

[श्री राजराज सिंह]

वे असफलतायें दिखाई दे रही हैं। आज खेती की पैदावार के दाम घट रहे हैं और कारखाने की पैदावार के दाम बढ़ रहे हैं। मेरा निवेदन है कि अभी भी वक्त है कि आप कोई बिंदु मत कीजिए और यह मत सोचिए कि बुंकि किसानों ने कैंक्टरि में गन्ना देना बन्द कर दिया है, इस लिए यह आप की प्रतिष्ठा का सवाल है। अगर यह तिष्ठा का सवाल नहीं है, तो मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि आप उरा सब सदस्यों को बोट देने की आज्ञा दीजिए, जिस तरह कि उत्तर प्रदेश असेम्बली में कुं मंत्री ने कहा कि हर एक सदस्य को आज्ञा दी है कि वह जिस तरह बोट देना चाहे, उस तरह बोट दे। आप भी बैसा ही कीजिए। मैं देखता हूँ कि जिन सब सदस्यों ने एक सबस्टीच्यूट मोशन का नोटिस दिया है, उन के दर्शन नहीं हो रहे हैं। यह बात तो है नहीं कि हमारे सदस्य सापरवाह हैं वे सतर्क हैं लेकिन फिर भी उन के दर्शन नहीं हो रहे हैं क्या बात हो गई है? अब वक्त है कि आप इस प्रश्न को जांच-पड़ताल करा के क्रीरन इस पर निर्णय कीजिए, वना जिस आयोजन को आप सफल करना चाहते हैं, उस का एक बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा असफल हो जायगा।

Mr. Speaker: I will now put the amendment to the vote.

The question is:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

"That this House, having considered the question regarding fixation of a higher price of sugar-cane, as recommended by the U.P. and Bihar State Legislative Assemblies, takes note of the situation arising out of the strike by cane-growers and the closure of sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh as a result of Government's failure to increase the cane-rates, and directs that the price of sugarcane be raised to Rs. 1.70 nP per maund as recommended by the Joint Sugarcane Board for U.P. and Bihar."

The Lok Sabha divided: Ayes—21; Noes—138.

The motion was negatived.

18-06 hrs.

CLOSURE OF KULTI FURNACES*

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the closing down of two blast furnaces in one of the biggest steel manufacturing concerns in India in the private sector—that is, Kulti Blast Furnace No. 4 and Kulti Blast Furnace No. 5 of the Indian Iron and Steel Company. On the 5th of October, 1958, Blast Furnace No. 4 was closed down and the production of pig iron to the tune of 10,000 tons was reduced.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Sir, I find that there is a conference going on on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker: They are only going away.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: They are not going, Sir; they are standing there.

Mr. Speaker: All right, the hon. Member may kindly resume her seat. Let all those who are not interested in the subject go away.

The hon. Member may continue now

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Sir, it is indicative of the lack of interest that this House takes regarding the question of steel and industrialisation that Government have allowed this company to close these blast furnaces Nos. 4 and 5, throwing out of employment in the first instance 710 workers and later on round about 800 workers. Production of almost 20,000 tons of pig iron was also stopped.

Now, the arguments which are put forward are fantastic on the face of it. We are told that we do not need any more pig iron and we are surplus in pig iron. Yet, we are still importing 4 lakh tons of steel. Therefore, Sir, it is an absolutely amazing

*Half-an-Hour Discussion.

argument that when we are having running blast furnaces we are allowing them to be closed down on the plea that when the public sector steel plants come into production and the small expansion of Burnpur and Tata Iron and Steel Company takes place we will be surplus in pig iron. If we could have had more pig iron, it would mean more steel, and if more steel is produced we would have less foreign exchange difficulties.

As a matter of fact, only the other day in answer to a question the hon. Minister stated that in 1958 alone we paid to Japan, U.K., U.S.A. and West Germany round about Rs. 20 crores for importing steel. The figures that have been given to us for import of pig iron are not correct. I am told by my hon. friend, Shri Vittal Rao that even Railways have imported so many lakh tons of pig iron, whereas the total figures that have been given to us by the Minister the other day in answer to a question are much lower. Possibly, Sir, they did not take this into consideration at all. If we were to calculate the total amount after taking into account the quantity imported by the Railways, we would find how much more we are losing by allowing these furnaces to be closed down. Extraneous arguments have been put forward on behalf of the management of the Indian Iron and Steel Company. Actually, they have been bringing forward the question of surplus all along, and all along this company has been trying to preach—

Shri Nardeo Snatak (Aligarh—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Sir, there is no quorum.

Mr. Speaker: The bell is being rung. Meanwhile, the hon. Member may go on.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: All along this company has been preaching the need for keeping down production and that has been done with the aim of getting a bigger margin of profits. The company has expressed

itself in widespread propaganda saying that we shall be having too much steel in a few more years. Thus, from the very beginning, before even the public sector plants have gone into production, the furnaces in Kulti have been closed down.

Actually, what has happened as a result of this closure? If we take this question of the Kulti furnaces, what was the type of pig iron which was being produced there? It was actually special foundry pig iron which was being produced there. In Kulti, one of the most important departments is the spun pipe department, apart from the general casting and light casting and vertical pipe foundry. For all these, we need a special type of pig iron and not the basic pig iron which is produced in the blast furnace at Burnpur. Further, for these various grades of items, we need pig iron with a high phosphorous content. For example, we need pig iron with a low manganese content for these foundries. Then we have the off-grade iron. We need all these for the various types of forgings and castings that are carried on. What has happened since the closings down of the blast furnace? What has happened is, the Kulti shops which were supposed to be fed by Burnpur have not been fed by Burnpur. They have been fed by No. 5 blast furnace, whose average production is about 5,000 tons. The rest of the production is met by the stock built up in the past.

We have heard that there has been an accident, but, in any case, they were bent upon closing down blast furnace No. 5, and as a result of that, there is again going to be a very big reduction in the amount of foundry pig iron which will be available for Kulti.

A little while ago, I have been reading the statement made by Sir Biren Mukerjee before his shareholders. In that statement he has said that the Burnpur extension works will be producing 12,000 tons of pig iron which would produce in turn 1,000 tons of steel. I am quoting him:

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"... the bringing into operation of the first blast furnace will mean a saving in foreign exchange to the country of more than Rs. 2 crores per month".

He added that if the second blast furnace in Burnpur comes into operation, the advantage will be doubled. If that is so, I see no reason why we should cut down what is being produced in Burnpur. The castings, etc., should be given over for Kulti which would be supplying itself for its own use but also supply for other forgings and foundries.

As a matter of fact, certain experts tell us that in order to produce foundry pig iron, the burdens and charges will have to be changed from time to time, leading to an overall lower figure of the total production. Thus, the country's crying need for steel is going to be reduced and it is fantastic how Government could allow the closing down of this blast furnace at the moment.

As a matter of fact, the total calculation was that at a time when our steel plants in the public sector come into operation as well as the extension works in Burnpur and TISCO had gone into production, that would be the time as to whether we should think of closing down these old processes of manufacturing pig iron in Kulti. In fact, the Government at one stage realised this mistake and they wanted that the company should continue this blast furnace for another three or four years. But later, in spite of the delay in the Government's steel plants going into production, the Government were almost bamboozled by the company's demands which the company was putting forward for a long time, and at that time they had also the support of the World Bank's opinion. They wanted a closure. It was a well-prepared move. The World Bank, who have been advising us to concentrate on agriculture and consolidate and go slow in industrialisation

projects, also gave its seal of authority on the ground that the furnaces were old and obsolete and it would be uneconomic. But how could the Government of India agree to this argument, when we have been crying about shortage of steel and shortage of foreign exchange? This is something very surprising.

The argument brought forward by the directors and the management of IISCO is that these are very old and obsolete furnaces. But let us see China's example. With an underdeveloped economy, it clutches at every farm, whether old or obsolete, in order to have a leap forward. So, we must also have our old obsolete furnaces and produce steel to make up the lag behind highly advanced countries with their big integrated steel plants.

When the Government of India actually asked the IISCO to continue the old blast furnaces for three to four years, this is what Biren Mukerjee said:

"... with the concurrence both of Government and the World Bank that such expenditure would not now be warranted having regard to the surplus pig iron that would be available from the new Blast Furnaces at Burnpur and from the other new or expanded plants and to the inevitable higher cost of production at Kulti owing to operational difficulties."

They go on to say:

"Government have recently requested that the company should examine the possibility of the Kulti Blast Furnaces being maintained in production for a period of about four years. This position would be capable of achievement only by the incurring of considerable expenditure on the plant and our Consulting Engineers are now examining the matter. In

the meantime, it has been indicated to Government that the company would expect all such emergent expenditure to be met by Government and the retention price of iron to be adjusted in relation to the actual cost of production."

In answer to that, I am sure Government have many many arguments to put forward, because the retention price has been increased from time to time. From Rs 393 per ton, it rose to Rs 405 and every element in cost has been taken into consideration—cost of renewal, cost of repairs, cost of depreciation, cost value of the increase in labour, overhead charges etc. Every conceivable thing has been taken into consideration. Again in 1958, to cover the higher cost of coal, we have given them an increase of Rs 46. In spite of this, Biren Mukerjee had said that they have decided to close down the Kulti furnace because the retention price was reduced by Rs 8-8-0 in 1956. But they have not taken into consideration the fact that since 1956, the components that make steel and pig iron—manganese, iron ore, etc.—have registered a fall in price and so the margin of profit is more.

There is also the fact that we have given to IISCO Rs 10 crores of interest-free loan. He himself admits in his speech to the shareholders that the depreciation was written off to such an extent that the reserves available were over-capitalised. Finally, as a result of the decision which they arrived at with the concurrence of the Government to close down the Kulti furnace, Rs 35 lakhs which had been kept for the rehabilitation of the Kulti furnace are now being transferred to the general development fund.

There is one other thing, namely, declaration of surplus labour. Ever since the public sector steel plants have been coming up, one cry has been heard from the private sector that they are afraid that the public

sector steel plants with highly mechanised units will be able to compete with the private plants so far as the cost of steel is concerned. That is why they have been saying again and again that they have many men working and so, the question of surplus labour will have to be taken into consideration. In spite of the consideration shown by the Tariff Commission, viz if any tribunal gives anything more to labour, then the retention price can be increased they have been laying the ground so that the labour can be declared surplus. We have seen that in October, 750 workers—610 plus 140—were declared surplus. They were, of course going to take only 200. As a matter of fact, Shri Biren Mukerjee in his speech stated that when the blast furnaces are closed down they shall be offering to the public sector the steel workers who have been declared surplus. What has been the fate of these people? 200 people were initially offered work when blast furnace No 4 was closed down. We sought the help of the Chief Minister of West Bengal. He got in touch with the Labour Minister of the Union Government and after that he told our union, the United Workers' Union well I had a discussion now 140 workers are going to be absorbed by the Government steel plants and 610 are going to Kulti and Burnpur. Where they will be taken, how and by whom, nobody knows. Regarding the 140 taken by the Government steel plants even today we do not know who they are, what were the posts held by them and on what principle they were taken. Still that question has not yet been settled. We are told that it has been decided by the recognized union. Well good a recognized union has been able to do something, we are glad. After all steel industry is an industry in which the employers refuse to negotiate except with those who are supposed to be from the recognized unions. In any case we are glad that through their efforts and our efforts we are able to take some sort of written assurance from the Chief Minister. I do not

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know what our Minister here will say about the 750 workers who were rendered surplus.

Now, day before yesterday I got a telegram saying that there has been an explosion. I do not know what type of explosion it is. I hope the hon. Minister will tell us.

The real desire of the management to close down blast furnace No. 5 has actually come into being and 600 to 700 workers have been rendered surplus. What is going to happen to them? Workers in the steel industry are well-qualified valuable workers whom we need very much. If this is the fate of such workers, what security of life can we expect for the other people? That is why I say that this company, which has been notorious in wanting to keep down its production, is trying to put all blame on workers. When the production goes down it is the workers who are held responsible. I say that the aim of this Company itself is to keep down production in order to keep up the profit. They are afraid of expansion of the public sector. So they constantly scare the people by raising the question of labour trouble or raising costs. They have been trying in every way to hamper production. Their main aim is to increase the margin of profit, and that is why they accuse the labour as being responsible for keeping down production.

It is fantastic that Government of India have allowed the closure of these running blast furnaces when we are so much short of steel, when we are still importing such amount of pig iron. Therefore, I would like to have an answer from the hon. Minister regarding this question. Why have we allowed these running blast furnaces to be closed down on the plea that they are obsolete, on the plea that they are expensive, until such time as the public sector steel plants come into production when we can evaluate the position? Instead of doing that, now we have thrown out

so many valuable workers on the streets, making many more others face the threat of retrenchment.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: I want to ask one question. It is said that the closing down is as a result of surplus of pig iron. When was it found that we have a surplus of pig iron? Because, we find in our country still an insatiable demand for pig iron. Only recently some engineering industries in Calcutta had to be closed down for want of pig iron. We want spun pipes for our many cities. Urban water supply as well as drainage schemes are being held up for want of spun pipes. Finally, when we have paid this company so much of money by way of development loans and otherwise also by increased retention price, how is it that these people are allowed to close down the blast furnaces?

Shri Nagi Reddy: We were told that the Government wanted pig iron to run the steel plants for another 3 or 4 years. When did Government get the opinion of the World Bank that this pig iron blast furnace should be closed down? Why was Government influenced by the opinion of an outsider who practically had no knowledge of the necessities of our country's needs of pig iron and steel?

Shrimati Ha' Palchoudhuri: I only want a clarification. It is understood that furnaces are closed because there has been an explosion and one would not want such a furnace to continue, i.e., if there are explosions. But I want to know what is going to be the fate of these 600 people, i.e., the latter lot, who have been declared surplus. For the first lot there was some sort of an agreement. I hope that the second lot will also be provided somewhere. 1,200 or approximately so many people are out of employment.

Mr. Speaker: Dr. Melkote.

The Minister of Steel, Mines and Fuel (Sardar Swaran Singh): If there

will be so many questions, no time or an answer will be left

Mr. Speaker: It does not matter if we will have ample time. We can wait for ten to twelve minutes more

Dr. Melkote (Raichur) From a broad national point of view, Government have consistently been saying that it is their policy to develop the economy to sustain the security of workers everywhere. In doing so it has been trying to re-open a number of textile mills which had closed down. In a case of this type where the workers had gained experience over such length of time, would it not be a mockery of this policy if workers are retrenched and no alternative work is allotted to them. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to why this change has taken place.

Sardar Swaran Singh, Sr. I hope this is known that the Kulti blast furnaces, Kulti coke ovens and the iron and steel works at Burnpur are owned by the same company. We are also aware and information has been supplied from time to time to this hon. House that under the expansion programme of the Indian Iron and Steel Works, the provision for the addition of two blast furnaces at Burnpur and the closing down of these was also a part of that arrangement. I am not at the moment trying to assess the arguments that have been advanced, but I want to give a factual picture. Under the expansion programme it was more or less a known fact—a fact which had been brought to the notice of the House and was known—that under the expansion programme two new blast furnaces, whose capacity is much bigger than these two which were in Kulti, were to be installed at Burnpur and these two at Kulti were to be closed. It is not that their closure was necessitated by the addition of the other two. It will be wrong to say that because they were adding two, therefore they were closing these two at Kulti. The real fact of the matter is that these ones at Kulti were really obsolete and really

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old—they were installed 40-50 years ago—and according to the advice which the Indian Iron and Steel Co. had obtained they could not live for long and could not produce pig iron at any rate at economic rates unless a good deal of renovation was undertaken. That meant more expenditure. That is the background factually.

Of the two blast furnaces, one was actually closed in October. This blast furnace which was closed in October was called the fourth blast furnace. In the agreement that the company entered into with the workers' union on 4th October it was indicated that the No. 5 furnace, i.e., the second of the two old furnaces at Kulti, was to be closed by the end of the current year and that the surplus labour will be dealt with under a separate agreement. I am mentioning this only to indicate that the ultimate fact that it was likely to be closed by the end of December was known to both the workers as well as to everyone and this was actually mentioned in the agreement which had been entered into between the representatives of the workers at the time of the closure of the fourth blast furnace in October.

So far as the immediate closure is concerned, I tried to contact the management and this is what they have written with regard to the closure of the present blast furnace. In a letter dated 17th December, this is what the managing director has written to the Ministry:

"I am extremely sorry to write and let you know that we lost the No. 5 blast furnace at Kulti due to a disaster at about midnight on the 15th December.

McCracken's note—McCracken is the general manager who is running these steel works—which I enclose also shows that every effort was made to get her back until the afternoon of the 16th when it was found that it was hopeless. He ordered the shutting down.

[Sardar Swaran Singh]

Incidentally, just about this time the teleprinter and the telephone connections between Asansol and Calcutta were cut off and up till now which is 4 P.M. today the P and T Department have not been able to put it right. They say a portion of some of the cables connecting Calcutta with the north has been stolen by someone."

Shri Nagi Reddy Was it sabotage?

Sardar Swaran Singh I do not say, nor does he say

Shri Nagi Reddy How were they cut off?

Sardar Swaran Singh That is a separate thing. The Posts and Telegraphs people will answer. That is not necessary for this.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao Both the closure and the cutting off of cables have synchronised. There is some suspicion.

Sardar Swaran Singh I do not know who should take credit for that. I do not take credit.

"The furnace was to have been closed down at the end of this month in any case. But the fact that we lost her due firstly to a power failure of the DVC and secondly by negligence of the pump house operators is a very serious problem which the Iron and Steel Industry has to face."

I think the House would also be interested to know very briefly the note which was sent to the management by the general manager of the works. This is briefly Mr McCracken's note.

'At 12.15 on the morning of 18th December the tap hole of No. 5 blast furnace was being stopped up following casting when the blast furnace foreman, Bodi

Mondal, observed that a mixture of mud and water was slowly trickling from the open discharge ends of the water cooling system indicating a failure of the cooling water supply.

As a result of the failure of the water circulating system, the copper cooling members were damaged and floods of water entered the furnace. Such a disaster to a furnace is serious at any time but with a furnace in the condition No. 5 was in it is fatal.

On investigating the cause of the water failure it has been established that between 11.22 and 11.25 on the night of Monday, the 15th of December, three low voltage fluctuations occurred on the DVC supply due to a fault on the DVC distribution system. As there was no other voltage disturbance thereafter it is clear that it was within these times that the water circulating pump motor failed.

On interrogation, the pump house personnel on duty at the time made a statement to the effect that the pump failed at about midnight. There is thus a time factor of 35 minutes unaccounted for in which no one seems to have been aware that anything untoward had occurred and it was during this time the emergency water storage amounting to approximately 20 minutes had become exhausted. Hence the severe damage."

Therefore, so far as the immediate cause of the closure of the blast furnace is concerned it is on account of, according to the management, the circumstances which I have just read out for the information of the House. It is no doubt correct that even if this unfortunate accident had not happened, the blast furnace was scheduled to be closed by the end of this month. It may not be correct to say that this closure is due mainly to this that there

is going to be surplus production of pig iron. But certainly it is a fact that the cost of production here was much higher. If the renovations had been undertaken, then the cost would work out to be much higher. It is true at a time when there may be shortages, perhaps we may be content with additional production even if the cost is higher, but if the requirements of the country are already catered for then it will not be wise, it will not be in the over-all national interests to maintain a production unit if the costs are uneconomic. This matter was gone into.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: We are importing so much.

Sardar Swaran Singh: So far as imports are concerned, they relate to an earlier period. It is true there was shortage some time ago, but we cannot ignore the fact that two blast furnaces whose production is much higher have started producing pig iron, and I have already stated on the floor of the House that at the present moment there is no shortage of pig iron. Actually we are inviting tenders for export of pig iron. Therefore, so far as the over-all availability of pig iron in the country is concerned, there is no shortage, and therefore on that account we cannot continue to maintain a unit which is uneconomic, which is obsolete, and we cannot support it by a price support policy when the country is not faced with shortages.

So far as the question of labour is concerned I also share the anxiety of the hon. Members belonging to various parties that they should do something with regard to the labour that is employed there. I have already indicated that so far as the closure of the first blast furnace was concerned, there was an agreement entered into between the management and labour, and the agreement was also implemented.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: No, no.

Sardar Swaran Singh: At any rate, I have contacted my colleague the Labour Minister and he has not received any report about the non-implementation of the agreement which was entered into.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: They are still there without jobs. One hundred and forty have not been taken into the Government steel plants. Out of 160 only a few have been taken.

Sardar Swaran Singh: So far as these 140 being taken into the Government steel plant is concerned, that could not be agreed upon without the steel plant being in the agreement, and we were never in that agreement. It is true that we do require workers for the steel plants and we will be glad, Hindustan Steel would be glad, to employ them, but to say that there was any agreement there between Hindustan Steel and the workers' union or between any persons which would be binding on the Hindustan Steel is not correct, and the sooner I dispel that feeling the better. I think Hindustan Steel cannot and should not undertake the responsibility of absorbing labour. Their test should be the suitability of labour. It is no doubt correct that in Hindustan Steel we do require workers, technical workers, and I am sure that the Kulti workers are technically qualified people therefore they will certainly be considered other things being satisfied for absorption there, but Hindustan Steel have never given any undertaking to any workers there that they will necessarily be absorbed. We can take the view that Hindustan Steel do require people, these people are available, and they are qualified, therefore there is every chance and every possibility of their being absorbed there, but to say that Hindustan Steel have given any undertaking to that effect, I think, will be a wrong statement and it is my duty to dispel that.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Do we take it that the letter to the Chief Minister does not stand any more?

Sardar Swaran Singh: I will request the hon. Member to be a little patient so that she knows what Government's case on that point is.

So far as the closure of the present blast furnace is concerned, in terms of the agreement which had been entered into between the management and the workers in October, 1958 it is agreed that the parties will enter into a separate agreement. Therefore, I presume that now that this accident has happened unfortunately, the management and labour will sit down and work out the requirements of Burnpur, as to how many of these will be absorbed there; with regard to the others, they will get their full re-trenchment benefits and the like, and they will also be considered, if they are found suitable, for absorption in Hindustan Steel. That is the maximum that can realistically be stated, and more than that, I think it will not be fair either to the Hindustan Steels or to the management. That will really be a matter which will be discussed between the workers' representatives and the management.

So far as the present position is concerned, it has arisen out of an accident which has unfortunately taken place, and, therefore, I think we should permit the normal circumstances to prevail in the sense of a further discussion between the management and the labour, so that those workers that are required for their main works might be absorbed there, and with regard to the others, according to the agreement and according to the normal functioning of labour laws, they will certainly be looked after.

Another point was raised that the type of pig iron that is produced in the blast furnace at Burnpur is not suitable for the spun pipe at Kulti. I do not know wherefrom the hon. Member has taken that information. For, this was a part of the expansion programme. The spun pipe is there, and it was to be fed by the pig iron which is produced at Burnpur.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Until now, the pig iron required for this is not being produced there.

Sardar Swaran Singh: It may not have been brought from there during this interval, because this blast furnace at Kulti though on its last leg, was producing some pig iron. So, it is a fact which is certainly known to the hon. Member, because she appears to be very actively in touch with the workers there . . .

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: She is the president of the union.

Sardar Swaran Singh: . . . that this blast furnace was due to be closed, and the spun pipe had to be fed by the pig iron which is produced at Burnpur. So, to say that the Burnpur pig iron is not suitable for this will certainly not be correct; we can give, and in fact, she has given a lot of credit to them for their profit motive.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: It is not producing it yet.

Sardar Swaran Singh: To suggest, therefore, that a private company will not look after their interests, and will put up a spun pipe not knowing about the quality of pig iron that is to be fed into it, is not perhaps consistent with the attitude that the hon. Member has generally adopted with regard to the management.

Therefore, with regard to the overall availability of pig iron, with regard to the labour, and with regard to the immediate cause of the closure, I think the position, as I have explained, is quite clear, and there is nothing further that Government could do in this respect.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: There is just one point that I would like to mention, regarding the labour. Are we to take it, therefore, that at the moment, we have got seven hundred who have been rendered unemployed, to await whatever will be the decision between Mr. Michael John and his union and the company,

and Government are not going to give any guarantee that the new steel plants will take them over, and the 140 which were to be taken over earlier are not covered by any agreement at all? Is that the position that now we have about eight to nine hundred workers without any jobs?

Shri M. K. Ghosh (Jamshedpur): Probably, the lady Member means the 140 that were left by the action of the Action Committee.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: The hon. Member comes from Jamshedpur, and not knowing anything about Burnpur, he is talking through his hat.

Shri M. K. Ghosh: I come from Calcutta, not from Burnpur.

Sardar Swaran Singh: I need not enter into the controversies between the various unions of the workers. That is a matter which they can easily sort out outside.

So far as the existing position is concerned, we sent out a team on behalf of the steel works to recruit suitable operatives out of the workers that might be available from Kulti. They have interviewed quite a few of

them, and it is quite likely that a fairly large number of those persons might find jobs there. But to say that any man who is thrown out, and who is not suitable for the particular type of work that is to be done in the new Steel Plants, should be absorbed, and that the Government steel corporation should undertake the responsibility of absorbing each and every individual is something which, I think, will not be fair to the Hindustan Steels; it will not be fair to mulct the Hindustan Steels with a responsibility of that type.

But as I have already said, work is there and it is expanding and a large number of workers are required. So if they are found suitable, they will certainly be considered.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: They have been working for 15—20 years and now they are thrown on the streets without any security at all.

18.45 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 19th December 1958.