

Title: Discussion on the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 1999. Moved by Shri Naveen Patnaik. (Not concluded.)

15.25 hrs.

THE MINISTER OF MINES AND MINERALS (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, be taken into consideration."

Sir, I would like to highlight some aspects of this Bill. The process of globalisation and liberalisation in our country began virtually a decade ago. Earlier Governments helped in this process and our Government wants to pass this Bill which is an extremely progressive legislation. This legislation will encourage vast investment which is required urgently for the mining sector. Reconnaissance is a procedure which takes a very long time and it requires a lot of investment. State-of-the-art technology is required for this which is generally not to be found for this aerial reconnaissance prospecting.

Sir, since a long period, the State Governments have been asking for more powers as far as the mineral sector is concerned. This Bill will give many more powers to the States. For instance, the States have been asking to remove the lime stone mineral from the schedule to the Act. This Bill wishes to give lime stone to the State Governments. As we all know, lime stone is used for making cement. Therefore, the State Government have been asking for this and the Bill wishes to give it to them.

Sir, this Bill is also there to further strengthen the laws against illegal mining. There is a provision for confiscation of the illegal mineral mined as also the equipment used for illegal mining.

Sir, I would like to round off by saying that the object of the Bill is to bring more investment to this sector, to give more powers to the States and also to strengthen the laws against illegal mining.

With these words, I beg to move that this Bill be taken into MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, be taken into consideration."

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (DHENKANAL): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister who comes from my State for piloting his maiden Bill, I believe.

">Secondly, I welcome this Bill. As he has rightly pointed out, this has been a vexatious question with the State Governments that the law did not empower them with adequate powers for reconnaissance, for prospecting and for giving lease in the various fields and there was undue delay. What started off in 1996, I am very happy and I compliment the Minister for bringing it to the House as a result of the Committee of Secretaries which met in 1996. The reasons which he has enumerated are very cogent. But along with authority, I think, goes accountability and responsibility. I am not very sure that the Bill empowers the State Governments in the enforcement and policing this vast mineral deposit which do give the State Governments a lot of revenue. Therefore, the accountability and responsibility have to be met and have to be asked for, at the same time giving adequate powers.

">In this regard I would like to take advantage of the discussion here because we have had occasions earlier where in the name of development and in the name of cost we forgot the value and the price of many a thing. In fact, if I just pick up the Economic Survey of 1998-99, in the Industrial Policy and Development chapter, it says that in the current year deceleration has been most pronounced in mining and manufacturing among broad sectors and industrial production registered a growth of 3.5 per cent.

">MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member may continue his speech on Monday.

">The House shall now take up Private Members' Business. Introduction of Bills.

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