

taken over by the Dandakaranya Development Authority;

(b) if so, when it was taken over and the reasons for taking over; and

(c) whether the Authorities received complaints about the dilapidated condition of this portion of the Road?

The Minister of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs (Shri Mehr Chand Khanna): (a) Yes.

(b) With effect from the 1st November, 1959 to provide work to settlers in Dandakaranya.

(c) We have received no complaints, but an enquiry has been made from the Dandakaranya Development Authority if any complaints have been received by them.

12 hrs.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

ACCIDENTS IN SIMLABAHAL AND BADRUCHUK COLLIERIES

Mr. Speaker: Shri S. M. Banerjee has tabled an adjournment motion on the following subject:

"Serious accident in Badruchuk Colliery near Jharia on 5th March 1961, resulting death of five workers. This is the second accident in a week's time—the first being on Monday last in Simlabahal Colliery in which 4 miners died. There is immediate need to discuss the criminal negligence on the part of the mineowners and violation of safety rules."

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): I have tabled a Short Notice Question on this.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): How does that arise?

Mr. Speaker: A Short Notice Question requires the consent of the hon. Minister. So far as an adjournment motion is concerned, whenever I find that the House must know, and

through the House the country at large must know, what exactly is happening, I bring up such matters. This is a case where, according to the information given here in the notice of adjournment, four persons had died already, and five more recently. I would like to know the position.

There is a calling attention notice also by Shri Indrajit Gupta and Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan. There is also a Short Notice Question.

Shri Raghunath Singh: Yes, Sir. That is mine.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): On the 5th March....

Mr. Speaker: I will not allow a statement now.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I am not making a statement. I am simply quoting: On the 5th March, it was reported in the press:

"Four miners were killed when a portion of the roof of the Simlabahal colliery caved in on Monday last, according to a report received here today.

The bodies of those killed were recovered on Wednesday, the report said."

The accident took place on Monday, and the bodies of those four miners who were killed could only be recovered after 48 hours. My submission is that this shows the seriousness of the accident.

And then again, near Jharia there was another accident. The report says:

"Five Killed in Mine Accident."

Mr. Speaker: I will adopt this course. If I allow an adjournment motion, certainly I will allow the hon. Member to go on. This is a preliminary stage. He has made some serious allegations here. Let me hear the hon. Minister. If anything arises out of it, then I shall allow him one or two opportunities. Let me know the facts first. The hon. Minister.

The Deputy Minister of Planning and Labour and Employment (Shri L. N. Mishra): I will make a brief statement. As the hon. Members are already aware, unfortunate accidents took place in the Simlabahal Colliery and the Badruchuk colliery.....

Shri Tyagi (Dehra Dun): On a point of order, Sir. I beg to submit that the procedure of adjournment motions is, in my humble opinion, being misused. An adjournment motion must be either permitted by the Chair or not, but the merits of the motion cannot be entered into unless the motion has been permitted.

An Hon. Member: What is the point of order.

Shri Tyagi: An Hon. Member tables an adjournment motion, makes a statement, and a reply is given. This is not the procedure. My submission is that we might establish a proper convention which might be followed hereafter. Whether an adjournment motion is in order or not is for you to decide.

Mr. Speaker: I have to make up my mind. An adjournment motion is allowed if it is a definite matter of urgent public importance. It must be definite, it must be urgent, it ought not to be an old one, and it must be of public importance. Four people died, and five people have again died. It is a matter of urgent importance. Whether it is a recent one is not clear here. Something might have occurred some time ago. It might have occurred in Andamans, and nobody gets to know. After a month if news is received here, I will treat it as urgent. There is no question of delay so far as that matter is concerned. Delay means avoidable delay. I must know that. These accidents may have been occurring on account of various other things. I have also said that so far as railway accidents and aeroplane accidents which happen in the course of reconnaissance etc., are concerned, I do not want them to be brought up here. I would like to know the seriousness

of it, because so many people died. I want to know the facts. I want also to be sure that it is urgent. If it occurred six months ago, I would not want to hear it.

It is no doubt a definite matter. On a matter of definite urgent public importance, when allegations are made, I would like to know the facts. If they are absolutely untrue, I would not give my consent. If only I were to take the advice of Shri Tyagi, I must go on allowing everything and then reject it. The same process will go on, one way or the other.

Shri L. N. Mishra: As the hon. Members are already aware, unfortunate accidents took place in the Simlabahal Colliery and the Badruchuk Colliery on the 27th February, 1961 and 5th March 1961 respectively.

In the former colliery, while four miners were dressing the side of a pillar, a mass of roof fell over them from a height of about six feet, killing them instantaneously. The accident occurred at 10:00 P.M., and the Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines, along with the Regional Inspector, reached the spot in an hour's time. All the four dead bodies were extricated before 2 A.M. under the direct supervision of the officers of the Mines Inspectorate. An *ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 250 is being paid by the management to the family of each of the deceased.

According to the preliminary enquiry report, the collapse of the roof took place because the width of the gallery where the accident occurred was made excessive and the roof was not adequately supported. The management thus appear to have contravened the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957, and suitable action will be taken against them.

The accident in the Badruchuk colliery took place at 4:30 A.M. on the 5th March, 1961. The Additional Chief Inspector of Mines, the Deputy Chief Inspector and the Regional Inspector reached the site of the

[Shri L. N. Mishra]

accident at 8.30 A.M., and helped in the rescue operations. This accident also was caused by fall of roof. The roof fell from a height of about 30 feet while a gang of miners was engaged in a depillaring area. While rescue operations were being carried on, another roof fall occurred. In all, five persons were killed in the accident, and four persons seriously injured.

The preliminary enquiry by the Mines Inspectorate revealed that the roof was not adequately supported according to the systematic timbering rules, and the management thus appear to be responsible for the accident, and action will be taken against them.

About 60 persons were employed in the Simlabahal and 1274 persons in the Badruchuk colliery. The accidents have not resulted in any unemployment or loss of production.

Mr. Speaker: Anything more?

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta—South-west): One question, Sir.

The Deputy Minister has said that an enquiry is being held by the Mines Inspectorate to determine the responsibility of the management, but may I know how the responsibility of the Inspectorate of Mines will be determined for not seeing to it that the roofs were properly supported in these mines?

Shri L. N. Mishra: The Mines Inspectorate make regular inspection of the mines. We have got that record, but here the management is responsible for the accident, and we will have the report from the Inspectorate.

Mr. Speaker: What he wants to know is this. Now, the adjournment motion is tenable or not according as Government has committed any particular default or not. It is the duty of the Inspectorate to visit the mines from time to time and then make suggestions. How has this

escaped the notice of the Inspectorate, and how has this occurred? Four persons have died in one case and 5 persons in another case. In the meanwhile should we not know what exactly happened?

Shri L. N. Mishra: As I said the accidents took place due to the falling of the roof. So far as the responsibility of the Inspectorate is concerned.....

Mr. Speaker: There are two cases.

Shri L. N. Mishra: Both of them took place as a result of the falling of the roof.

Mr. Speaker: What is the interval between the two? What is the distance?

Shri L. N. Mishra: They are two different mines in two different areas.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: According to the regulations, when the height of the roof is 30 feet the permission of the Chief Inspector of Mines has to be obtained; and this permission is not granted unless it is inspected by the Regional Inspector of Mines and a report is made that he is satisfied that proper safety measures have been adopted. In this case, may I know when the mine was last inspected and when the permission was given? May I know whether all the statutory requirements have been complied with?

Shri L. N. Mishra: We shall find out all these things. We are expecting the report from the Chief Inspector of Mines and we shall see whether any of the Inspectors also are responsible—whether a proper inspection was made or not.

Mr. Speaker: We shall have a discussion on this report—not now, but as soon as the report is published.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Unless the safety measures are taken immediately, there will be some more accidents. Therefore, we request you to

allow the adjournment motion; you can postpone the discussion of the report for a week (*Interruption*).

Shri Tyagi: Sir, I want your ruling whether it is in order or not in order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Hon. Members all along want me to give my consent. Is it not open to them to say it is an important matter? I consider it a very important matter. Four persons have died in one case; and five persons in another case. The hon. Member Shri Vittal Rao suggests that in cases where the roof is 30 feet high, special permission of the Inspector is necessary. For granting that he has to inspect. If he had inspected, possibly, this would not have occurred. This is a matter of life and death, so far as the miners are concerned. I take it that it is a very serious matter. All that I want to know is whether an opportunity may not be given after the full details are available to the House. But Shri Tyagi forces me to give my consent today. I am really surprised. (*Interruption*)

I can understand reasonably good suggestions being made. This is not the first instance when Shri Tyagi advises me on this matter. I am explaining it. There are particular cases which are not of such great urgent importance. I dispose of them; I do not give my consent. Formerly, some of the hon. Members wanted to raise the matter notwithstanding the fact that I did not give my consent. But, recently, they have adopted another policy. They ignore the orders I have passed and take other opportunities to do so. In very serious matters, if I take the advice of Shri Tyagi then I cannot control the House. It is meaningless to say that it is not serious when 9 persons have died. It is not only the concern of the Opposition. Even persons like Shri Tyagi who are sitting in this House should welcome a discussion on this matter. So far as this matter is concerned, I take very serious objection to this kind of lightly treating

the case of death of 4 persons. Even if one person has died, it would be a deterrent to the other miners. They won't go to work. These are serious consequences. The Inspector has to inspect. I do not know the rule; but it has not been contradicted. If he has to inspect before the mine can be utilised if the ceiling is above 30 feet, and if the Inspector has been negligent, then the Minister is negligent. There is no meaning in it.

When is the report likely to be received?

Shri Tyagi: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. I was not opposing the motion. I was only making a request to you.....

Mr. Speaker: How can I act on a complaint unless I know other things also? There are other matters also which are urgent, definite and of public importance. Having regard to the other work before the House, should I allow this to interfere with the normal working of the House is a matter to be considered, when the same thing could be brought up in any other manner—there are ample opportunities to the House—notwithstanding the fact that it is a matter of urgent public importance? Tomorrow we are going to have another debate. These are the various other considerations that have to be taken into account. Therefore, I would like to know when the report is likely to be available.

Shri L. N. Mishra: Within a week's time we shall try to get the report.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Ferozabad): May I make a few observations, Sir? You were pleased to observe that whenever such major accidents take place involving the death of persons, the Ministers will themselves report the matter to the House. The Minister is responsible not only because he did not control his Inspector, but he also did not report the matter to the House.

Shri L. N. Mishra: The accident took place on the 5th. Yesterday the House was adjourned and today I am reporting it to the House.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Sir, since both the accidents have taken place due to the collapse of the roof, I suggest that the Central Government may depute some officer of the Labour Ministry to go and see that all these mines in the adjoining areas are inspected so that this thing would not recur.

Mr. Speaker: In view of the statement of the hon. Minister that an Inspector has been sent to make a full enquiry and send a report, I would advise the Minister to place the report on the Table of the House as early as possible so that we may have full information. There is also the 'Calling Attention Notice' of Shri Indrajit Gupta and Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan which refer to the

'Recent successive mine accidents at Simlabahal and Badruchuk collieries in Jharia coalfields, Bihar, resulting in loss of four and five lives respectively and in dislocation of production.'

Therefore, there seems to be not only one incident. I would like to have a full and frank discussion on this matter as soon as the report is ready and is placed on the Table of the House. Let all these matters be taken into consideration.

In the meanwhile if hon. Members want other matters to be looked into let them send information to the hon. Minister who will send them to the Inspector and then carry out the suggestions.

In view of what has been said I do not think it is necessary for me to give my consent.

Shri Mahanty (Dhenkanal): May I make a submission, Sir? I am afraid, Sir, that an enquiry conducted under the auspices of the Chief Inspector of Mines would suffer from an infirmity inasmuch as it has been suggested

indirectly in this House that his responsibility is attracted in this particular matter. Therefore, in the interests of a fair enquiry it should be conducted by a panel of eminent technicians in the Ministry of Mines.

Shri L. N. Mishra: The Chief Inspector of Mines is taken as a technical expert. On receiving the report we shall decide whether such an enquiry is necessary or not. First we have to receive the report and decide whether it is necessary or not. (*Interruption*).

Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat): May I make a submission?.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. A suggestion has been made that when this Inspector has been in default it is not likely that he would expose himself. Let us have his report first and see whether others have taken proper care. If it is further necessary that there ought to be another report then we will think about it.

Shri A. C. Guha: In the meantime, till the report comes, may I request the Government to see that the roofs of those two mines are properly protected and proper precautions taken so that there may not be any such accidents hereafter in these two mines?

12.18 hrs.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME
MINISTER REGARDING THE
DEATH OF PANDIT G. B. PANT

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): Sir, with your permission, I would like to read out a message to this hon. House from the Prime Minister on the passing away of Pantji.

"What we have been expecting fearfully, during the last two weeks, has come to pass, and the last glimmer of hope that Pantji might recover has been snuffed out, and we are left desolate and