

AMENDMENTS TO THE REPRESENTATION  
OF THE PEOPLE (CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS  
AND ELECTION PETITIONS) RULES

**The Deputy Minister of Law (Shri Hajarnavis):** I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Notification No. S.O. 1836 dated the 20th July, 1960, making certain further amendments to the Representation of the People (Conduct of Elections and Election Petitions) Rules, 1956, under sub-section (3) of Section 169 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-2259/60].

DEMAND FOR SUPPLEMENTARY  
GRANT (RAILWAYS), 1960-61

**The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram):** I beg to present a statement showing Supplementary Demand for Grant in respect of the Budget (Railway) for 1960-61.

12.14 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER  
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

EXPLOSION IN CHAUPI KHAS COLLIERY,  
RANIGANJ

**Shri Aurobindo Ghosal (Uluberia):** Sir, under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Labour and Employment to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

The explosion in the Chaupi Khas Colliery of Raniganj, West Bengal on 1st August, 1960.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri L. N. Mishra):** As hon. Members are already aware . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order There is much noise in the House. He will start a minute later. Let all hon.

Members talk out side what they want to talk.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat):** There is something upstairs.

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes.

**Shri L. N. Mishra:** As the hon. Members are already aware, an explosion took place in the Sripur seam of Chaupi Khas Colliery at about 7.15 A.M. on the 1st August 1960. The mine is owned by M/s Bharat Collieries Limited and is situated in District Burdwan of West Bengal.

The Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines has made enquiries. The Chief Inspector of Mines and the Additional Chief Inspector of Mines also visited the site of the accident. It appears that on the day of the accident, at about 6.30 A.M. approximately 65 persons had gone down No. 5 Pit in Sripur seam. At about 7.15 A.M. an explosion occurred as a result of ignition of "firedamp"—probably by the flames of naked lamps carried by the workers. Five persons working in the rise section received burns of various degrees as a result of the explosion. One of them instantaneously died. The remaining four were removed to hospital. Two of them died there subsequently, one has been discharged from the hospital and the other is making satisfactory progress. The mine had previously not been declared gassy, as gas had never been encountered in the past. The workings had, however, approached a dyke, from which gas seems to have escaped and built up. A detailed investigation is in progress.

The management of the mine has made an *ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 500 to the families of each of the three deceased and Rs. 200 to one of the injured workers. This is in addition to the amount payable by the employers to the families of the deceased under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** Is it a fact that this mine where the accident took place is under the contract system although the Implementation Committee had recommended that the contract system should not be resorted to, and that during this time, the workers were engaged in dressing another work in the dyke? Prior to that, hot water was coming out and in spite of that, the contractor insisted on the workers working there and after that the gas accident took place: is that a fact?

**Shri L. N. Mishra:** The hon. Member is giving details. We are expecting a report from the Inspector. When we get all the details, we shall see how the matter stands.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** Is it also a fact that the Inspectorate, although they were being phoned up by the Colliery Mazdoor Sabha, did not go to the spot till four hours after the accident was over?

**Shri L. N. Mishra:** I am not aware.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** This is most unsatisfactory. We would like to know if there is a court of enquiry, whether a court of enquiry is going to be set up, because this is a very disgraceful story about the management, the contract system and the Mining Department itself which has called it a non-gassy mine only a few months ago.

**The Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri Nanda):** The answer having been given that an enquiry is in progress, it should satisfy the hon. Member for the present. If any facts are revealed which require further action, we will certainly take.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** I want to know whether a court of enquiry has been held.

**Shri Nanda:** There is an enquiry. A court of enquiry is not held for every accident that occurs.

**Mr. Speaker:** If hon. Members who have tabled this Calling Attention notice have got any particular point for investigation, they will kindly write it out and sent to the Minister. He will pass it on.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam):** Let us have the Inspector's report. On that we shall raise a debate.

12.19 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: ESSENTIAL SERVICES MAINTENANCE AND MOTION RE: STRIKE OF SOME CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES—Contd.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now take up further discussion of the following Resolution moved by Shri Naushir Bharucha on the 8th August, 1960, namely:—

“This House disapproves of the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance, 1960 (Ordinance No. 1 of 1960) promulgated by the President on the 8th July, 1960.”

and also along with it further consideration of the Motion moved by the hon. Home Minister and the amendments that have been tabled and moved in this House. Shri Nath Pai.

**Shri Nath Pai rose—**

**Shri M. Khuda Bukhsh (Murshidabad):** On a point of order. I am stating a point of order and may, therefore, be permitted to read out from a manuscript. The Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance, 1960 has been challenged in two High Courts, namely the Madras and Calcutta High Courts, and in the process, articles of the Constitution have been invoked. Sir, it involves fundamental questions of freedom. I submit that the people of India are sovereign, and so are the Government elected by them.