

NOES—contd

Mehta Shri J. R.
Mehta, Shrimati Krishna
Melkote, Dr.
Minimata, Shrimati
Mishra, Shri Bibhuti
Mishra, Shri L. N.
Mishra, Shri R. R.
Mishra, Shri B. D.
Mohideen, Shri Gulam
Muniswamy, Shri N. R.
Murmu, Shri Paika
Naldurgkar, Shri
Narasimhan, Shri
Nehru, Shri Jawaharlal
Nehru, Shrimati Uma
Oza, Shri
Padam Dev, Shri
Pahadia, Shri
Palaniyandy, Shri
Pandey, Shri K. N.
Panna Lal, Shri
Parmar, Shri Deen Bandhu
Patel, Shri N. N.
Patel, Shri R. D.
Patel, Shri T. S.
Ila, Shri Thanu
ha kar, Shri Naval
Raghuraj Sahai, Shri

Raghunath Singh, Shri
Raguramaiah, Shri
Ram Saran, Shri
Ram Subhag Singh, Dr.
Ramananda Tirtha, Swami
Ramaswamy, Shri S. V.
Ramesh Prasad Singh, Shri
Rampure, Shri M.
Rane, Shri
Raut, Shri Bhola
Roy, Shri Bishwanath
Rungsung Suisa, Shri
Rup Narain, Shri
Sadhuram, Shri
Sahai, Shri Ganpat
Sahu, Shri Rameshwar
Samanta, Shri S. C.
Sanjri Rupji, Shri
Satyabhama Devi, Shrimati
Selku, Shri
Shakuntala Devi, Shrimati
Shankar Deo, Shri
Shankaraiya, Shri
Sharma, Shri D. C.
Sharma, Shri R. C.
Shobha Ram, Shri
Shree Narayan Das, Shri
Siddananajappa, Shri

Sil diah, Shri
Singh, Shri H. P.
Singh, Shri K. N.
Singh, Shri M. N.
Singh, Shri R. P.
Sinha, Shri Sarangdhara
Sinhasan Singh, Shri
Snatak, Shri Nardeo
Subarayan, Dr. P.
Subramanyam, Shri T.
Sumat Prasad, Shri
Surya Prasad, Shri
Tahir, Shri Mohammed
Tantia, Shri Rameshwar
Tariq, Shri A. M.
Tewari, Shri Dwarikanath
Tiwari, Shri R. S.
Tiwari, Pandit D. N.
Tyagi, Shri
Uiike, Shri
Umrao Singh, Shri
Vairavan, Shri A.
Vedakumari, Kumari M.
Viswanath Prasad, Shri
Vyasa, Shri R. C.
Wasnik, Shri Balkrishna
Wodeyar, Shri

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Now the result of the division is as follows:

Ayes 35; Noes 137.

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That this House takes note of the statement made by the Minister of Railways in the House on the 20th November, 1961, on major accidents which occurred recently."

The motion was adopted.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): Our difficulty is this. We were given to understand by Government that they have no business. Now it is 3 o'clock, half an hour after the time allotted for non-official business, and they come with this argument.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We have certainly heard this complaint more than once, and the answer also. Probably, if hon. Members agree, we might take it up. I hope hon. Members agree that it might be taken up. Now the Deputy Labour Minister. He will be very brief and sweet.

15.03 hrs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: In the view of the hon. Minister, immediate consideration of the next Bill in the order paper, namely, the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Bill, is very essential. If hon. Members co-operate, we can pass it quickly before we take up non-official business.

15.04 hrs.

IRON ORE MINES LABOUR WELFARE CESS BILL

The Deputy Minister of Planning and Labour and Employment (Shri L. N. Mishra): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on iron ore for the financing of activities to promote the welfare

of labour employed in the iron ore mining industry be taken into consideration."

Iron ore mining industry employs a substantial labour force. During the year 1960, about 50,000 persons were employed for raising 10.7 million tonnes of ore, as against 26,000 persons employed in 1952 for an output of four million tonnes. The production target fixed for the Third Plan is about 32 million tonnes in 1965-66 (22 million tonnes for internal consumption and ten million tonnes for export). This would involve employment of additional labour on a large scale. The need for keeping the labour force employed in this important industry contented and peaceful can hardly be over-emphasised.

Constant efforts have been made by Government to get improvements effected, on a voluntary basis, in the working and living conditions of the labour engaged in the industry. The results obtained have, however, not been encouraging. The reports of the officers of the Industrial Relations Machinery who, during their visits to mines, persuade managements to provide at least the minimum facilities, show that despite their efforts, facilities such as water supply, housing, sanitation, education and recreation are either generally lacking or inadequate. A Working Group set up in 1956, which included representatives of employers and workers, while commenting on the unsatisfactory labour conditions in mines surveyed by them, reported that individual employers had their own limitations, that even among the larger employers instances of indifference to the problem were by no means rare and that, in any case, smaller units could not achieve anything by themselves. They also stated that the problem of housing was of such a magnitude and involved so much financial outlay that it could not be tackled successfully without Government intervention. The Working Group, therefore, recommended that a Welfare Fund financed by a special cess, on the pattern of the Coal Mines

Labour Welfare Fund or the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund, should be set up. This recommendation was supported by the tripartite Industrial Committee on mines other than coal, which included representatives of State Governments. The present Bill is in pursuance of this recommendation. It represents the consensus of opinion of all the parties vitally concerned.

The Bill contains eight clauses. Clause 2 provides for the levy of a cess at such rate not exceeding 50 naya paise per metric tonne of iron ore produced, as the Central Government may fix from time to time. It is expected that the cess at the maximum rate of 50 naye paise will yield about Rs. 40 lakhs per annum, on the basis of average production during the last three years.

The welfare activities for which the proceeds of the cess may be utilised are indicated in clause 3 of the Bill. It is not the intention to take over completely the responsibility of the employers in the matter of provision of welfare facilities. The primary responsibility in this regard is, and must remain, that of employers. This clause also provides for payment of grants-in-aid in respect of approved welfare schemes, as also to owners who provide welfare facilities at their mines of the prescribed standard.

Clauses 4 and 5 deal with administrative aspects. Under clause 4, tripartite advisory committees will be constituted in the major iron ore producing States, in consultation with which the proceeds from the cess will be utilised for providing welfare measures.

Clause 6 is an important one. Under this clause, the Central Government is empowered to exempt any State or part thereof from the purview of the proposed legislation if there is a law in force in that State making adequate provisions for providing welfare amenities to iron ore workers.

[Shri L. N. Mishra]

Clause 7 provides for the publishing of welfare activities undertaken and the statement of accounts thereon. Clause 8 deals with subordinate legislation, detailing the purposes for which rules can be framed under the Act. The scope of this clause is limited to matters of procedure or detail and the delegation is of a normal character.

This Bill is very simple and, I might say, its simple object is to raise some fund for the welfare of the working class people engaged in iron ore mines. Hon. Members, specially those who take interest in the problems of working classes, are aware of the condition under which iron ore workers are living and working. They work under the most unhygienic conditions in regard to their problems of housing, health, sanitation, education and water. So, they have to be attended to. I am sure the House will appreciate that this is an urgent matter and Government are keen to see that this Bill is put on the statute book as early as possible.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved.

"That the Bill to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on iron ore for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of labour employed in the iron ore mining industry be taken into consideration."

I hope hon. Members will take half the time which the Minister took.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khamnum): I welcome this measure, notwithstanding the fact that the experience we had in the working of a similar organisation like the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund has not been taken into consideration. The experience that we have gained in working that organisation should have been taken into account while drafting this piece of legislation. I congratulate the Government on the eagerness they have

shown to push through this Bill during this session, because I consider it as one of the rare instances wherein Government have tried to implement the assurance given in this House.

As the hon. Minister has stated, the conditions under which the iron ore workers are working are very inhuman. With regard to housing, they live in thatched bamboo hutments which are unfit for human habitation. Even water is not available in adequate quantities what to talk of protected water supply. Their wages are something like Rs. 1|2| a day and so forth. They are the lowest paid workers among the mine workers.

With regard to profits, the owners are making huge profits. I would cite only one instance, that of the iron ore mines at Gua which are worked by Martin Burn who are the owners of Indian Iron and Steel Works. For the directors there is a very fine guest house. I do not grudge them this. On the top of the hill there is a very fine aerodrome constructed for the benefit of the directors and the official staff. But you see in contrast in what condition the workers are kept. They are kept in very inhuman conditions. There is no proper water supply. There is not even good housing. This is only to show as an instance.

Then you take, for example, the public sector. In the Dhalli Rajhara iron ore mines also the conditions are similar to what are obtaining in the private sector. There is no proper housing. Only some quarters are being constructed. These workers do not have any relation in the surrounding area. They are generally workers who are drawn from other States. They are subjected to these inhuman conditions. I hope and trust that some welfare activities will be undertaken.

I have got a lot to say about administration and about so many things, but I am not going to say . . .

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: After hope and trust the speech should conclude.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: I hope this will go a long way in improving the welfare of these iron ore mine workers.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shrimati Renu Chakravartty.

Shri K. N. Pande (Hata): Sir, I also want to speak.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. lady Member should also be very brief, though sweet she always is.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): I will be very brief though it is very difficult to be sweet on this particular subject because the condition of the iron ore mine workers, as Shri Vittal Rao has already pointed out, is one of the most primitive and the workers live in conditions which are hard to believe unless you see them. Therefore we are happy that at last this Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Bill has been introduced. We want it to be passed into law, but we hope that they will also consider many of the difficulties which are facing the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund in its work and will try to so implement the Act in the case of the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund that they are able to overcome those shortcomings.

The main thing over here is the question of housing, of transport and of minimum medical needs being met. These are the three very important things. Take the question of water supply, for example, in Gua. In the Gua Iron ore mines it is open mining as the hon. Minister knows. In the rains if you see the water there, it is absolutely red water. I do not know how human beings can drink that water. That is worked by the Indian Iron and Steel Company which is one of the biggest and the richest of industrial units in the whole of India. We have brought this to the notice of our Mines Directorate and others but nothing has happened up till now. At

least we should be in a position to give to all these people who are working right on the top of the hill water to drink. They work on the top of the hill and live right down below. They do not have a protected drinking water supply or even any kind of good water supply. Therefore this is the minimum.

Then take the question of housing. If you go either to the manganese ore mines or the iron ore mine areas which are all in that juggle area of Singbhum and Keonjhar and which I know very well, you will find that the houses there are not made with brick and mortar, not even with bamboos, but are made largely with jungle sticks. Besides these, there are a few Adivasi houses which they make not even with bricks but just with mud. The conditions are so primitive that you will not believe and they live in those conditions. Yet, crores and crores of rupees worth of iron ore is exported. It is one of our biggest foreign exchange earners.

The other point is about the question of transport. In the Gua mines because of mechanisation you do have a road right up to the top of the hill. But if you go to Manoharpur and Chiriah areas, you will see that there is no road. People just have to go up by *pagdandis* and if there is an accident uphill, it is almost next to impossible for any transport to go and bring them down. They have to be brought down in skips that go from top to bottom. In such conditions even very badly wounded people have to be brought down. Therefore this question of transport for them is important.

There is no ambulance in Chiriah. There is only a handcart. That also cannot go on the hillside. So many thousands of workers are there in Chiriah, but if you go to the Chiriah hospital, you will see that it is hardly a hospital. You cannot call it a hospital.

[Shrimati Renu Chakravartty]

Then, lastly, there is the question about nutrition. My hon. friend, Shri Vittal Rao has said that we are implementing an assurance given to this House. I would like to point out that the question of nutrition is dependent upon minimum wages. I do not say good wages; I do not say fair wages; I say the implementation of minimum wages. As the hon. Deputy Minister knows, in the Committee on Mines other than Coal it was decided that minimum wages will have to be implemented. You go and see the *rezakamins* women who work in those areas of Bihar and you will find that those Adivasi men and women get in a day not Rs. 1|2|- as my hon. friend, Shri Vittal Rao has said, but hardly Re. -|11|- , Re. -|12|- or Re. -|13|- . That is their daily wage. They are temporary workers. They are contract labour. There is no such thing as permanency for them. Therefore I would say that if you want to give these people nutrition, we must have at least this implementation of the minimum wages. I do not see with the greatest trust and hope how you can solve this out of this Fund. Therefore if you want to do that; this is needed.

Shri K. N. Pande rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Hon. Members have done enough during the last five years.

Shri K. N. Pande: I shall not take a long time.

Sir, although this Bill has come late, I am very much thankful to the Labour Ministry that they have brought it. The necessity for such a Bill was very much in view of the fact that a similar fund had been created for the workers working in the coal mines. Taking whatever has been done by the Labour Ministry for the welfare of those workers into consideration I am satisfied that whatever money is collected under this Act will be utilised in the same manner as it has been utilised for the benefit of the coal mine workers.

The only thing that I want to express here is this. After all, wherefrom the money is coming. This money is going to be paid by the consumers. My only question here is whether the responsibility of keeping in view the welfare of workers is only that of the State or the Central Government or whether the employers also have got some responsibility towards it. From these mines the owners are earning a lot. But what are they going to spend for the welfare of those workers? Government is going to construct houses for them. They are going to make arrangements for the supply of water, for the training of their children and also for their schooling. But what are the employers going to do? The tendency is cropping up in the minds of the employers that as the whole responsibility is going to be taken by the Government they are not going to do anything. The moment this responsibility of constructing houses in the industrial area was taken by the Central Government, employers stopped even to repair their own quarters. If such things are continued, I think it will hopelessly affect the minds of the workers. What are these employers going to do when we are doing everything to see that the relations between the employers and the employees are cordial? Therefore my proposal is that the Government should take this thing also into consideration. Something must be done. The employers should be made to do something for the welfare of the workers.

Shri L. N. Mishra: Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Members for their support to this measure. Hon. Members in the course of their speeches have drawn attention to the unsatisfactory conditions in which these workers are working. In my speech I have accepted these points. It is only because of that unsatisfactory condition that we have come forward with this legislation.

So far as the wages in iron ore mines are concerned—which my hon.

friend Shrimati Renu Chakravartty referred to—I might inform her that we have already decided to implement the Minimum Wages Act among the iron ore mine workers, along with four other mines. The State Governments have been asked to implement it because the administration of this Act is in their hands and they have to implement the provisions of this Act.

As regards the responsibility of providing welfare it is a fact that this is an obligation of the management. Since they have failed to discharge their obligations Government have stepped in and come forward with this Bill. Still we do not think that the employers will cease to have any responsibility. They are expected to fulfil their responsibility of providing at least minimum welfare and amenities to the workers.

In coal mines too Government's responsibility is not hundred per cent; the management have their responsibility. And here also we expect them to discharge their responsibility.

My hon. friend Shri T. B. Vittal Rao referred to the public sector mines. It is a fact that things are not very good in the public sector mines too. But comparatively they are much better. He can look into the conditions in the coal mines under the NCDC. He will find that there is a change, that there is an improvement there. Of course it is not an ideal state, but if we look at it comparatively we must say that the working conditions, the housing conditions, the sanitary conditions and other things in the public sector mines are much better than those in the private sector mines. Sir, I have nothing more to say.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on iron ore for the financing of activities to promote the welfare

of labour employed in the iron ore mining industry, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We will now take the Bill clause by clause. Is the hon. Member, Shri T. B. Vittal Rao, going to move any amendment?

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Yes, Sir, a small amendment. The Minister is likely to accept it.

Shri L. N. Mishra: No, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Then perhaps he need not move it.

The question is:

"That clauses 1 to 8, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title stand part of the Bill".

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 1 to 8, the Enacting Formula and the long Title were added to the Bill.

Shri L. N. Mishra: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed".

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed".

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We now take up non-official Business.

15.23 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

NINETY-FIRST REPORT

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with the Ninety-first Report of the