

श्री सिकन्दर बल्ल : इसका क्या होगा ?

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उपसभापति : किसका ?

श्री सिकन्दर बल्ल : यह भी इंडियन एक्सप्रेस में एक खबर आई थी, उसका जिक्र हुआ था।

श्री सिकन्दर बल्ल : یہ جو انڈین ایکسپریس میں ایک خبر آئی تھی اس کا ذکر ہوا تھا۔

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The Special Mention relating to the Secret Meeting a listed at Serial No. 6 and the Special Mention of Shri Inder Kumar Gujral is at Serial No. 4, Okay.

CRISIS IN THE WAGON INDUSTRY IN WEST BENGAL

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : Madam, during the last two day's discussion on the Labour Ministry, there have been talks about low productivity of Indian workers and here is a case of the Howrah Burn Standard Works, where in the minutes of the meeting, the management has informed the trade unions that since they do not have orders, the production has to be brought down. This is a wagon-making industry and there are industries like Howrah Burn Standard works (Howrah and Asansol), Braithwaite and Jessop and allied industries who are employing about 60,000 people. There have been no jobs because there are no orders for wagons. The wagon manufacturing industry is a captive industry for the Railways, specifically meant for supplying wagons and other equipment to the Railways. They have drastically cut down the orders. I am giving you the figures. The licensed capacity of the wagon manufacturing in this country is 35,376 in terms of four-wheeler units. Now, during 1991-92, orders for 25,700 wagons were placed. In 1992-93, orders for 25,300 wagons were placed and in 1993-

94, it has come down to 18,500. That means orders have been drastically cut down by 30 per cent and ordering has been done in three phases. Normally, orders are given one year in advance so that the production centres can plan much in advance. But during 1993-94, it has been done in three phases after the Chief Minister of West Bengal had taken up the matter with the Prime Minister. Today, in 1994-95, till now, there is no order or wagons with these units and all the workers are absolutely without any work. There has been a report by Atkins, appointed by the Ministry of Industry, on the advice of the World Bank, and this report specifically says that the cost of wagons in these public sector units is much less than their cost in Western Europe or Eastern Europe. Now the Atkins report has said that some of the units have to be closed down and the Government immediately referred those units have to the to BIFR for closure. But when the Atkin report has further said for these units that they have scope for better capacity utilisation and the production cost is less. But till now, the Government has not taken any action in placing orders. It appears that either the Government will import the wagons or they will depend on the road transport. I do not know what they are going to do. The productive capital assets are being under-utilised and the road transport or the import of wagons or the setting up of new factories, would not help. I want that the Prime Minister should immediately convene a meeting of all the Ministries because there is a game of musical chairs going on. The Ministry of Industry say that it is not their problem. The Ministry of Railways say that they are not placing the orders and there is no Plan Allocation from the Ministry of Finance and this is going on. The Prime Minister should immediately call a meeting of all these Ministries and see to it that orders are immediately placed on these units.

REFERRING OF IISCO TO BIFR IN VIOLATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal) : Madam, I feel, the Indian Parliamentary system is really being tampered

with. Only the other day, there was a recommendation from the Standing Committee of this Parliament, saying that the IISCO should not be privatised and the Government should take all steps to revive the IISCO.

Within seven days there was a hurriedly called meeting of the Board of Directors of IISCO in the presence of the Chairman of SAIL and they had decided, violating all canons or normal procedure, to refer it to the BIFR. IISCO did not incur any loss for three consecutive years. A unit can be referred to the BIFR if there is loss for three consecutive years. In 1991-92, IISCO earned profits. Despite that, there was a hurriedly taken decision on the part of the Board of Directors, may be, at the instance of somebody very important in the Ministry of Steel because he believes that IISCO should be handed over to Mukand via BIFR. Madam, the only point is that the Tripartite Committee constituted by the Government of India had decided that land should be sold out to revive NTC. If in the case of NTC, land could be sold out, why not in the case of IISCO which is having assets who value, as estimated by MECON, is Rs. 23,000 crores? The IISCO is having assets worth Rs. 23,000 crores. Even then, it is being sent to the BIFR and the bill for modernisation is nothing more than Rs. 5,000 crores! Madam, SAIL is having enough money to modernise. The annual profit of SAIL is Rs. 500 Crores, and SAIL, on its own behalf, has undertaken to modernise Bokaro and some other plants of SAIL by spending an amount of Rs. 20,000 crores during the Eighth Plan and Ninth Plan periods. If Bokaro can be modernised by SAIL, with its own funds, if the other units of SAIL can be modernised by spending Rs. 20,000 crores, then what is the reason for handing over the IISCO to a private party via BIFR? Therefore, I question the merit of the decision and I question the methodology. It is not the merit that promoted the Board to refer it to BIFR. It had been sent because some parties were very important. I believe, the Minister of Steel has an axe to grind and it is because of

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Will you now be brief?

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : Madam, it is because of the Minister of Steel.... (interruptions)....

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Andhra Pradesh) : Madam, if the axe of the Minister is very long, how can the speech of the Member be brief?

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : Therefore, Madam, the point is without taking into consideration the recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, without taking into consideration the unanimous recommendation of all the Central trade unions in the country, including the Indian National Trade Union Congress, and violating all norms, it is being sent to BIFR. It is being deliberately made sick and the whole methodology is to hand it over to a private party, i.e. Mukand, via BIFR. I oppose this, I call this anti-India, anti-public sector, anti-Indian economy and it is unpatriotic and there is something suspicious and fishy in the whole thing. I want a parliamentary probe into the whole thing, and pending the parliamentary finding, the whole decision of the Board of Directors of IISCO should be asked to be suspended.

(Interruptions)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Shri Jibon Roy.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN (Kerala) : Madam, it was a unanimous decision of the Committee. ... (Interruptions)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I am sorry. Mr. Jibon Roy gave me a paper and asked me to give a opportunity to him and I must give him a chance.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : Madam, I should also be given a chance.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Only after him.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : Madam, the Parliamentary forum is flouted. You have to protect us.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I will protect you but let me protect Mr. Jibon Roy first.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : Madam, protect a parliamentary veteran.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Let me protect his right to speak first.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal) : Madam, I happened to be a Member of the Standing Committee. Personally I am a steel workers. I know both the technique and the economy of the plant. Madam, before the Report of the Standing Committee was laid on the Table of this august House on 19th of this month the main focus of the Standing Committee had been that modernisation had to be done by the SAIL and, at the same time, the Report has also given some alternative routes and some alternative ways of resource mobilisation.

Unfortunately, the report also says that the matter has to be settled through a tripartite consensus. It was the focus of the report. The Steel Ministry, through a premediated decision, have taken recourse to victimising IISCO. Strictly speaking it is not the case of BIFR. The Steel Ministry is exploiting the accounting jugglery. The entire world will laugh to hear that for making a loss of Rs. 800 crores a steel plant with having six captive plants, is to be liquidated, is to be referred to the BIFR. Visakhapatnam steel plant is making a loss of Rs. 600 crores every years. IISCO's its accumulated loss is Rs. 800 crores. It is because of the fact that the equity base of the company is too narrow. (*interruptions*). According to the Committee of experts, which was constituted by the Steel Ministry, the assets of IISCO amount to Rs. 2,042 crores. The Committee of Experts which has recommended its privatisation to Mukands, has said that its assets come to Rs. 2,042 crores. The entire thing is calculated on the basis of Rs. 388 crores equity with 423 crores assets. Had the equity base been expanded taking the real asset it would not have been referred to the BIFR. I have got documentary evidence with me. Had the Steel Ministry accepted the decision of the Parliamentary Committee, this matter would not have been referred to the BIFR. It is a trade union movement. Madam, INTUC, AITUC, CITU,

BMS are opposing the move of privatising the Plant. Not a technician nor any engineer has accepted the decision of the Steel Ministry. I would request, through you, the Steel Minister to come here and make a statement (*Interruptions*). It is not a matter of IISCO only. I have got documentary evidence with me. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Mukands and the Steel Ministry.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra) : Madam, to refer a matter to the BIFR does not mean that they are giving it to the private sector. The BIFR should examine it and decide whether it can be revived or not. I very strongly feel that IISCO can be revived. IISCO has got vast chunk of land in prime area. If the Urban Land Ceiling Act is relaxed in the case of public sector undertakings and if finances are made available, they can again put it into a very strong position. As such, I would request the Government and the BIFR to see what finances they can get by selling the surplus land. So, through that money and with the help of budget allocation, this unit should be revived because it is a question of the steel industry. I feel that it should not be handed over to the private sector. If the BIFR comes out with some other conclusion, then it should be debated in the House so that all of us can make our arguments.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I understand the sentiments of the House. If you want a discussion, the Chairman has to decide when time has to be given. Now, Shri Inder Kumar Gujral... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA (Bihar) : Madam, I would like to associate myself with whatever Shri Gurudas Das Gupta said. I feel that the IISCO should not be privatised and it should not be referred to the BIFR. It is being handed over to Mukand with *mala fide* intentions. Mukand does not have the expertise nor the technical knowhow... (*interruptions*)... to revive it. The SAIL has got the capacity to do it and the Government must come out with a plan.