

[Shri L. N. Mishra]

for Railways, with five senior officials of the Ministry of Railways and five representatives of the Loco Running Staff will be constituted and commence functioning within five days of the resumption of the work by the loco running staff. A representative of the Ministry of Labour will also attend the meeting.

- (11) With respect to matters discussed and agreed to, no direct action will be resorted to within the period of three years from such agreement.

Last but not least, I take this opportunity of expressing my deep sense of appreciation of the good work done and the high sense of duty displayed by all the staff, supervisors and officers of all ranks who had gone all out to keep essential supplies moving for the country. I had stated in the House earlier that their services will not go unrecognised. Many of them had to face coercion and physical violence and sustained injuries. Their commendable services under very trying conditions will be amply rewarded. I am confident that Parliament will be one with me on this.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): The locomen also thank the Minister for this. It is a defeat for those who wanted to sabotage the negotiations and agreement.

MR. SPEAKER: You can go and congratulate him. Shri Vidya Charan Shukla.

12.32 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. EXPLOSION IN AMMUNITION FACTORY, KIRKEE

THE MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE PRODUCTION) IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

STRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): I regret to inform the House that an explosion occurred at 11.03 hours on 11th August, 1973 at Ammunition Factory, Kirkee, in a process shop which is utilised for the manufacture of Bicet Strips which are training aids for the Services. The explosion originated in an area where the filling of Bicet Strips is carried out. As a result of the explosion, the causes of which are yet to be determined, 13 people have died. 2 persons actually engaged in filling lost their lives instantaneously. The collapse of the inner wall of the filling building and the heat of explosion caused the instant death of 3 more persons and 8 others succumbed to their injuries in hospital. Out of the 34 persons injured the condition of 8 is causing anxiety. Injuries to other 26 persons are relatively not serious.

As provided under the rules, an enquiry has been instituted by a Board of three Officers, presided over by Chief Inspector of Military Explosives, Kirkee, to go into the causes of the accident. Further action will be taken when the report of the Committee is received. The Committee has already started functioning and is expected to submit its report within a month's time. Immediately on receipt of the news of the explosion, Secretary, Department of Defence Production and the Addl. Director General, Ordnance Factories visited the scene of accident and met the officers and staff of the factory and also visited the injured in Hospitals and the families of the deceased in their houses and conveyed the condolences of the Government to them.

The Police authorities have also visited the site of the occurrence and are also separately investigating into the case.

Government are deeply distressed over this tragedy which has brought so much suffering to so many families and all assistance will be given for their rehabilitation. To each of the

families of the deceased workers, a sum of Rs. 2000 from the DGO's Benevolent Fund and Rs. 100 for the funeral rites of the deceased from Factory Welfare Fund have been or are being disbursed. Further, a sum of Rs 1150 will be given to each bereaved family by the Ammunition Factory Employees' Credit Society, Kirkee. The families of the deceased will be entitled to benefits amounting approximately Rs. 8000 to Rs 9000 under the Workmen's Compensation Act, in addition to benefits admissible under the Pension Rules. One individual from each family has been offered suitable appointment in DGO's Organisation. In so far as the injured are concerned, apart from free medical treatment, these persons will be entitled, during the period of their treatment, to full pay and allowances, in addition to compensation which they may get under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased workers and in wishing speedy recovery to the injured persons.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): You allow a call attention notice. This is the fifth accident in Kirkee, and second in the Ammunition factory. It is not the fault of the Minister. A Committee has been appointed but since the departmental committees are not of great help, let there be a high-power committee. They are paying with the human lives. I myself served in the factory. I know what is that factory. It is the oldest factory. 13 people have been killed. I would request you to allow either a discussion or a call attention to be answered.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a very serious accident and I very much feel concerned about it. I think we should find some time to discuss it.

12.36 hrs

MOTION RE. CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): Sir, I beg to move:

- (1) (a) That a Committee of both the Houses, to be called the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes be constituted consisting of thirty members, twenty from Lok Sabha and ten from Rajya Sabha, to be elected in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote; and the voting at such election shall be by secret ballot;
- (b) That a Minister shall not be eligible for election as a Member of the Committee and that if a member after his election to the Committee is appointed a Minister, he shall cease to be a Member thereof from the date of such appointment;
- (2) That the functions of the Committee shall be:
 - (i) to consider the reports submitted by the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Article 338(2) of the Constitution and to report to both the Houses as to the measures that should be taken by the Union Government in respect of matters within the purview of the Union Government including the Administrations of the Union Territories;
 - (ii) to report to both the Houses on the Action taken by the Union Government and the