

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA : We want the response of the Minister who is here as to whether the Home Minister can go to Andhra Pradesh ... (*Interruptions*)...

TEH VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES) : Mr. Singla, the point has been noted by the Government. Now, you please sit down. Now, Shri Jibon Roy.

RE : POLICE ATROCITIES ON WORKERS OF CHENAB TEXTILE MILLS AT KATHUA IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal) : Sir, I rise to draw the attention of the House and the Government, especially the Labour Minister who is present here to the serious situation which arose out of the police and the goonda attack on the workers the Chenab Textile Mills and their families at Kathua, near Jammu.

Sir, on the midnight of 31st July, a big police force and the private army maintained by the textile company raided the workers' colony. They ransacked the whole colony and it was in response to a strike in which all the workers were participating. The private army and the police wanted the workers to resume their duties. The attack included indiscriminate firing, tear-gassing and lathi-charging. The police and the goondas broke open the houses of the workers and molested the women. I don't know what actually had happened in that place. We don't know what happened to the women in that colony. A number of workers are reported to be missing after the police action. Nobody is being allowed to go to that area. The entire area is kept like a concentration camp. Even the Press is not being allowed to visit the place. A correspondent of the 'Indian Express' wanted to go to that colony. He was debarred from going there. Myself and Mr. Basudev Acharya,

a Member of the other House, could go and visit that place with the help of the Union Home Secretary. What we have come across is a devastating picture. There was a lot of firing by the Police and the hired force. The women there had deposed before us that on the midnight of 31st July, the police and the goondas entered their houses and beaten them up mercilessly. A woman who deposed before us told us that while she was sleeping in the room along with her two daughters, they entered her house. These women were scarcely clothed in the midnight. They were not allowed to clothe themselves properly and were beaten up mercilessly. We met about three dozen women there who were molested and beaten up. We were told by one, Mr. Pandey, that his wife was raped. After she was raped, she was picked up by the goondas and there was no trace of her thereafter. Another woman deposed before us saying that herself and her daughter were raped and her husband was taken away from their home. Of course, we took them to the DIG who came over to the place. They said that they were molested. They tried to rape them. But they could not. But the thing is that many people have fled from the place of action. The entire area is looking like a concentration camp. The CRP men are guarding it. The workers are not allowed to enter the place. Even the Press is not allowed to enter the place. We have got the names of 98 persons who are reported missing. It is complained some of the workers were killed and thrown into the company's boiler. I want the Government to take some immediate action.

First of all, the Government should allow the Press to go to the affected area. Secondly, I demand that there should be a judicial enquiry to enquire into the whole issue. It should find out as to how many workers are missing and how many women were raped on that night. The hon. Labour Minister is present here. I

request him to respond to me immediately. The whole incident appears to be a consequence of an industrial dispute. There is no inter-union rivalry. There is only one union which is controlling a majority of the workers. But the management wants to rule over them through some hired private army. Therefore, I request the Government to intervene in the matter, order a judicial enquiry and find out immediately the fate of the women who were raped and the workers who are missing. I demand that the Press should be allowed to go to that place. Yesterday the reporter of the *Indian Express* was not allowed to go there. Only the Jammu Doordarshan was allowed to take some photographs. The local police is involved. All this has happened under the leadership of SSP. Sir, I have been in the trade union movement for the last thirty years. I have seen many cases of atrocities on workers and their families. But I have never seen such atrocities that have taken place in Jammu. I hope that the entire House will associate itself on this issue.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): The owner must also be asked to explain how this has happened. And I want the Labour Minister to respond to it immediately, please. There should be a judicial inquiry into the whole thing.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, at least the Press should be allowed to go there so that things can come to light. I and Shri Basudev Acharya could enter that area only after great efforts. None from the outside is being allowed to go there. Even the workers are not being allowed. People should know what is happening there.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): Mr. Jibon Roy, the hon. Minister has taken note of it. Give him some time now.

I want the sense of the House now. We have finished Zero Hour submissions.

Should we adjourn for lunch for half an hour?

SHRI SATISH AGGARWAL (Rajasthan): Sir, I have a request to make. We have three Special Mentions and thereafter there are some Bills to be introduced and some Bills to be discussed and passed. Then there are clarifications on the statement by the Minister. I have come to know that the 'clarifications' business has been carried over to tomorrow at 12 o'clock. Tomorrow when we debate on this issue at 12 o'clock, there will be no Zero Hour submission and no Special Mention—I am the first speaker on the Bihar situation and that has been agreed to with my consent. So, 'clarifications' will go on to tomorrow. Let the Special Mentions be over. After that, if you think it proper, you can adjourn the House for one hour and we can meet again at 3 o'clock, because the Ministers are also not here to introduce the Bills.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): Sir, I can introduce the Bill on behalf of the Law Minister.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Has he taken the permission of the Chair?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): Yes, Sir.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: All right, then you can do it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES): But first let us complete Special Mentions. Dr. Y. Radhakrishna Murty.