any particular time and then say that he wants to make a speech or a statement. We are governed by the Rules of Procedure. We have got an Order Paper. If the hon. Member wants to say anything further with respect to the Bill, then I shall take up the Bill first, and then call the hon. Member, and he may say what he wants to say.

12.27 hrs.

MINES (AMENDMENT) BILL—
contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Nanda on the 8th December, 1959, namely:—

“That the Bill further to amend the Mines Act, 1952, be taken into consideration”.

The Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri Nanda): Yesterday, I had just com-

menced my reply to the debate on the motion for consideration of the Mines (Amendment) Bill. I expressed my appreciation in the House....

Mr. Speaker: The time allotted for this Bill is 6 hours. The time taken already is 3 hours and 28 minutes. The hon. Minister is now replying to the debate on the motion for consideration. Now, 2 hours and 32 minutes remain. Even if the hon. Minister takes 32 minutes, still we shall have 2 hours left for the clause-by-clause consideration.

Shri Nanda: How much time is allotted to me?

Mr. Speaker: He can take about 32 minutes. There is ample time. If he wants fifteen or twenty minutes more, he can take.

Shri Nanda: There was a very wide and general appreciation of the need and the vital importance of the provisions of the amending Bill before the House. There was also, I recognise, a certain measure of opposition. A few members had expressed a sense of disquiet about some clauses of the Bill.

I think there is a very great deal of misapprehension about the intent and the effect of the provisions of this Bill, in the minds of those hon. Members and others who had expressed a kind of a feeling of alarm about what might flow from this Bill as a consequence of its provisions.

Now, what are the provisions to which exception is being taken? When we analyse all this criticism, we find that it ultimately comes down to those clauses which refer to penalties, that is, the enhanced penalties which are now proposed by this legislation. And those hon. Members have assumed that a string of consequences is going to follow from this. They have imagined much of it, that there is going to be a great deal of harassment to the managers in the mines, from what they call junior inspectors.