

[Shri S. Mohan Kumaramangalam] concerned, we have not really discussed it in any depth. I am grateful to the hon. Member for bringing it to my notice. Certainly, the Minister of Labour and I will look into it and see whether any changes of this character that are possible can be made. I am not quite clear exactly how it should be put through. It is a question of trying to form an organisation and procedure. It is important that a safety organisation should command the confidence of the workers. Let us see how it is possible to organise something and change the present position, and to form an organisation which can really command the confidence of the workers.

Regarding the allegation of lobby of the highest officials, I am afraid, I am not in any position to comment on that. It is true that mistakes might be committed by some of them. I am not here to defend them. But I do say that so far as what has happened in the last three days is concerned, and on the basis of my personal investigation and that of the Minister of Labour in Dhanbad yesterday, when we went to the mine, not merely did we feel that the Directorate-General of Mines Safety had really done its best in a very difficult position, immediately after the major explosion, but this was also a statement made by the trade union people and other people to us. Therefore, I am not speaking just for myself and just for the sake of defending them. To get into the mine just immediately after a major explosion like this shows a certain amount of anxiety on their part to try to do whatever is possible. The persons who work round the clock, for 24 hours, for 36 hours, exerting themselves to the utmost have also to be given a little credit. If they have made mistakes and they are found guilty, action will be taken against them. But those who work hard deserve the approbation, not merely of the Government but of this House also.

Then, the hon. Member raised a question about proper protection so far as workers are concerned who have to work under such dangerous conditions, and suggested that there should be a type of insurance scheme which will see that the compensation is much greater than what it is today. I am grateful to him for the suggestions and, certainly, we will examine it.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Yamuna Prasad Mandal—absent;

Shri Mukhtiar Singh Malik—absent.

13.00 hrs.

RE-ABSENCE FROM THE HOUSE OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

MR. SPEAKER: Now, papers to be laid on the Table...

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): The working journalists are on strike; there has been no newspaper today. The Minister should make a statement. (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: I am told, the Minister will make a statement during the day.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta-North-East): Mr. Speaker I had asked for your permission, and you were very kindly disposed to give it to me, to raise a matter in relation to the absence from the House of the Minister of Finance. What has happened is very, very extraordinary. This is the height of the Budget Session, and the Minister of Finance chooses to go out of the country for a period of nearly three weeks. It may be that the presence of the Minister of Finance at some international meeting in the United States is quite important. I can appreciate the fact of the Finance Minister having to go just in order to add some im-

portance to the proceedings, as far as he is concerned. But, for him to be away for a technical conference of a very very peculiar, financial nature where most of the job would be done by his advisers in the Ministry, for him to be absent from the House in the height of the Budget Session for three weeks is almost tantamount to contempt of the House. Yesterday the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs told me that I should not raise it yesterday because he had not left the country, but I find that the bird has flown, he left last night. I am told, he gave you a letter. I have seen a copy through the courtesy of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs; I have seen a copy of the letter and I am constrained to have to observe that there is not a word of apology or sorrow that he is not here. He merely intimates to you from high up in his stand that he just chooses to be out of the country during the height of the Budget Session.

I remember, in the first Parliament, Mr. Deshmukh, when he was the Finance Minister—Mr. Jagjiwan Ram, Mr. Nanda and Mr. Tiwary were there, they would remember—throughout the Session, even when the Demands for Grants were discussed of any Ministry, not only Finance Ministry, would be present most of the time. That was the kind of norm laid down in the House in the time of Mr. Mavalankar when he was Speaker, and certain Ministers who functioned in those days. Now I find, these Ministers go out of the House for a three-week sojourn in the United States in the height of the Budget Session, and they do not even have the decency to express a sense of sorrow to you, Sir. I do not know whether it is a matter of breeding or a question of arrogance which is seen in the Ministers these days. But I take a very serious objection to this kind of behaviour on the part of the Minister concerned. I wish the Prime Minister was here. As Leader of the House, she has to uphold the

dignity of the House, which she does not choose to do, for whatever reason I do not know. Therefore, I have brought this to your attention and to the attention of your colleagues. I am sorry to have to say that most of the leaders of parties are also absent; I do not know, it might be an accident. That is also a matter which perturbs me. Nobody cares about the dignity of the House, nobody cares about the decorum of the House, nobody cares about efficient performance of national duties by the House. Everybody is concerned about sensationalism and how to put some sort of a curb on it. That is why, I want the very special attention of yourself, in particular, to be drawn to the absence of the Finance Minister.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR
 (Ahmedabad): I entirely endorse what my hon. friend has said.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA
 (Bengaluru): In such cases, a practice should be laid down that the Minister must seek the permission of the House before he leaves the country, especially in the Budget Session. (Interruptions).

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
 TARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHU
 RAMAIAH): In the first instance, I would like to submit that the Finance Minister is no less anxious than any of us that the dignity and decorum of the House should be maintained. I would like to assure Shri H. N. Mukerjee and all my hon. friends about it. I understand that he has written to you, Sir, explaining the extraordinary circumstances which have compelled him to go. First of all, I would like to clear one misconception. He is not out for three weeks. He is out only till the 30th of this month. He has explained in his letter to you that he is going there to attend Committee 20 of the International Monetary Fund meeting and also the meeting of Group 24. He has further explained that important

[Shri K. Raghu Ramaiah]

issues relating to the international monetary situation will come up. In the present international monetary situation, the House will appreciate that it is not enough that an officer goes but that a Minister must be there to take the highest responsibility for the discussions and the conclusions arrived at there. Therefore, in a long sitting like this, you will appreciate and the House will appreciate that such conferences of the highest importance should be attended by our Ministers and not relegated to officers. By 30th he will be back, and in view of the fact that he has already written to you, I hope the House will appreciate the situation.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA:

Why was the House not taken into confidence? Why did he not come up before the House to seek its permission. Instead of writing to the Chair, he should have come up before the House.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Let the letter be circulated to Members. We want to see what he has written.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी (शाजापुर)
अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप ऐसा प्रार्थना कि
वम ने लम सह गलत परंपरा प्रागे रही
बनेगी।

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, I have written to you under Rule 377.

MR SPEAKER: I am not permitting you. Rule 377 is not meant for that purpose. You are completely misusing it. (Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER: I have not allowed you. It will not go on record. I have allowed only one member, and I called him.

(Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER: No question of any deliberation. I am not allowing.

(Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER: Mr Bosu, I have not permitted you. Please do not do it everyday. You are speaking without my permission.

Papers to be laid.

13.09 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

DETAILED DEMANDS FOR GRANTS OF
VARIOUS MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN
THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE
(SHRI K R GANESH): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the following Ministries/Departments for 1973-74.—

- (i) Ministry of Agriculture.
- (ii) Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.
- (iii) Ministry of Health and Family Planning.
- (iv) Ministry of Heavy Industry.
- (v) Ministry of Industrial Development.
- (vi) Ministry of Irrigation and Power.
- (vii) Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals.
- (viii) Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.
- (ix) Department of Atomic Energy.

[Placed in library. See No LT-4542/
73].