

12.04 hrs.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

ACCIDENT AT EAST KAJORA COLLIERY

Mr. Speaker: I have received notice of two adjournment motions and one calling attention notice relating to the serious accident at East Kajora Colliery on 22nd April 1961 due to collapse of the roof, resulting in death of five workers. The newspaper cutting has also been enclosed. What is the position?

The Deputy Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri L. N. Mishra): Sir, the accident has taken place on Saturday, the 22nd April and we have also seen the Press Reports. The Deputy Inspector of Mines has proceeded to the scene of accident and we have not so far had a full report about the accident. In two or three days, we shall be getting a report and we shall place it before the House . . . (*Interruptions.*)

An Hon. Member: Five persons have been killed.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): Sir, my adjournment motion had also pointed out that in this very area there had been a large number of major accidents taking place in the same manner. For instance, Sir, in February on the 27th in Simla Bahal four persons were killed and many injured due to depillaring roof fall. On the 5th of March at Badruchuk, five were killed due to the same reason. Again at Loyabad at the end of January, two persons were killed due to roof collapse. At East Nimcha about four months back two were killed. All these accidents have been happening in the same area. But the department and the inspectorate have not even placed before us what their findings were. It has been going on for such a long time that it has assumed serious proportions. The mine owners do not put up the timber which is so important and when these accidents take place they do not take any notice of them.

Shri L. N. Mishra: It is not fair to say that we are not taking any notice. It is unfortunate that some accidents have taken place in this area perhaps because of roof falls. So far as site inspection is concerned, we have tried to examine the position and fix the responsibility of the management in most of the cases. I have also placed before the House full reports of the previous accidents and about this accident also, we will place a report before the House.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: When the Badruchuk accident took place, Shri Abid Ali said that it was due to deliberate and illegal acts of the management. What has been done since then?

The Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri Nanda): He had said that wherever there was any deliberate act or omission and we opposed to the law, prosecution would take place. Action is taken and on that score I do not think there need be any feeling that we are not doing all that is possible. There are two aspects to it. The first is whether the number of accidents on the whole have been such that a situation has arisen where there is need for an enquiry on that score. In the course of the discussion on the Budget Demands, I have explained the number and the rate and other things in relation to these accidents. In individual cases we have to look into it as to who was the responsible and what was the cause and so on. The two cases referred to by the hon. Member . . .

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Five cases.

Shri Nanda: . . . were due, I think, to negligence and we are taking all the action that could be taken. We have given all the details here and we shall give information about the others.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Mining operations are being carried on at much deeper levels than the original levels with the result that more safety measures are to be taken by

[Shri T. B. Vittal Rao]

the mine-owners. I can even now say something about this but I do not want to say it because you will not allow me to say that and so I will request that, till the report is received, you may hold over the adjournment motion and not dispose of it.

Mr. Speaker: I will disallow the adjournment motions and keep the calling attention notice.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Sir, there is no purpose in doing so. It was not done in the past. When some clarification is necessary there should be an adjournment motion and not a calling attention notice. The matter is so serious that the House must have an opportunity to discuss it.

Mr. Speaker: I will certainly do so. But the hon. Minister has just now said that while speaking on the Demands for Grants relating to his Ministry, the same matter was raised he answered that in serious cases they would take action and the necessary steps. Nothing new has arisen now. The hon. Member, Shrimati Renu Chakravartty, referred to so many matters which had been answered.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: No, Sir, that is exactly what I am challenging. In the Simla Bahal accident, four were killed in February; in March at Badruahuk five were killed; a little earlier, at the end of January at Loyabad, two were killed and four months ago at East Nimcha two were killed. Now, in April this has happened. There are so many other cases of this type. Accidents like that were happening during the last four or five months and the hon. Minister says that there were one or two cases.

Shri Nanda: Sir, may I explain again that I do take a serious view of any individual accident that has occurred. There are legal provisions and we recently amended the law, and provided for more stringent penalties. That was one thing that we

could do. Then when a case comes up and it is found that the employer is at fault, action is taken in accordance with the terms of the law. That is what we are doing.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: They do not even let us know these things. I went myself to one place and told them: please let us know what is your finding. They said: Yes; we will do so. But they never did so.

Shri Nanda: If there is anything or any information which the hon. Member wants, I shall certainly give it. Some reports have already been laid on the Table of the House. In this particular case, we have yet to know what occurred. If due to the report three or four cases which have occurred, there can be some idea of of some kind of a situation which calls for a general enquiry. I shall look into that also . . . (Interruptions.)

राजा महेन्द्र प्रताप (मयूर): मैं प्रधान मंत्री जी से एक अज्ञ करना चाहता हूँ। क्या आपका कानून है और क्या यह बात है कि कांग्रेस वालों की तरफ से कभी कोई ऐसा एडजॉर्नमेंट मोगन नहीं आता है। एकसीडेंट, होते हैं, लोग जखमी हो जाते हैं, मर जाते हैं लेकिन कोई प्रश्न नहीं आता। मैं यह चाहता हूँ कि कांग्रेस वाले यह दिखलायें कि हम को बहुत ज्यादा तकलीफ होती है, रंज होता है और ऐसी कोई वारदात हो जाती है। पार्टीबाखी नहीं होगी चाहिए।

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister says that he will look into this matter. The serious cases that have been referred to by Shrimati Renu Chakravartty all occurred before the hon. Ministry's reply to the debate relating to his Ministry. They are not new ones. He has also said that he is taking steps to make the law more stringent. If he finds that a general enquiry is necessary, he will have one. I will make one suggestion. Whenever there are cases of

accidents leading to deaths of any miners, those reports may be placed on the Table of the House.

Shri Nanda: We are doing it.

Mr. Speaker: Regarding the other matters which are not very serious, if any hon. Member wants any information and applies to the Ministry, the Ministry will kindly supply the information. With regard to those reports that are placed on the Table of the House, if they are serious, the House may have an opportunity from time to time to discuss, if any general principles are involved.

So far as the adjournment motions are concerned, I am not allowing them. The calling attention notice will stand over for three or four days.

Shri Nanda: In four days, we will be ready with the information.

Mr. Speaker: I will fix a date.

12.11 hrs.

ALLEGED ARREST OF ADIVASI WORKERS IN ROURKELA

Mr. Speaker: There is another adjournment motion by Shri Chintamani Panigrahi. It says:

"The need to discuss the serious situation arising out of recent large scale arrests of Adivasi workers employed in Rourkela Steel Factory."

Is there any discrimination made against these Adivasi workers as against other workers?

The Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Sardar Swaran Singh): There is no discrimination at all. So far as the particular thing raised by the hon. Member is concerned, I have been trying to get in touch with Rourkela. I have learnt of this adjournment motion only today and I have not been able to get in touch. I will ascertain the information and supply it if the House so desires, as soon as information is available.

Shri Chintamani Panigrahi (Puri): More than 3,000 adivasi workers had **been now retrenched in Rourkela**. The promise was given to them that once their land has been taken, they would be given unskilled jobs in the steel factory. This was discussed on the floor of this House and the hon. Minister was pleased to tell us that if the displaced Adivasi workers are not provided with lands so far, they will be provided with unskilled jobs at least in the Rourkela steel factory. Now, many of those who were provided with unskilled jobs have been retrenched now. Neither they have been provided with land nor they have been provided with jobs. When they went and squatted for ventilating their grievances to the General Manager, more than 200 adivasi workers are arrested. You know how the Adivasi react if they are arrested.

I will request the hon. Minister to go to the spot, enquire into this matter and see that the Adivasi workers are provided with jobs in the near future and they are not arrested like this. That is my submission.

Sardar Swaran Singh: I share the sympathy for the Adivasis who are working there or elsewhere and I would like to do the maximum that is possible for the adivasis. But what happened in the beginning was that many of these displaced persons and others preferred to undertake work with the contractors, because the contractors were offering higher wages, particularly contractors who were doing the construction work. In the initial stages, when there were possibilities of employing the people by the plant authorities, they were reluctant to come forward and were attracted by higher wages offered by the contractors. Now the construction work is coming to an end. In the meantime there are not enough jobs with the steel works to absorb all the people.

Therefore, whatever retrenchment benefits are due to retrenched workers who are adivasis or non-adivasis, it is the responsibility of the