

RAJYA SABHA

*Monday, the 28th February, 1994/ 9th
Phalgun, 1915 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr.
CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Karma Topden (Sikkim).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Fire Accident in the New Kenda Colliery

*61. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:
SHRI G.G. SWELL:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to
state:

(a) what are the causes and details of
the recent fire accident which took
place at New Kenda Colliery of the-
Eastern coalfields near Asansoi on 25th
January, 1994;

(b) what is the number of workers
trapped, injured and killed in the fire
accident and what rescue steps were
taken to save their lives;

(c) what safety measures were taken
before and after the accident;

(d) whether there has been any
violation of the safety norms at the
mine, if so, what are the details in this
regard and what precautionary measures
were taken;

(e) what compensation has so far been paid
or is likely to be paid to the persons injured
and killed; and

(f) the number of accidents which took
place in India Limited and the subsidiaries
during each of the last three years. What were
the causes and details of such accidents and
the preventive steps taken in this regard
before and after each accident?

- i) Funeral expenses Rs. 2000/-
- ii) Ex-gratia Rs. 10,000/-
- iii) Special ex-gratia Rs. 50,000/-

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI

AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (f) A
statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Blazing fire was noticed on the intake
roadway about 50 metres from the shaft in
New Kenda Colliery on 25-1-1994. Ministry
of Labour have constituted a Court of Inquiry
headed by Mr. Justice Shamsuddin Ahmed
formerly Judge of the Calcutta High Court to
hold an inquiry into the accident.

(b) 55 miners got trapped in the mine.
Immediate combing

(c) operations were started by rescue
teams for locating the trapped miners. But the
efforts of the rescue teams were hampered
because of heat thick smoke and roof falls 37
bodies have been recovered so far.

(d) & (d) The coal companies are strictly
following the provisions of the Mines Act,
1952 and Coal Mines Regulations, 1957. The
safety situation is constantly monitored at
various forums for removing dangers and
upgrading the safety situation in the mines.
The exact cause of the accident including
violation of safety norms if any, would be
known only after the inquiry is complete.

(c) Apart from paying terminal benefits,
compensation payable under the Workmen's
Compensation Act amounting to Rs. 37.89
Lakhs approximately in respect of all 55
victims has been deposited with the-
Compensation Commission upto 22.2.94. In
addition, as on 23.2.1994 the following
benefits have been provided for each of the
victims dependents:

Paid to nominees of all 55 victims. Paid to
nominees of 36 victims. Rest to be paid when
other nominees arrive from their native place.

- iv) Job to the widow or a dependent of the deceased worker, failing which, the widow has the option to draw pension of Rs. 3000/- p.m. till she attains the age of 60 years.
- v) Transport facility at the cost of the company for the widow or the next of kin for taking the body to their place of choice for last rites.
- vi) Dependent children of deceased employees will be given free education with boarding and lodging upto the age of 18 years in any Ramakrishna Mission or Mother Teresa schools at the cost of ECL.
- Offered to all who reported after cremation now numbering 35.
- Given to all who required.
- Preliminary study made by Ramakrishna Mission, Purulia.

(f) The information is furnished in the Statement-I.

Statement-I

Details of pre accidents in Coal India Ltd. and its subsidiaries

S1. No.	Name of the Colliery	Date of occurrence	Cause and place of fire	Remedial acitov' Preventive steps.
EASTERN COALFIELDS LTD:				
1.	Khottadih Samla	5.3.91	Pillar fire.	Places drowned.
2.	Khandra (Kajora Seam)	25.3.91	Spontaneous heating in F-16 depillaring panel.	Panel sealed off.
3.	Naba Kajora Lower Kajora Seam.	26.3.91	Spontaneous heating in caving panel 6D.	Panel scaled off.
4.	North Searsole.	18.6.91	Pillar fire.	Dealt by water infusion.
5.	Bahula Kenda top.	27.6.91	Spontaneous heating in stowing panel.	Quenched by hydraulic sand stowing.
6.	North Searsole.	11.7.91	Pillar fire.	Dealt by water infusion.
7.	Bahula (Banbahal seam).	16.8.91	Spontaneous heating in caving Pane 1-F.	Panel was sealed off.
8.	Mithani (BD Seam).	9.10.91	Spontaneous heating in panel 1-4.	Panel sealed off.
9.	Mithani (BD seam).	9.10.91	Spontaneous heating in panel-2.	Panel sealed off.
10.	South Samla (Samla Seam)	9.10.91	Spontaneous heating in W.L. off 7 dip.	1 Whole mine was scaled off and again reopened on 17.2.92.
II.	Singha (Poniatl Seam).	13.10.91	4 Pit shaft level 6th south dip	Dealt with Water infusion, cement plastering and cement injection.
12.	Shyamsunderpur Jambad bottom	20.10.91	Spontaneous heating in Panel-19	in Panel was scaled off.
13.	Khas Kajora	19.11.91	In drift	Dealt with water.
14.	Madhaipur	30.3.92	Spontaneous heating in old sealed off panel	in Sealed off by stopping.
15.	Amritnagar Narainkuri seam.	2.5.92	Spontaneous heating in pit panel A-4	: Panel sealed off. 2
16.	Haripur Chora seam	6.5.92	1st and 20th level fire	Dealt by water infusion.
17.	Siduli Jambad Seam	12.5.92	Spontaneous heating in old sealed off panel.	in Repairing and strengthening the stoppings.

S1. No.	Name of the Colliery	Date of occurrence	Cause and place of fire	Remedial action/ Preventive steps.
18.	New Kcnda, Kenda Seam.	3.7.92	Spontaneous heating in 3 dip side and panel No. 5 in old developed galleries.	Sealed off by building 7 Nos. of isolation stoppings.
19.	Madhujore, Kajora Seam.	23.8.92	Spontaneous heating in old goaf fire.	By building up 3 stoppings and No. 2 pit was sealed off.
20.	Shyamsunderpur	20.9.92	Spontaneous heating in old goaved out.	Sealing off the area by making 3 Nos. of isolation stoppings.
21.	New Kenda Kenda Seam.	10.5.92	Spontaneous heating in sealed off panel No. 3.	Isolated by building 8 No. isolation stoppings.
22.	New Kenda	1.1.93	Spontaneous heating in old working between 4 & 8 pit on the rise of panel No. 6.	Isolated by 42 Nos. of isolation stoppings and sealing off 2 old shafts.
23.	Naba Lower Kajora Seam.	28.8.93	54 rise old workings.	Sealed off by making 14 Nos. of isolation stoppings.
24.	Mithani (BD Seam)	9.10.93	Spontaneous heating in Panel-5.	Isolated by isolation stoppings.
25.	Amritnagar K.J. Seam	12.10.93	Spontaneous heating near 3 pit old goaved out area.	Sealing off by making 4 stopping.
26.	Kumardihi Banbahal Seam	15.10.93	Spontaneous heating in panel-12.	Heating occurring due to power shut down from 29/9/92 to 3/10/92 and it was sealed off
27.	Chindkuri Borachak.	18.10.93	Spontaneous heating in old goaved out panel No. 70	By repairing the stoppings and sealing off old shaft.
28.	Dalurband		Old fire in worked out seam.	Sealing have been completed.
29.	South Samia	13.12.93	8th rise off 4 EL Coal pillar.	Fire was dug out and quenched.
BHARAT COKING COAL LIMITED				
1.	Lodna XI/XII/XIH Seam	22.10.91	Smoke and Carbon Monoxide were detected in depillai trig (Caving) district.	Intentional flooding and Nitrogen flushing were tried. Finally sealed off by isolation stoppings in U/G and 4 Nos. pits isolation at surface, no casualty.
2.	Basuria XI / XII Seam	Nov. 92	Heating detected in old quarry debris.	Surface blanketing done, trench cutting along Rly. line and village, quenching with water done. No casualty.
3.	Moonidih, Longwall Face	Aug. 93	Carbon Monoxide detected in face	Equipment salvaged sealed off by isolation stoppings. No Casualty.
CENTRAL COALFIELDS LTD:				
There were no fire accidents in mines of C.C.L. during the last three years involving any loss of life.				
NORTHERN COALFIELDS LTD:				
There were no fire accidents in mines of N.C.L. during the last 3 years.				
WESTERN COALFIELDS LTD:				
1.	Rajur V/G Major Seam. Wari Area.	13.7.91	6D/27L. Panel C&D Heating in fallen coal.	Heated coal removed from site to deal with fire.-

Sl. No.	Name of the Colliery	Date of occurrence	Cause and place of fire	Remedial action/ Preventive steps.
2.	Rajur UG Major Seam Wari Area.	15.8.91	34L31-D	Heated coal removed from site to deal with fire.
3.	New Majri-3, Majri Seam, Wari Area.	16.8.91	Heating at goaf edges.	
4.	New Majri-3, Majri Seam, Wari Area.		Panel C&D heating in sealed area.	Area again resealed off.
5.	New Majri-2, U/G Majri Seam. Wari Area.	18.8.91	37-D/21 L.S. Heating of pillar side.	Quenching plastering with Cement.
6.	Nakoda UG Majri, Wari Area.	18.9.91	32D566, Spontaneous heating in panel.	Area scaled off and then re-opened.
7.	Damua LVG No. 1 Seam Kanhan Area	14.7.91	Split of 1-E dip Section. Heating in fallen coal.	Area sealed off.
SOUTH EASTERN COALFIELDS LTD:				
1	Churcha East	2.10.93	Suspected cause is bursting of live electric cable which caused fire at 51 level.	The mine was scaled off at the outlets
MAHANADI COALFIELDS LTD:				
1.	Nandira	6.6.92	Power cable crushed under track chain which caused heavy flash and caught fire in the spilled lubricant and coal dust.	Mine was sealed off.
2	Deulbera	27.10.93	Cause suspected as spontaneous heating of coal in old workings. Actual reason is still being investigated.	Mine scaled off.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन: सभापति महोदय, कोयला मंत्री का उत्तर सत्य से उतना ही दूर है जितना हिन्दुस्तान की कोयला खदानें सुरक्षा से दूर हैं मैं उनके उत्तर से केवल दो उदाहरण दूंगा। (ख) में कोयला मंत्री कहते हैं कि बचाव दलों ने तुरंत बचाव कार्य आरम्भ किया। आपको सुना कर यह आश्चर्य होगा कि इस खदान में जब 4 बजे आग लगी तो रात के 9 बजे तक वहां कोई नहीं पहुंचा था इस खदान से मुखी दुशद नाम के एक व्यक्ति का शव मिला जिसकी घड़ी पर उसने एक चिट्ठी लिख कर रखी थी कि अभी रात के 10 बजे हैं, अभी तक हम जीवित हैं लेकिन हमें छुड़ाने अभी तक कोई नहीं आया। पता नहीं लोग कब आएंगे। यह चिट्ठी से स्पष्ट है कि रात के 10 बजे तक, 6 घंटे के पश्चात् भी वहां कोई नहीं गया था। इसमें यह कहा गया है कि कोयला उपबंधों का कड़ाई से अनुपालन कर रहे हैं। यह भी असत्य है।

कोयला कंपनियों को खदानों में काम करने वाले हर व्यक्ति को एक सेल्फ रिस्क्युर देने की बात होती है जिसकी सहायता से किसी भी हवा में वह बीस मिनट तक जीवित रह सकते हैं लेकिन इस प्रकार का कोई सेल्फ रिस्क्युर वहां नहीं दिया गया था। 55 लोगों की जानें इसमें चली गईं। लगता यह है कि कोल इण्डिया लिमिटेड कोयले का उत्पादन बढ़ाने में मनुष्य हानि से कोई चिन्ता नहीं कर रहा है। इसलिए इस असत्य उत्तर के संबंध में मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूं..

MR, CHAIRMAN: Please ask your question.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन: मैं प्रश्न ही पूछ रहा हूं। क्या मंत्री जी स्वयं इस बात से आश्चर्य हैं कि कोयला कंपनियों सुरक्षा के नियमों का कड़ाई से अनुपालन कर

रही हैं? यदि कोयला कम्पनियाँ कड़ाई से अनुपालन कर रही हैं तो दुर्घटनाएँ क्यों बढ़ रही हैं? क्या आज तक किसी कोयला कम्पनी को सुरक्षा नियमों का पालन न करने के कारण किसी प्रकार की कोई सजा सुनाई गई है और यदि सुनाई गई तो उसकी जानकारी सदन को दें?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Sir, the answer given is according to the CIL and ECL company where the fire took place, but I think the hon. Member has got some wrong information. The fire took place, according to the records available, at about 4.00 p.m. and not 4.00 a.m. in the morning.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I am sorry, it was in the evening at 4.00 p.m. but nobody reached the spot.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: The record shows that one gentleman, named Ganesh Lala, reported the fire at 4 p.m. When I went there personally, I examined and found out that immediately, the mine officers team on the spot, that is one Manager and one agent, had gone down.

SHRI JIBON ROY: it is untrue, it is completely untrue.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: It was found that in the in shaft from where the people go down at about 50 metres, a blazing fire was there.

So far as the wrist watch and the note are concerned, at that time I was in Santo ria and when I read it in the newspaper, immediately I asked the Chairman to go there and find out because this would be the best evidence. I was told that a thorough search was made. The reporter who had reported it also said that it was a hearsay and he had heard it from somewhere. Then all the bodies which were found there were searched, but no such wrist watch or

papers were located. Yet, I do not want to make any comments because there are *prima facie* and a court of Inquiry has been ordered and the Court of Inquiry will go in depth to find out whether any such thing was there or not. All these things may come as evidence before the Court of Inquiry.

Regarding my satisfaction, personally speaking I was not satisfied when I went to the spot. Therefore, I requested Mr. Sangma, the Labour Minister, to give an hon. Judge of High Court so that not only justice is done but also seen to have been done. I requested the Labour Minister because there is a special provision in the Mines Act, 1952, I requested him to institute an inquiry through a Court of Inquiry under section 24. As per the provision, one Judge is there. There are two assessors. One is an expert on mining and the other is from trade unions. This was done so that there might not be any loss of faith in the system by the workers for whom this enquiry is made. That is why this Court of Inquiry has been ordered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन: सभापति जी, मुझे लगता है कि कोयला मंत्रालय इन दुर्घटनाओं के बारे में संवेदना शून्य हो चुका है और सेफ्टी मेजर आप नहीं लेते जिसका एक उदाहरण देकर दूसरा सप्लीमेंटरी थोड़े में पूछूंगा। माना यह जाता है कि कोयला खदानों के अंदर कोई ऐसा टेलीफोन सिस्टम हो जिस टेलीफोन से कम से कम वह ऊपर को यह बता दे कि नीचे दुर्घटना हो रही है। इस कोयला खदान में जहां 55 व्यक्तियों की मृत्यु हुई, एक प्रकार से हत्या हुई, वहां पर इस प्रकार का कोई टेलीफोन नहीं था, इसके कारण 6 घंटे कोई संपर्क हो नहीं पाया। इस दृष्टि से मैं मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि कोयला खदानें सुरक्षित हों इस दृष्टि से आस्ट्रेलिया की ओर से भारत सरकार को एक 40 करोड़ की स्कीम 1986 में सुझाई गई थी। जिस 40 करोड़ में से लगभग

22 करोड़ बहुत ही कम व्यय पर कर्जा है और 18 करोड़ मुफ्त में मिल रहा है लेकिन इस 40 करोड़ की जिसे खास दर ऑस्ट्रेलियन रूफ लॉकिंग सिस्टम कहते हैं इस प्रकार की सुरक्षा व्यवस्था 1986 से ऑस्ट्रेलिया देना चाहता है, कोयला मंत्रालय गत 8 वर्ष से इस योजना पर विचार कर रहा है। बार-बार ऑस्ट्रेलिया की ओर से यह पृष्ठ जा रहा है, लेकिन पता नहीं कोयला मंत्रालय में कौन अधिकारी ऐसा बैठा है कि जो इसको आगे जाने नहीं देना चाहता? मैं कोयला मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि आगे इस प्रकार की दुर्घटना न हो इसलिए यह जो ऑस्ट्रेलिया रूफ बोल्ट सिस्टम ऑस्ट्रेलिया की सरकार की ओर से योजना भारत सरकार को बताई गई है, दी गई है, जो दुनिया में मानी गई है, क्या इस पर भारत सरकार तुरन्त निर्णय लेगी?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: So far as the Australian roof bolt system is concerned, it is one of the systems used, but we have to check up whether it is suitable to the Indian conditions. In the case of the wright wall face that we imported, it was found that in Indian conditions it was not possible for full, optimum, ass.

SILP-I PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Coal India has already recommended the technical viability of the scheme to the Ministry and it is pending with the Ministry. Coal India, which is an expert, has said that this is the best system in the world and you must take it. I can show it from your files.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: When tills came, up, it was examined by the Ministry, and it appeared that there were two divergent views. Therefore, to find out the best thing we referred it to one of the best available experts, Prof. A.K. Ghosh of the Indian School of Mines, and Prof. A.K. Ghosh is of the opinion that a modern system of this type be looked into afresh according to the nature of coal areas. In that event, the Australian roof-bolt technique has not yet been rejected. Experts are examining it, because this will save care of the underground system. Unless the whole thing is looked into, the details of it, and without that if it is applied and something

happens, there will be danger. That is why all expert opinion is being taken. The file came to me. I asked certain questions on it because there were divergent views, and it is now being examined. ... (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do hope the experts will take a decision early, not so many years.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Coal India are experts, and the bureaucrat⁵; are overriding the experts... (Interruptions)...

प्रो० विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा: कितने साल लगेंगे, कितने लोग और पोंगे जब यह फैसला करेंगे ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री सिद्धु कान्त शास्त्री: वहां टेलीफोन की व्यवस्था ठीक नहीं है, यह तो बताया नहीं.... (व्यवधान)

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUJAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, kindly issue a directive to the Minister and the Ministry. It is very important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. The question has already been asked, in any case ... (interruptions)...

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: As I said, it came to me. When hon. Members, including Mr. Gujral, a senior Member, are insisting, I will call for the file and once more I will look into it and inform the hon. Members what the position is.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, there are two things which have been pointed out—whether those two security precautions were taken or not. One was about the telephone system. There was another thing also.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: The Australian roof-bolt technique and telephone are two different things. Anyway, the third part I am answering. When I went there, I found in this mine, New Kenda Dobrana Seam, that there was a mechanical system for signals not telephone. It is underground nine, and if fire takes place often, the wires also get burnt. This was the explanation given. I

am not making any comments because the inquiry proceedings are there. Telephone was not there. But they said that the mechanical system of warning was there.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL: Sir, I rise out of anguish. The main point is that for every tragedy, appointment of an inquiry commission has become an excuse and delaying tactics. May I Sir, with your permission, ask the Minister to refer the entire file to a Committee of this House, because this is a very serious matter?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Sir, under this statute made by this House—it is section 24 of Mines Act, a special statute, I suppose it has to be referred under that.

SHRI G.G. SWELL: Even by what the Minister has stated, the fire was detected at 4.00 p.m., and the first rescue party arrived at the spot only at 8.30 p.m., more than four hours and a half. Why should it be so? I would like to know whether the coal mines organization have got a central rescue organization with trained men and equipment that is ready to reach the spot of accident as early as possible. In this case it appears they didn't have those men along and they didn't have the equipment, and they were running helter-skelter to collect men and equipment, and by the time the rescue team arrived, the worst had happened. I would like to know this from the Minister.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Sir, the Central Rescue Team which is the main rescue team, is stationed at Sitarampur here. It is fully equipped to deal with any sort of emergency like this. But the local mine officials, that is, the Agent the Manager, etc., went there. The Central Rescue Team took time to reach there because it had to carry all types of apparatus necessary to go there. In the structure I find that there is only one Central Rescue Team,

and, to me, it is not enough. Therefore, I have directed that there should be more rescue teams situated nearby in view of the enlarged activity of the ECL.

श्री वीरिन्द्र कटारिया: चैयरमैन साहब, जब वह हाउस शुरू हुआ था, मैंने एक कॉलिंग अटेंशन मोशन इसी इश्यू पर दी थी और मेरी तजवीज है कि इस सवाल के संबंध-साध आगे बढ़े की...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask your question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask your question.

श्री वीरिन्द्र कटारिया: मेरा प्रश्न यह है कि हम हमेशा रिप्लेट करते हैं जबकि कोई ट्रेजेडी हो जाती है।

we do not act to prevent that tragedy.

मैं मंत्री महोदय से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि अजब की दुनिया में जब हम 21वीं सदी में जा रहे हैं तो बहुत से सेफ्टी मेजर्स, बहुत से मुल्कों में जहाँ माईंस हैं, एडवांस किए गए हैं और दूसरे मुल्कों में जो सेफ्टी मेजर्स एडवांस किए गए हैं उनके संबंध में मंत्रीजी का कहना है कि हमारी ज्योग्राफिकल सिचुएशन या कोल-फील्ड पोजीशन डिफरेंट है। सारी दुनिया में जहाँ कि कोल-माईंस हैं, उनके अंदर एक जैसे सेफ्टी मेजर्स हैं। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि लेटेस्ट मेजर्स जो दुनियाभर की माईंस में एडवांस किए गए हैं, हमने उनको हासिल करने की कोशिश की है या उन मेजर्स को एडवांस किया है या जो हमारे पुराने बिसे-फिटे मेजर्स थे और जो आउट ऑफ डेट हो गए हैं उन्हीं पर हम टिके हुए हैं?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Sir, it is not correct that the geological position of all mines all over the world is the same. I am advised by experts that the Indian conditions are different, that they are similar to those in China and that they are not at all similar to those in the United Kingdom or Australia or other places.

Definitely, the safety aspect is in-built in production and productivity. The new Kenda accident took place, and naturally and immediately the production has gone down. Therefore, the safety measures are in-built in production and productivity. Safety first is the condition. Therefore, the safety policy of the CIL has been formulated. It has got twelve strict compliance methods.

Then, Sir, the Internal Safety Organisation which is called the "I.S.O.", is also operating.

Thirdly, there is review of the safety standard to make it up-to-date.

Then, Sir, there is a three-tier system. One is at the shop-floor level i.e. at mine site. The second is the Safety Board of the CIL. The third is a Standing Committee at my level to take safety measures.

Then, Sir, safety conferences take place.

Then, there is training of the workers. Before going inside, the training is given, and an in-service training is given.

These are the methods of safety being adopted by the Coal India, as I am advised.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, the accident in the New Kenda Colliery is not an isolated accident. There have been accidents in that area for a pretty long time, and always there has been a complaint from the trade unions that the safety measures are not being undertaken. Something is there or the book, something is there is the guidelines, but it has been violated with impunity. It is also true that in all the safety conferences which took place one after another, to which the hon. Member has just now referred, there was a unanimous opinion from the trade unions that the safety measures were being constantly violated. In this case the DGMS has given a report which has totally condemned the security systems and measures in that particular area. Therefore, Sir, in view of this persistent complaint about the total failure of the enforcement of the safety measures, despite the standing committee, despite the mine-level committees and all that, and in view of the categorical condemnation by the DGMS, what measures will the hon. Minister promise to take? An inquiry committee is not sufficient. What measures does he

propose to take to ensure that the managements strictly conformed to the safety rules? Secondly, what are his comments about the report of the DGMS?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: So far as his first question about safety is concerned, a safety audit has been directed for all the 449 mines operating in India. Underground mines have been given the first priority. There again, priority has been given to the mines which are accident-prone. I do not want to take the time of the House, but I want to inform the House that accident-prone mines have been identified. These New Kenda and Dobrana were not in the list. In fact, the history is that there had been seldom any accident in that area and all the workers and the people there were working very efficiently.

Coming to the other aspect, the hon. Member mentioned about a meeting of the trade union, like CITU, INTUC, KMS, AITUC. In order to get satisfied, the union leaders on their own made an enquiry. They have not yet given their report. Mr. R. Kumar of AITUC has taken charge of Dubeshwan, Chapui Khas, Patmohna, Dabor and Ranipur. It is very good that all these leaders have come forward on their own. It appears that the CIL has also asked them to go ahead and submit a report pointing out the lacunae that are there because the question of workers' safety was involved. Like that, seven groups were made and we are awaiting their reports. I can assure you that immediately report of the Inquiry Committee is published, effective steps would be taken and all the suggestions and recommendations made by the Committee will be given effect to and the guilty would be punished.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I referred to the report of the DGMS.

SHR! CHATURANAN MISHRA: Let the report come before the House.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: So far as this mine is concerned, it has not come

to my notice. So far as the DGMS report in general is concerned, I can say from the brief that has been given to me that all these details have been taken out from that report and are being implemented. I will hand over this report to the hon. Member. If there is any lacuna on any point, please bring it to my notice. Certainly we are very much interested in the safety of the mine workers.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, I had raised my hand. I am a trade unionist. I may be allowed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you go on.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, the first body that was raked from the pit was only after 25th February. It proves that the rescue operation did not begin immediately.

As per the information given by the hon. Minister, eight accidents had taken place in the year 1993 and they occurred in the ECL collieries and underground mines. He has not given the casualty figures during 1993. Thirty-three people were killed during 1993 and in each and every case the trade unions have written letters to the ECL that the safety norms were being violated. No steps have been taken. Now the trade unions have demanded a CBI enquiry besides the Court enquiry. I want to know from the Minister whether he will agree to a CBI enquiry. The question of lives is involved. People are being killed like cattle in the coalfields.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: The Government of West Bengal has started local police enquiry. The Government of West Bengal has initiated a local police enquiry. If the hon. Member has no faith in the enquiry being conducted by the State Government police, he might take it up with the hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal for CBI enquiry (Interruptions).

SHRI JIBON ROY: I wanted CIL enquiry (Interruptions).

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: So far as a CBI enquiry is concerned, the hon. Member would appreciate that there is a special statute. In 1952, two years after the Constitution was brought, a specific provision was made regarding a mine enquiry. Whether a CBI enquiry is necessary or not I cannot say from here. The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Jyoti basu may be approached. If he says that the State police machinery is inefficient and cannot go on, certainly it will be placed before Central Government.

श्री धरमेश्वर कुमार अग्रवाल: अध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने सी० एंड् डी० में कहा है कि कोल माइन्स एक्ट के तहत सुरक्षा की जितनी कार्रवाई होती है, वह की जा रही है। जहां तक मेरी जानकारी है इस एक्सीडेंट के कई कारणों में से एक यह है कि वहां एक गोफ खरिया था, उसमें फायर स्टॉपिंग लगी हुई थी या नहीं, दूसरा कारण यह है कि जो जाने का रास्ता था, उसमें क्रेयला गिर रहा था, वहां टिम्बर लगी हुई थी या नहीं और तीसरा कारण यह है कि ऑयल सर्किट ब्रेकर खिच ठीक था या नहीं। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि आपने, आपके स्टाफ के माइनिंग मैनेजर ने यह और जो सुरक्षा के लिए जिम्मेदार लोग हैं, इन सब बातों का, जिनका मैंने उल्लेख किया है, आखिरी बार इन सब बातों का कब इन्स्पेक्शन किया कि ये सब चीजें ठीक थीं और यदि नहीं थीं तो क्यों नहीं थीं?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member is right that there are so many conjectures about the cause of this fire accident. That is why this Court of Inquiry with a retired High Court Judge has been appointed. At this stage, I do not want to make any comment on the real cause of the accident. After the enquiry is over, we will do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 62

SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, are you satisfied with his answer?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. This question is over. Now. Q. No. 62.