

Title: Regarding Disinvestment of Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) in Tamil Nadu.

**SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI):** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you very much. I would like to draw the attention of the Government, through you, to an important issue over which the entire State of Tamil Nadu is very much agitated and concerned. Neyveli Lignite Corporation is the energy bridge to fulfil Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's vision.

On that basis, it was established in 1959. This is the prestigious public sector undertaking continuously making profits right from 1976-77 up to date. Recently, in the current financial year, the Corporation has earned a profit of Rs.724 crore against the investment of around Rs.6,000 crore by the Government of India. But we were shocked to realise the fact that the Disinvestment Commission has submitted a report on Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) with a proposal recommending disinvestment of 51 per cent equity. Of course, not only the sick units to be disinvested but the Government is of the view that some of the profit-making public sector undertakings also have to be disinvested. But, Sir, not the NLC.

Presently, the core activities of the Corporation are to excavate lignite in two of its mines with a capacity of 763 MT. Two power stations, with a capacity of 600 MW and 1470 MW, are presently catering to the energy needs of the entire South India. This public sector undertaking provides employment to 20,000 people directly and 10,000 through Indcoserve and contract.

This recent move, that is, giving the NLC in a golden platter to any one of the monopoly companies, is not to be tolerated. Of course, the Government of India should not accept the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission. It is the pride of our State. The Government is paying Rs.1.64 per unit whereas we have to pay nearly Rs.5 per unit. All the political parties, all the trade unions and the entire State are agitated over this issue.

I would urge upon the Union Government not to heed the suggestion of the Disinvestment Commission on this particular public sector undertaking. This is the only public sector unit which is profit making in my State. If you hand over NLC, then, in that case, you would be handing over all the public sector institutions in a golden platter to the monopolists. The hon. Prime Minister the other day said that some of the profit-making institutions also have to be disinvested. But not the NLC. The Government of India should not accept the recommendations. Already the people of the State and the political parties are making peaceful agitation. The Government should not allow it to reach a point of explosion of volcano.

Therefore, I would request the Government and particularly the Prime Minister not to accept the recommendation of the Disinvestment Commission and give up the idea of handing over the NLC to any one of the monopolists. ...*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** All right, I allow all of them to associate with Shri Vaiko....*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI VAIKO :** Sir, it is a very important issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** After many days, we are going to have the 'Zero Hour'. All the hon. Members would get the chance. ...*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Shri Vaiko, I would allow all of them to associate with you....*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI VAIKO :** For the first time, all the political parties of Tamil Nadu are supporting it. ...*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** I would allow all of them to associate with this issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Shri Ezhilmalai, are you associating with this?â€¦ *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI (TIRUCHIRAPPALLI):** Sir, it is not just simply associating with it. This is not just to say that we are also associating with that. We are actually involved ourselves in this. Particularly, the whole State. ...*(Interruptions)*

With regard to the NLC, this is not about the land, we give everything to the NLC. The Government of India acquired the entire land of 32,000 acres in and around Neyveli for NLC. The entire land was completely wiped out. Out of 32,000 acres of land, not even 25 per cent of the land have been utilised. On no account and on no circumstance, the people of Tamil Nadu would allow disinvestment in NLC. Thank you very much. ...*(Interruptions)*

**डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) :** सरकार कहां सुन रही है? â€¦ *(व्यवधान)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** I have already mentioned to you that I allow all of you to associate with this issue. Now, please resume your seats. ...*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI ADHI SANKAR (CUDDALORE):** I represent that constituency. ...*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Shri Adhi Sankar, I am allowing you to associate with it. You have not given any notice. ...*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY (CHIDAMBARAM):** The staff and workers are beaten up mercilessly by the police when they were protesting peacefully. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What is Shri Adhi Sankar reading? (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Nothing would go on record. (Interruptions) \*

\* Not Recorded

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Adhi Sankar, you have to get permission from the Chair. Neyveli may be a place in your constituency but you should get the permission from the Chair to speak. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (BALLIA, U.P.): In such a sensitive matter, if a Member belongs to that constituency, at least he should get two minutes to speak.

Everyday, the Prime Minister says that the Opposition is blaming that the Government is selling away the country. Hon. Member said that 32,000 acres of land belong to this industry. If it is a profit-making industry, on what basis the Government is going to sell it? There should be some logic or basis or some rationale for disinvesting such a unit. I do not want to intervene but if the hon. Member feels so sensitive about it and it is a sensitive matter in my opinion, he should get a chance.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Chandra Shekhar, in the 'Zero Hour', Shri Vaiko has given the notice to raise this matter. When all the hon. Members stood up, I said that all right, I would permit all of them to associate with this issue. They have not given the notice. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI ADHI SANKAR : Sir, now I seek the permission of the Chair. ... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You cannot read anything during 'Zero Hour'. However, since it is located in your area, you can make a submission.

SHRI ADHI SANKAR (CUDDALORE): Sir, the electricity that is generated through the power stations of Neyveli Lignite Corporation is sold to the Governments in the Southern Region, namely to the States of Kerala, Karnataka, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh at a very cheap rate, at Rs. 1.65 and to the State of Tamil Nadu at Rs. 1.14, whereas the power generated from the private sector is sold at Rs. 4.50 to Rs. 5.50. Apart from this Corporation is also engaged in social activities and is catering to power requirements of Southern Region, mostly as service-oriented organisation, rather than as commercial organisation. It is a viable unit successfully functioning and the ongoing projects are going to be commissioned very shortly. The workers are also agitated on the move of the Government to privatise Neyveli Lignite Corporation. Therefore, I would plead with the Government not to make any efforts to disturb the structural arrangement of this undertaking, as that would necessarily create trouble not only in the power sector but also would affect the entire economy. It is a hen laying golden egg and, therefore, the Government should not make any attempt to vitiate the healthy atmosphere of this Corporation.