

for want of speakers, in which case I will take up the discussion on Dandakaranya Development Authority and only 2½ hours will be available for the discussion on the Report of the Pay Commission.

**Explosion in Ordnance Factory,
Khamaria**

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*73. { Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:
Shri Amjad Ali:
Shri P. G. Deb:
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Shri Hem Raj:

Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a) whether an explosion took place in Ordnance Plant Blast at Khamaria on the 1st January, 1960 resulting in the death of one person; and

(b) if so, the full details of the explosion and the findings of the Enquiry Committee formed?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence (Shri Fatehsinhrao Gaekwad): (a) I regret to say that such an incident occurred.

(b) On the 1st January 1960 at about 03.25 hours when break-down and boiling out of shells were in progress in building No. 200 at F 6 Section in the Ordnance Factory, Khamaria (Jubbulpore), one shell exploded. 9 persons were working in the building at the time of the explosion. As a result of the explosion, the roof of the building was completely blown up and one individual was killed and 4 others injured. A court of enquiry has been held whose findings are awaited.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know under what circumstances that explosion occurred? Pending the submission of the report of the court of enquiry, may I also know whether the explosion was due to any negligence or it was merely accidental?

Shri Fatehsinhrao Gaekwad: No such information is available at the

moment; we are awaiting the report of the court of enquiry.

Shri Raghunath Singh: As the hon. Parliamentary Secretary has no information, may I know whether any departmental enquiry was held?

Shri Fatehsinhrao Gaekwad: This court of enquiry is a departmental enquiry.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want to know whether this accident took place in the danger building, whether all the safety measures likely to be taken in the danger building were provided and even after that this accident took place?

The Deputy Minister of Defence (Shri Raghuramaiah): These are all matters which will have to be gone into by the court of enquiry and reported upon.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Since this report will take a long time and payment of full compensation will take a long time, may I know whether any ad hoc compensation has been given to Mrs. Kamble, the wife of the worker who died because the worker has no son?

Shri Fatehsinhrao Gaekwad: Yes, Sir. Rs. 3,000 has already been sanctioned as compensation.

Shri Hem Raj: May I know whether the loss due to the explosion has been assessed?

Shri Raghuramaiah: The only information we have is that one person died and four were injured. About other matters, it would be presumptuous to say anything without receiving the report of the Court of enquiry?

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: We are told that we will get the information about this explosion only when the court of enquiry submits its report. But when an hon. Member asked about the extent of damage done to the plant, to say that that information will also be known when the court of enquiry submits its report is something which is quite astonishing.

Shri Raghuramaiah: If my hon. friend has followed the answer that was read out, he could understand. The information we have, which was pointed out in the answer, is that the roof of the building was completely blown up; one individual was killed and four others were injured. For any further information as to the actual value of the things damaged and so on, we will have to await the report of the court of enquiry. This is all the information we have.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: It is a factory where arms and ammunition are manufactured and it can be easily known what sort of ammunition was damaged due to that explosion and the estimated value of that can also be easily made available.

Shri Raghuramaiah: I can only give the information available. I have already placed before the House whatever information we have. Any further information which will be revealed by the proceedings of the court of enquiry will be undoubtedly placed before the House.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: It is this negligence which we do not want to tolerate. The explosion took place in January and it is now February and the department says that it does not know anything about that. If they are running the ordnance factories in this fashion, nobody will allow them to do so.

Shri Raghuramaiah: It is entirely wrong to say that, and I do not accept that there is negligence, unless it is proved. Whether it is due to negligence or not is a matter which will have to await the report of the court of enquiry. It is not one man's or two men's opinion. A court of enquiry has to go into it and it has to find out what is the cause for the accident. *(Interruptions)*.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It requires greater clarification. The functions of the court of enquiry probably are to assess the responsibility for this occurrence and so on. So far as the

materials that have been lost are concerned, it is the department that has to find out what machinery has been lost, how much has been lost, etc. Is that also part of the function of the court of enquiry?

Shri Braj Raj Singh: It cannot be

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It might be. Is the department to look only to the court of enquiry for finding it out? What exactly is the loss? Can they not independently ascertain the loss?

Shri Raghuramaiah: I am willing to place before the House all the information we have. Now, according to our report, when shells were broken out for reconditioning in a section of the building in Khamaria factory, when this operation was going on, one shell exploded during the boiling of the exploder container as a result of which the roof of the building was completely blown up.

Mr. Speaker: What about the machinery?

Shri Raghuramaiah: We have no information. I shall certainly get the information and place it before the House.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: What are the terms of reference of the Enquiry Committee or the court of enquiry? Do the terms of reference include the assessment of the loss that has occurred as a result of this explosion?

Shri Raghuramaiah: Broadly speaking, the terms are that they should go into this accident and find out the reasons. *(Interruptions)*.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Do the "reasons" include the assessment of the damages? Hon. Members expect that immediately when an occurrence happens like this, the owner of the property must know the extent of damage. Therefore, the authorities must have an assessment as regards the apportionment or the reasons for that. Who is responsible for that? By this time, about two months have

elapsed. A court of enquiry will go into it, but how is it that the Government have not got that information except that the building collapsed and so on? Any hon. Member will certainly put a question to know the loss. Any person will be driven to ask, "Is the damage serious, and how much is the loss" etc. It is really strange that the department concerned has not assessed the loss, etc. The hon. Minister will kindly do so as early as possible.

Shri Raghunath Singh: Was there any equipment in the hall where the explosion occurred?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister gave the House all the information that he has.

Shri Raghunath Singh: What was the immediate cause for the explosion? We want to know that.

Mr. Speaker: As early as possible, the hon. Minister will try to give sufficient information to the best of his enquiry, apart from the report to be made by the court of enquiry.

Sale of Pig Iron

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*74. { **Shri Pangarkar:**
Shri Abdul Salam:
Shri Chintamoni Panigrahi:

Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel be pleased to state:

(a) the quantities of pig iron sold to different foreign countries by the Hindustan Steel so far; and

(b) whether such exports of pig iron are intended to be a temporary feature pending the completion of the steel-making sections of the public sector steel plants?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha): (a) So far a quantity of 136,900 tons of pig iron produced by Hindustan Steel Limited have been arranged for export to different foreign countries.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Shri Pangarkar: May I know the present output of pig iron in India?

Mr. Speaker: All this can be gathered from the annual reports.

Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha: The output of pig iron in 1959-60 from all the steel plants was 9,70,000 tons.

Shri Pangarkar: What is the present annual requirement of pig iron in the country? (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member must stand erect and put the question slowly and distinctly.

Shri Pangarkar: May I know the present annual requirements of foundry grade pig iron in the country? (*Interruption*).

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: How could they give the production for 1959-60 so soon?

Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha: I gave the figures for the expected production.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: May I know at what price this pig iron has been exported to various countries? Has it been a uniform price the f.o.b. price and has the price varied with different countries or has it been the same? How does it compare with the imported price that we paid when we were deficit in pig iron?

Mr. Speaker: How does it arise out of this? I cannot allow it.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: We have exported pig iron now.

Mr. Speaker: The question about the price does not arise out of the main question. (*Interruption*). Order, order. I have noticed a tendency among hon. Members. When one hon. Member takes the trouble of putting a question, another hon. Member butts in and goes on, trying to get details. If he is interested, why not he table a separate question? He is going into details. No Minister is omniscient and particularly, I am afraid, a Parliamentary Secretary.