

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA (Serampore): I want a clarification. The LIC had filed a petition before the High Court for a stay of the orders for payment as per the notice that was existing, and now this stay order has not been granted. So where do we stand? An appeal is pending, no doubt, but the stay order has been refused. If the Minister takes the onus on himself that, in spite of the judgment of the Calcutta High Court, he has no obligation to pay the amount to the LIC employees, I have got nothing to say. But the country should know that this is the position in regard to Government and that in spite of the judgment of the Court, they are still hesitating—I don't know why. On the 1st of June the Court had given a direction that you must pay.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want to reply to this?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I am not supposed to enter into a controversy. Let the law take its own course. If they can take action against Government through the High Court, let them do it. I thought Parliament was supreme.

18.05 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377—contd.
(REPORTED DEATH OF THREE WORKERS IN
BHANORA COLLIERY (ASANSOL)—contd.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI K. C. PANT): When I was not present in the House this morning, Shri K. C. Halder raised a matter regarding an accident in the Bhanora Colliery. It is true that there was an accident in 5 and 6 incline of Bhanora Colliery under the Eastern Coalfields Ltd., on the 20th May, 1976 at about 10.00 a.m.

due to roof-fall. I regret that three persons including a mining sirdar died in this accident. I am sure, the House will join me in conveying our deep sympathies to the bereaved families. The officials of the Directorate-General of Mines Safety and the Eastern Coalfields Ltd., are enquiring into this accident. I would like to assure the House that suitable action would be taken on the basis of the findings of the above enquiry.

An *ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 500 each has been made by the company to the dependents of the deceased and the amount under the Workmen's compensation Act will be paid to them shortly.

I would like to reiterate that both the Government and the coal companies are anxious to maintain the highest safety standards in coal mines. Amongst the steps taken to ensure safe working of mines is the setting up of internal safety organisations in the coal companies, directly under the Managing Directors. This is to supplement the efforts of the Directorate-General of Mines Safety. You are also aware that a high-powered committee, including two senior trade union leaders, constituted by the Government is already examining the whole question of safety in coal mines.

MR. SPEAKER: Before we adjourn. I must express my thanks to the hon. Members for the kind cooperation they have extended to me during this long Session.

Now, the House stands adjourned *sine die*.

18.07 hrs.

Lok Sabha then adjourned sine die.