

tomorrow is the last day of the session, we want to know when the Coal Minister is coming to make the statement on the question of killing of six striking coal miners.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): I will get it from the Minister and then reply to you. Now, Special Mentions. Shri Parag Chaliha.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Sir the hon. Finance Minister is waiting.

You can ask him to go since my motion is going to be taken up tomorrow at 11 o'clock.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): I can't tell him.

### SPECIAL MENTIONS

#### **Inadequate Railway Services in Assam and North-East**

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA (Assam): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity, after 14 days of wailing like someone asking for a job. Assam's case and, for that matter, the case of the entire North-East seldom finds any prominence here. I am very sorry to say that our grievances are very little known.

The problems of Assam and the North-East are seldom discussed. Why so? I regret that I have only to pass certain resolutions in a small meeting, without being cared, much less appreciated, by the powers that be. A little while ago, we were discussing about telecommunications. Perhaps, very few people know that the first bridge linking the two banks of the Brahmaputra came up only after an agitation and because the Congress session was held Guwahati in 1957. We had to wait for ten years. I am a freedom-fighter. I can claim to be a much greater Congressman and a much older Congressman than many persons here.

Assam had to bear the brunt of partition. The link with India was only a corridor of a few miles. The narrowness of the corridor has resulted in the narrowness of the mind of other people living in this big country. They assume that Assam and the North-East is still a region of barbarians. The people of the North-East are certainly not barbarians. They are 1101 naked people. Many people in other parts of the country think that Nagas are only naked Nagas. Notions of this sort are at the root of many of our grievances.

The unrest in the entire North-East is disturbing the whole of India. I am not one of those who support this sort of insurgency much less violence, very much less killings. But, certainly, I do feel that there are very very deeprooted grievances in the people's mind. I don't want to tax the patience of all my colleagues. I want to give just one instance of neglect.

Geographical location, causing virtual isolation and, thereby, neglect towards redressal of long-standing genuine public grievances by the powers that be, largely contributed to economic backwardness of Assam, may, the entire North-East.

Needless to assert, communication and transport facilities play a vital role in the development process of a region, and the importance of the railways in this regard needs no emphasis. Unfortunately, however, out of the total of seven States in the North-Eastern region, not even an inch of railway track exists in three States, namely, Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram. In three other States, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Tripura, the railways are yet to serve most parts of the interior areas, inasmuch as the small section of the main railway line passes along the common boundaries with Assam, where, again, it runs generally through thinly populated paddy fields, marshy lands and forests, without even touching most of the district and sub-divisional headquarters and otherwise important urban and rural localities like Barpeta, Dhubri, Goalpara, Mangaldoi, Dhcmaji, Nagaon, Kaziranga, Bakakhat, Golaghat, Dergaon, Haiiakandi, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Sonari, Moran, Digboi, Doomdooma, Marghcrita and Sadiya, to name only a few.

Resultant upon persistent popular demands the single-track railway-line has at last been partially converted into B.C., still, however, delinking the above-mentioned important localities. The outdated M.G. line passing through the north bank of the Brahmaputra as also the Barak valley are yet to be converted to B.G.

*Inter alia*, it is rather deplorable to have to add that whatever has been done to link the North-Eastern region with the country and the national capital, inordinate and frequent delays,

even last-minute cancellation, in the running of trunk-route trains, actually defeat the very purpose of the railway network. To cite recent lapses, during last July alone, the North-East Express train from Guwahati and back has been arriving at New Delhi and Guwahati by as late as Five hours to 21 hours. It is not a solitary feature, but a regular feature now. Moreover, as most of the other trains from Guwahati to Bombay, Madras, Trivandrum, Bangalore etc. operate only once a week, the plight of the passengers, mostly patients, going for treatment, can be better imagined than described, when the trains are running with long delays or are suddenly cancelled. The Minister for Railways, therefore, is urged to put an end to this very unwholesome functioning of the Railway services in Assam, nay the North East.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): Shri Yerra Narayanasamy—Hon. Member absent.

**Need to create separate Ministry for North-Eastern Region**

SHRI YONGGAM NYODEK (ARUNACHAL PRADESH): Sir, through this Special Mention I would like to appraise the House and the Central Government of the need for the creation of a separate Ministry for the North-Eastern region under article 371, clause 2, of the Constitution of India.

The North-Eastern Region has been in turmoil for many decades. The 'Seven Sisters', viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura have sprouted a number of militant groups over the years, each with its own ideology and aims. The problems are becoming very complex day by day, particularly because of the geo-political situation of the region, as, barring Nagaland, all the States of the region have international boundaries. Therefore, arms, drugs, terrorists, extremists and foreign intelligence agencies like ISI are pouring into the region and large-scale immigration and infiltration of foreigners are creating serious problems. Problems like secessionist movements led by ULFA, NSCN, Boro Security Forces and PLA are so serious that unless the Central Government acts soon, it will become more serious than what is obtaining in Jammu and Kashmir.

Very often we have seen that instead of making direct or indirect approach to the extremists, it has become a regular affair of the Central Government to despatch army and para-military forces to the North-Eastern region to fight the extremists and secessionists. As a result, huge amounts of arms and ammunition, money and human lives are being lost in the operations on either side. In my view, military action cannot eliminate the problem. Rather it will create more problems of hatred and revenge. Therefore, I submit a few suggestions:

First, the problem should be dealt with proper understanding, compassion and a healing touch.

Secondly, political negotiation should be made with extremist and secessionist leaders through middlemen.

Thirdly, barbed wire fencing should be erected along Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh borders to check infiltrators and arms smugglers.

Fourthly, the number of civilians and army intelligence network should be strengthened in the international border areas and Finally, more road communications, air services and technical institutions should be made available and more industries should be established in the region to employ thousands of educated unemployed youths of the region. Then only peace can be brought into the region.

I welcome all right-thinking people to support my view to extinguish the burning problems of the North-Eastern region. I also whole-heartedly support the memorandum submitted recently to the Prime Minister by the Chief Ministers of the North-Eastern States for the creation of a separate Ministry for the region.

SHRI BHADRESHWAR BURAGOHAIN (Assam): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Shri Nyodek Yonggam.

SHRI VIZOL (Nagaland): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I want to say something. I will take a minute or two.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): All right, only one minute. Prof. Varma Sahib, please take your seat.