

12.43 hrs.

REFERENCE TO ALLEGED INAC-
CURACY IN REPLY TO A
QUESTION

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukandapuram): On the 9th September, 1958, in answer to Starred Question No. 1072 asked by Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri and four others, the hon. Deputy Minister for Labour, *inter alia* stated,

"The Vice-President of the Federation, of which representatives met us, has written to us that the question should be left to be settled by the regions themselves."

When the hon. Deputy Labour Minister was present, the representatives of the Federation including myself, requested the Government of India to set up a national tribunal, so far as the demands of the All-India Petroleum Workers' Federation were concerned. Later on, I personally wrote a letter to Shri G. L. Nanda on the 25th August, 1958, from Bombay, in which I requested the hon. Minister to set up a national tribunal. It was after that letter that this question was answered by the hon. Deputy Labour Minister.

I had made it very clear in my letter dated the 25th August that the Federation stand for the appointment of a national tribunal and the oil companies are trying to upset the whole demand by starting certain regional negotiations. But obviously, the hon. Deputy Labour Minister said on the floor of the House that I have written to the Government telling the Government that it is better for the Government to leave the matter to be settled by the regions themselves. That comes directly contradictory to the stand taken by the Federation and also what I have written in my letter. The hon. Deputy Labour Minister says that para. 2 of my letter gave him the impression that I told the Government that the matter should be left to the regions themselves.

I have to submit that the answer given by the hon. Deputy Labour Minister is an allegation and also an insinuation about the stand I have taken personally. In the letter which I have written to them, it is made very clear that a national tribunal should be set up so far as the petroleum workers' demands are concerned. I request the hon. Deputy Labour Minister to correct the answer that he has given attributing to me that I have informed the Government that the matter should be left to the regions themselves to be settled. I also wish to submit that whatever interpretation may be given to both para. 2 and para. 3 of my letter which is in the possession of the hon. Deputy Labour Minister, reasonably no impression could be gathered that this matter should be left to the regions themselves. On the contrary, I have told the hon. Deputy Labour Minister in the letter that the oil companies are trying to raise up issues in the regions and the Government of India should not be deterred by those regional negotiations which have been started by the oil companies. I, therefore, request the hon. Deputy Labour Minister to make matters clear at least this time and correct the answer that has been given, so that the misunderstanding that has arisen because of the reply in the mind of the petroleum workers can be removed.

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): Shri T. C. N. Menon, who is the Vice-President of the All-India Petroleum Workers' Federation, in a letter addressed to the Ministry of Labour and Employment on the 5th August, 1958....

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: Not 5th August, but 25th August.

Shri Abid Ali: ...relating to the demands of the petroleum workers, stated *inter alia* as follows:

"After refusing to negotiate on the wage increase demands at Madras, the Oil Companies all of

a sudden expressed a willingness to negotiate with the Unions in Madras on the 14th of August, 1958. The Madras Labour Minister called a conference in which the companies agreed to negotiate with the Unions. It was also agreed that if no settlement is reached within four weeks from the date of the above agreement, the parties are at liberty to pursue their own course."

This letter, particularly the part which I have just now read, ft an impression on my mind that the hon. Member wanted the question of wage increase, etc. to be left to the regions to settle.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: It is quite unfair. Read the next paragraph.

Mr. Speaker: Although the te has been corrected as 25 and not 5, the hon. Minister has read out the letter without any mistake. The hon. Member has written that originally a conference is going to be called and if it is not successful, those people will do it themselves. Evidently the hon. Minister feels that because the letter has proceeded from the Vice-President of the Federation, that is his view also that in case the conference is not brought about by the Labour Minister at Madras, the parties will take to such steps as they think proper. I do not know how we are going to correct that impression. That impression can arise or it need not arise also.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: He has read out only the second para. If he reads the third para., it will be clear.

Shri Abid Ali: It is not here.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: I will read it:

"This sudden change in the policy of the companies especially at Madras alone is obviously an attempt to disrupt the workers and also to find an excuse for not

dealing with the workers on an all India basis. The Unions attended the conference and agreed to negotiate just because they did not want themselves to be accused later on that they violated the code of discipline. The time-limit even in Madras would expire by 10th of September, I request you to be good enough to appreciate the Oil Companies tactics to frustrate the Federation's effect."

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member himself has suggested that if the oil companies still persist in doing so, the parties will take to their own course.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): What has been put forth by the companies is attributed to the workers themselves. He is opposed to it.

Mr. Speaker: Possibly para. 2 should have taken the place of para. 3. If he has put in para. 2 as para. 3, that would have been proper, that his view might come in ultimately. He complains that these oil companies are not dealing with the workers properly and ultimately he gives a suggestion in para. 2 that if nothing happens, the only course is we will be relegated to that position. It is not as if the hon. Minister wanted to attribute motives to any hon. Member of this House.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: It is a question of fact. He replied on the floor of the House that the Vice-President of the Federation has written to the Government that this question should be left to be settled by the regions themselves.

Mr. Speaker: So?

Shri Nagi Reddy (Anantapur): The letter does not say that it should be left to the regions.

Mr. Speaker: What is that could be done? I cannot understand what more has to be done. Both the paragraphs have been read. Neither the

[Mr. Speaker]

companies nor the Federation is in his hands. Therefore, they are trying to settle the differences, and that is the function of the Government. Still, if nothing happens it has to be regretted.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: Sir, that is not a dispute between you and me. The hon. Deputy Labour Minister attributed to my letter a thing which I have not stated. Now it is for him to correct it.

Mr. Speaker: He must have quoted this also—if nothing happens this is what the President of the Federation says.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May I submit something?

Mr. Speaker: What is it that the hon. lady Member wants?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: You should direct the hon Deputy Minister to express regret for the mistake.

Shri Abid Ali: What for?

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: For quoting what did not appear in the letter. I may also state that the hon. Deputy Minister is given to making insinuations in reply always. So, it is better that he does it.

Shri V. P. Nayar: Let him say that he could not understand that letter.

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid, one kind of wrong information has been answered by another kind of suggestion that he is prone to make insinuations.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: I submit that the only question is that he has stated that I have written a particular sentence, and that is not there in the letter. That is the only question involved.

Mr. Speaker: Hon Members will understand the scope of this entry, so

far as corrections to answers are concerned. It is always open to any hon. Member who feels that the Minister has not given a correct reply, or has understood his letter differently, to bring it to the notice of the House. I give notice to the Minister to be present here and explain it. Now the hon. Member has read out several portions of the letter, and the hon. Minister also has read out some portions. There the matter stands and nothing more is to be done. The public at large are able to understand what exactly has happened in regard to this matter. Therefore, let us proceed to the next item.

12-13 hrs.

MOTION RE INVESTMENT
POLICY OF LIFE INSURANCE
CORPORATION

The Minister of Finance (Shri Morarji Desai): I beg to move:

"That the statement made by the Finance Minister in the Lok Sabha on the 25th August, 1958, regarding the Investment Policy of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, be taken into consideration"

I have not a long statement to make at this stage, because the views of Government have been made known in the statement referred to in the motion. The statement is now before the hon. Members and the public for more than three months. I find that there is no grave criticism of this policy so far. Therefore, too, it is not necessary for me to speak now about any particular points which may arise for discussion in this policy. I should, however, welcome any suggestions or criticisms that may be made by hon. Members here after the deep consideration they must have given to this policy, and I may assure hon. Members that any suggestion that may be made will be carefully considered by Government and if any changes are necessary, the changes