

from the coal head to the Bhadravati works. I am referring to the want of railway communication between the port by which it comes now—sea cum rail route—and the Steel works.

**The Minister of Finance (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):** May I answer this question, Sir? My hon. friend wants us now to admit that there are ports near about Bhadravati which have no rail communication to Bhadravati. It is a geographical fact. My hon. friend need not admit it.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** May I know if the coal that is supplied to Bhadravati Iron Works is metallurgical coal and if not, why could not they draw their supply from nearer coal fields at Singareni, etc.?

**Sardar Swaran Singh:** This is coal and hard coke. I think there is no nearer source of availability.

**Shri Dasappa:** May I ask.....

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the good of asking indirectly that a railway line or rail link ought to be established with the port? Next question.

### Neo-Buddhists

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\*345. { **Shri B. C. Kamble:**  
**Shri D. C. Sharma:**  
**Shri Raghunath Singh:**

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the question as to whether a member of Scheduled Caste on conversion to Buddhism, should be entitled to the constitutional safeguards admissible to him formerly as Scheduled Caste; and

(b) if so, the decision taken in the matter?

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant):** (a) Yes.

(b) A member of a Scheduled Caste on conversion to Buddhism will not be entitled under the Constitution to

the facilities provided exclusively for Scheduled Castes.

**Shri B. C. Kamble:** May I know what are the principles on which this decision of the Government is based?

**Pandit G. B. Pant:** The basis is this. Government's activities are controlled and guided by this House. This House, last year, passed a law to the effect that no one who professes any religion other than Hinduism or Sikkism will be regarded as a member of the Scheduled Castes.

**Shri B. C. Kamble:** In view of the definition which is given in article 366 sub-clause 24 of the Constitution of India where there is no mention whatever of any religion, can religion be made the basis for taking such decision or making such enactment?

**Mr. Speaker:** These are opinion on matters of law.

**Shri B. K. Gaikwad:** May I know whether it is a fact that the Central Government have informed all State Governments that the facilities as regards education and economic aid which were provided to the Scheduled Castes people should be continued even after their conversion to Buddhism?

**Pandit G. B. Pant:** Government have advised the State Governments to assist persons who have been or who may be converted to Buddhism wherever they deserve such assistance as other backward class members are treated on the same footing.

**Raja Mahendra Pratap:** May I know whether this question is religious, social or economic? What does the Government think about it?

**Pandit G. B. Pant:** All the three.

**Raja Mahendra Pratap:** I am interested in religion. Is a religious question.....

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** You don't call persons who have tabled questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members who have tabled questions will kindly rise in their seats one after the other.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** I have risen so many times.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sorry. Before the taller friends I have not been able to notice him.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** I think a constitutional clause should be put in the People's Representation Act that no person on my side should be taller than me.

May I know if any representation has been received from the new Buddhist converts by the Home Ministry and whether the reasons which they have given for the continuation of concessions has been examined and if so what is the result?

**Pandit G. B. Pant:** Representations were received. Careful consideration was given to them. The law experts were consulted and the answer that I have given is based on the advice given by them and on the very serious thought given to the matter by the Home Ministry.

**Shri B. S. Murthy:** May I know whether the neo-Buddhists still consider themselves as belonging to the so-called untouchable community and whether they are being so treated by the caste Hindus even after their conversion?

**Pandit G. B. Pant:** Untouchability is inconsistent with a religion so noble and humanitarian as Buddhism. There are millions of Buddhists outside India and nowhere I think is untouchability observed among them or any caste system in any way encouraged.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** The point which the hon. Member wanted to know—and that also covers my question—is whether even after conversion to Buddhism the majority community of the Hindus continues to practise any form of ostracism against them. That is the point I think he would like to know.

**Pandit G. B. Pant:** We do not want any sort of ostracism against any individual in this country.

**Shri Nagi Reddy:** But what is the reality and fact?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is for each individual Hindu to consider it for himself.

#### Kundah Project

\*346. **Shri S. V. Ramaswami:** Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Canadian help to the Kundah Project extends only to the first stage of the Hydrel works,

(b) whether it is a fact that Canada is willing to extend help for laying the transmission lines also to link up with the existing Madras grid,

(c) whether the Madras Government have requested the Centre to secure for it this additional help also; and

(d) if so, what steps the Union Government have taken in regard thereto?

**The Minister of Finance (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):** (a) to (d). The Canadian aid for the Kundah Project contemplated the inclusion of transmission lines subject to a limit of \$20 million. When the details were worked out it was found that the cost of transmission lines would not be covered within this limit. Our request for additional assistance for this item is under the consideration of the Canadian Government.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswami:** May I know whether the Canadian aid is complete by itself or whether in order to complete that project we have got to buy any essential commodities on our account?

**Shri T. T. Krishnamachari:** I could not give the details of the commodities that we have to buy, but I think no aid of this nature is complete. There are certain things which are filled up by indigenous production to a very large extent.

**Shri S. V. Ramaswami:** Concern was expressed in the Legislative Assembly about the possible slowing