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12.45 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at forty-five minutes

past Twelve of the Clock.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

CALLING ATTENTION TO THE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of reported move to privatise Neyveli Lignite Corporation and steps taken by the Govt. in regard thereto

Title: Shri P. Mohan called the attention of the Minister of Coal to the situation arising out of reported move to privatise the Neyveli Lignite Corporation.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The House shall now take up Item No.9 – Calling Attention.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Just wait and hear what I say.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please allow me to conduct the House. You are dictating terms to the Speaker every time. Wait for what I say.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, it was very unfortunate that you were not present when the matter was called on. Therefore, in future please attend to the matters in time.

श्री सुशील कुमार मोदी (भागलपुर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, ये दागी मंत्री हैं। (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप क्या बात कर रहे हैं?

(व्यवधान)

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (SOUTH DELHI): Sir, the Prime Minister should come and reply.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मंत्री जी, आप बोलिए।

(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : ये क्या हो रहा है, आप लोग ये क्या कर रहे हैं? हम आपसे विनती कर रहे हैं।

(व्यवधान)

SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Coal to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported move to privatise the Neyveli Lignite Corporation and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

श्री प्रमुनाथ सिंह (महाराजगंज, बिहार) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, तीन दिन से प्रधानमंत्री जी को बयान देने के लिए कहा जा रहा है। (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Only the Minister's statement will be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

कोयला मंत्री (श्री शिवु सोरेन) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, नेयवेली लिग्नाइट कारपोरेशन का निजीकरण करने का कोई प्रस्ताव अथवा पहल नहीं की गई है। मैं माननीय सदस्यों को बताना चाहता हूँ कि नेयवेली लिग्नाइट कारपोरेशन एक उत्कृष्ट कार्य-निपादन करने वाला पी.एस.यू. है और उसका निजीकरण करने का हमारा कोई इरादा नहीं है।

एन.एल.सी. एक लाभ कमाने वाला सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र का उपक्रम (पी.एस.यू.) है और पिछले तीन वर्षों के दौरान इसने लगातार लाभ अर्जित किया है।

क्रम सं. वित्तीय वर्ष कर-पूर्व लाभ

(करोड़ रुपए में)

1. 2001-02 1198.53
2. 2002-03 1687.83
3. 2003-04 1413.08

इसके अलावा राष्ट्रीय न्यूनतम साझा कार्यक्रम के अनुसार, लाभ कमाने वाले पी.एस.यू. का निजीकरण नहीं किया जाएगा। इसलिए नेयवेली लिग्नाइट कारपोरेशन (एन.एल.सी.) का निजीकरण किए जाने का कोई इरादा नहीं है।

* Not Recorded.

*SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI) Sir, hon. Minister is now stating that they are not going in for privatising Neyveli Lignite Corporation which is making huge profits for the past 3 years in a row. He says there is no such policy. Let me thank the hon. Minister for this. But at the same time I would like to ask of him as to why certain jobs in a new mine are to be handed over to private contractors when NLC itself can handle the job. My very question is based on this factual information only. When you are making impressive gains as one among the Navaratna PSU companies why should you rope in private sector for certain operations. Precisely that is what I want to ask of him. As part of the second mining work at the site called northern flank, a private company named as Ranjit Constructions of Gujarat has been handed over with the overburden process work. The NLC Administration says that it may have to incur an expenditure of Rs 80 crore and hence they have handed it over to that private contractor for Rs 62 crore at a time when workers there say that it can be completed at a cost of a mere Rs 12 crore.

MR SPEAKER: What is this? The Minister himself has stated that they are not privatising NLC.

SHRI P. MOHAN: When NLC has made a profit of Rs 1413 crore last year alone, an amount of Rs 80 crore cannot be a discouraging one to that organisation and they are giving work contract to a private contractor. I do not think it is financial prudence. It is not a mere money matter. It is a policy matter. I would like to point out and express my apprehension that this could be a step towards privatisation in days to come. Hence I urge upon you to take up the over-burden work yourself. Let it not be entrusted with private contractors. Will the Government pay heed?

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri C. Kuppusami – not present.

SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN (COIMBATORE): Sir, in Tamil Nadu, NLC is considered to be a leading public sector undertaking unit. It is a pity that such a company is in bad shape due to discrepancies in the administration and privatisation also.

You are aware that in the Second Thermal Plant, there are seven units but five units had ceased to function due to shortage of lignite. ...(*Interruptions*) I would like to bring to the notice of the House that lignite is available in the Second mines, but not been dug out. Instead, lignite is being transported from the First mines to the Thermal Plant thereby increasing the cost of production. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It is being recorded.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. SUBBARAYAN : The House should also note the following serious points. ...(*Interruptions*) The Chairman and the Director of Mines do not possess the technical knowledge of mining. ...(*Interruptions*) Now, the NLC Printing Press has been closed down. ...(*Interruptions*) About 100 workers have become unemployed. The work is given to a private printing press with the sole motive of getting commission. ...(*Interruptions*) Another important point to ponder over is the "over burden" in the Northern Flanker area is given to a Gujarat-based company, named, Ranjit Construction for an amount of Rs.62 crore.

(Interruptions) In general, all the NLC maintenance work has been privatised.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down, Shri Subbarayan. Your Calling Attention is with regard to the privatisation of NLC. The Minister has said that there is no proposal for privatisation of NLC. What are you asking?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Prof. M. Ramadass - not present.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): Sir, the Calling Attention is whether there is a move to privatise NLC.

...*(Interruptions)* The hon. Cabinet Minister has categorically said that there is no such move to privatise NLC.

...*(Interruptions)* The hon. Member has asked about outsourcing. ...*(Interruptions)* We know that outsourcing is necessary for us because we cannot invest huge amounts for purchasing the latest machinery because it is only for three years. If we invest in a big way, the company would face losses. This is a temporary arrangement made by the company after a lot of discussions. With the approval of the Board, this decision was taken. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Item No.11 – Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad.