

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

6955

6956

HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Monday, 10th May, 1954

The House met at a Quarter Past Eight
of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

9-07 A.M.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

ACCIDENT IN SINGARENI COLLIERIES

Shri V. P. Nayar (Chirayinkil): Sir, under Rules 215, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Labour to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

“On 2nd April, 1954, 5 miners were crushed to death in Singarem Collieries, Kothagudium, Hyderabad, as a result of the collapse of a part of a roof in a coal-pit there. Accidents of this nature, taking heavy toll of miners' lives and crippling even more of them have been repeatedly taking place in these collieries, creating a natural sense of danger and insecurity and causing acute unrest among the mine workers.

The Government should therefore take immediate and effective steps in order to institute a proper enquiry into this accident in active

association with the Union representatives and adopt measures in order to prevent the recurrence of such accidents in these collieries.”

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): On the 2nd April 1954, there was a sudden fall of a mass of roof-stone in the Kothagudium Colliery, resulting in the death of five persons.

The average daily strength of labour employed in this mine during February 1954 was 10,868.

The place of accident had been developed between the years 1945 and 1947, long before the Central Mines Act was extended to Hyderabad. King seam which is being worked in this area includes a stone band about 8 feet from the roof. The roof is of massive sandstone and galleries have been driven on the top of the seam exposing the roof.

On the 2nd April 1954, when three labourers were employed in cutting this stone band, and nine other labourers were engaged in loading coal, a mass of roof stone measuring 40/30 feet and having a maximum thickness of 10 feet suddenly collapsed, killing four of the miners. Another person died while being carried up to the surface during rescue operations, which were started immediately after the accident.

The grain size of the fallen mass of sandstone was very uneven. There were also large black areas exposed in the roof which had formed a plane of weakness but this defect could not have been noticed when the roof was intact as the fallen roof stone was about 10 feet thick. The fall was,

[Shri Abid Ali]

therefore, caused by the existence of a concealed plane of weakness in the roof coupled with poor cohesion due to its uneven grain size.

This type of roof condition has never been noticed before in this mine. There have been instances when an area up to 400 feet by 400 ft. had been extracted, timber supports had been withdrawn and still the roof had not come down. The fall in the present case appears to have occurred on account of the presence of a geological disturbance which weakened the cohesion in the roof strata, and was, therefore, most unexpected. The place had been adequately timbered in accordance with the rules. The mine has a full complement of managerial and subordinate staff who possess the requisite technical qualifications. The place of accident had been inspected by the Assistant Manager along with an underlooker about two hours before the accident, and was found to be safe. A detailed enquiry made by the Inspector of Mines has shown that nobody was responsible for the accident and that it was a case of misadventure.

Statistics of fatal accidents in the Singareni Collieries for the last three years show that the death rate per 1000 persons employed in 1953 was half the death rate of 1952 and only about 42 per cent. of the death rate in 1951.

The death rate due to accidents in Indian Coal Mines has also been progressively on the decline, the rate 72 per 1000 persons employed for the year 1950 that is, the year immediately preceding the extension of the Central Mines Act to Part B States being the lowest on record. The rate for 1949 was 75. This compared favourably with the rate of 2.59 for Canada, 2.19 for U.S.A., 1.65 for Japan, 1.64 for South Africa, .99 for Australia, .83 for France and 75 for the United Kingdom.

The staff of the Mines Department is being strengthened to enable the Inspectorate to make more frequent inspections so as to secure further improvements in safety in mining.

Compensation to the dependents of the deceased will be paid under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

ELECTION TO COMMITTEES

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): I beg to move:

"That the Members of this House do proceed to elect, in the manner required by sub-rule (2) of rule 239 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House of the People, twenty-five members from among their number to be members of the Committee on Estimates for the year 1954-55."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Members of this House do proceed to elect, in the manner required by sub-rule (2) of rule 239 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House of the People, twenty-five members from among their number to be members of the Committee on Estimates for the year 1954-55."

The motion was adopted.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: I beg to move:

"That the Members of this House do proceed to elect, in the manner required by sub-rule (1) of rule 238 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House of the people, fifteen members from among their number to be members of the Committee on Public Accounts for the year 1954-55."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Members of this House do proceed to elect, in the manner required by sub-rule (1) of rule