

श्री जसवंत सिंह : आप जिनमें चाहें बोलिये ।

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, as I was saying India has not and will not bow down to the whims of any nation. The most recent example is the stand that we have taken on the American bombing in Libya. We have been very clear. We were perhaps, the first country in the world to come out with our point of view and it was our lead that has given the non-aligned movement the strength during such a critical period.

On the question of terrorism, there are methods of dealing with it. They are however, not good enough. There are shortcomings in the ways that we have but we have seen with the American reaction on Libya that one must not get carried away. One must be very careful, think very carefully of how to handle terrorism and develop international means to handle terrorism. There are no short-cuts. It will take time. In the meantime, we have to protect ourselves from within and see that every possible measure is taken so that this does not affect us internally.

**Violation of safety measures in the Bharat Electronics Limited, Ghaziabad**

\*43. SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:†

DR. R.K. PODDAR :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether any representations / complaints have been received from any quarter by Government regarding violation of safety measures in the Bharat Electronics Limited, Ghaziabad ;

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Nirmal Chatterjee.

(b) if so, what are the contents thereof ;

(c) what action has been taken by Government in this regard ; and

(d) if the reply to part (c) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND DEFENCE SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**Statement**

The employees working in the Transmitter hanger of Bharat Electronics Limited, Ghaziabad have represented to their Management expressing their apprehensions regarding the adequacy of the safeguards provided in the transmitter of one of the radars against X-ray and microwave radiations and other hazards. Newspaper reports making various allegations have also appeared in this regard.

2. Government have examined the matter in consultation with BEL Management. The apprehensions are misconceived. Safeguards have been provided in the equipment design against all possible radiation hazards. The adequacy of the protection against X-rays and microwave radiation has been verified by experts of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre who have certified that the installation is safe for operating personnel. As a measure of caution, however, four employees working close to the Transmitter have also been medically examined by BARC, including chromosome analysis which has confirmed that none of them has been exposed to any X-ray radiation and that no abnormalities have been noticed in the other clinical tests.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the statement, in paragraph No. 2 it has been stated; the Government have examined the matter in consultation with the BEL Management. There is no reference that the Government have consul-

ted the trade union. In this particular case, the accused are the BEL Management and this Government which talked about labour participation in Management has failed to enter into any discussion with the trade union and the employees, who have lodged these complaints. This is the element contained in the statement. Sir, let me mention a few facts about the seriousness of the situation. Number one, when a test was made by experts from BARC in this BEL, it was discovered to the surprise of everyone that while international standards are : any exposure of the order of 500 milli roentgens per year accepted in U.S.A. and India while 100 milli-Roentgens in U.S.S.R. the exposure in the factory is 500 or 400 millirem (milli roentgens) per hour. This is the statement of the BARC experts when workers were 5 meters away from the testing spot. Now, it is the statement from the BARC experts which the employees are quoting. What I want to know from the Minister is whether or not it is a fact as the employees are asserting that this is the level of radiation there. Is it not a fact that because of such high radiation the French Company which supplied the equipment has advised using of lead shields to protect the employees from this kind of radiation and is it not a fact that such lead shields are not always utilised for this and there are ample instructions from the French Company in this regard.

**SHRI SUKH RAM :** Sir, it was on the representation of the employees of the BEL, Ghaziabad that they had some misapprehension about the adequacy of the safeguard provided to them that the Management referred the matter to the BARC experts and the lead shields which are manufactured here within the country, were examined by them.

And they were found in accordance with the specifications of the

collaborators. Then, Sir because there was some apprehension, the matter was misconceived and in order to allay the fears of the workers, the management further sent four employees out of 65 to BARC for medical examination. They were medically examined and the normal blood test was also done. Specially the chromosome aberration test was also done, and it was found that their health was quite normal and there was not even a single case of X-ray radiation in the blood. According to the report which we received, their was nothing wrong and the installation was quite safe for the workers. Sir, for the information of the Members, I may further State that this IRMA type of radar had been in production at Ghaziabad since 1974. Now in all about 120 workers have worked near the transmitter hanger and 65 worker—out of them four are women—have been working for the last ten years and not even a single complaint has come to the management regarding any health hazard arising out of the manufacture of this radar. So, Sir, it was only some misconception. Some report appeared in the press and panic was caused amongst the workers. And we arranged a discussion between the BARC experts and the employees. Now they are satisfied. There is no complaint. There is no problem at all.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** You have not answered one or two points, Mr. Minister. Is the level of radiation higher than the permissible limit ? Secondly, he asked whether lead shields were recommended for use and whether they were used or not.

**SHRI SUKH RAM :** As regards the level of radiation, it was also measured by the experts and I may state for the information of this House and particularly the Members who have raised this question, that with the full complement of the lead shields, the X-ray radiation level was measured to be

0.1 milli-Roentgens per hour at a distance of one meter from the tube. Even if the system operates continuously throughout the year, the total exposure will be 876 milli-Roentgens as against the internationally accepted safe level of 5,000 milli-Roentgens per hour. The level of micro-wave....

**SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:** 5,000 milli Roentgens per hour?

**SHRI SUKH RAM:** Per year, I am sorry. It is the total per year. The level of micro-wave radiation was measured to be 20 micro-watt per square centimetre against the permissible level of 10,000 micro-watts per square centimetre. The BARC had, therefore, declared this installation to be quite safe.

**SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:** Sir, he has, should I say, mouthed the version of BEL management. I have got the papers with me and his statement indicates the distance that the BEL management has from the workers. The workers were complaining about various kinds of ill effects since last ten years.

It seems that their ears are so plugged that these complaints do not reach the BEL management. If the Government is concerned about the employees' welfare, are they prepared to discuss with the organisation of the labourers and satisfy them on the following counts?

(1) The reports of measurements taken by BARC experts should be made public, with the lead shield and without the lead shield; (2) All the employees concerned be medically examined— all the 100 or 180; (3) The medical reports of the four employees are not given to them. Will they be made available to them? (4) Will the affected employees if they are so affected, be granted all the expenses by the BEL management? Will the Government persuade the management to do that? And lastly, till these reports are avail-

able, these shields should in no case be utilised for covering the employees.

**SHRI SUKH RAM:** I fail to understand from where the honourable Member has got all these facts. As a matter of fact, the management even made an offer to all the 65 employees that if anybody has got any doubt, he can be sent, at the expense of the management, to BARC Bombay, for medical tests. But there was no response at all. As regards the level and the report which the management has got, that was explained to the workers and the workers thereafter felt satisfied. I do not know how the honourable Member has got this complaint. I am quite sure, I have made personal inquiries, that the workers have no complaint at all. But still if anybody has got any complaint I am making this offer on the floor of the House that he or she as the case may be, will be got examined at BARC at the expense of the management or the Government.

**DR. R.K. PODDAR:** I think it is now clear to the House that the Government is trying to shield the BEL management. It sounds unbelievable -- or, at least it appears to me on this side-- that the management of this prestigious public sector undertaking was oblivious of the dangerous radiation hazards of the 230 KV Klystron Tubes in spite of the fact that the French suppliers, M/s Thompson —CSF, gave meticulous instructions to use 30 mm or 40 mm lead shields while operating these Tubes. Unfortunately this shielding was not always used. So, I would like the Government to tell us what exactly have been the conclusions of BARC officials regarding the total count and the differential count of blood and chromosome aberrations of these employees and their specific recommendations, if any, on the follow-up measures, and whether the Government would take disciplinary action against the negligent officials and compel them to introduce without any further delay, film badge service and a regu-

lar health check-up for continuous monitoring—I say continuous monitoring—of the probable ill effects of the radiation on the exposed workers.

**SHRI SUKH RAM :** My reply has covered all these Points. But still I may state for the information of the honourable Member that these lead shields were previously imported from France from our collaborators, and then in accordance with our policy of indigenisation they are now being manufactured here within the country, and they have been tested by experts and have been found in order and there is nothing wrong with the lead shields and adequate protection has been provided to the workers. The X-Ray radiation and microwave radiations has been found much below the permissible international level. And, Sir, there is no danger to the workers at all. So, I do not know from where the honourable Member has got this complaint and has got this information that the level is very much higher. It is in accordance with the report of the experts.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** Yes, the honourable Prime Minister.

**SHRI RAJIV GANDHI :** Sir, I will just add one thing. Most of the points that the honourable Members have raised the Minister has already answered. We have checked to the best of our ability. We believe that the management has not done anything wrong. If it is brought to our notice that the management has done something wrong, yes, of course, we will act. But I would like to add that were we have the production of an item which is critical to our defence and a particular Union is trying to disrupt that production, we will also take action against that Union. *(Interruptions).*

**SHRI DIPEN GHOSH :** Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I ask a supplementary?

**SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE :** Sir, it is a slander against a workers' Union. *(Interruptions)*

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** If all of you are silent, I will give a chance to Mr. Dipen Ghosh. But if all of you speak, I will go to the next question. Yes, Mr. Dipen Ghosh.

**SHRI DIPEN GHOSH :** Sir, I am glad that you have allowed me to put a supplementary. The point is that the Prime Minister has asserted that the BEL management has not done anything wrong. But the point made from this side is that the BEL management has done or has been doing something wrong. But who will decide it ? With regard to the Report of the BARC that question has not been answered by the Minister at all. I would like to know whether the Government is prepared to lay on the Tables of Parliament the BARC Report on this particular issue so that Parliament can get a chance to go through it and have a discussion on it and decide as to who is on the wrong side.

**SHRI SUKOMAL SEN :** As to who is on the wrong, whether the labour or the management.

**DR. R. K. PODDAR :** Sir, my second question has not been answered.

**SHRI SUKH RAM :** Sir, the BARC authorities are the only competent authorities who can decide this issue and they have already sent the Report and the contents of the Report I have already supplied to the House. If the honourable Member wants to see it, I have got no objection.

**MR. CHAIRMAN :** You put it in the Library. Now, the next question. Question No. 44 Mr. Indradeep Sinha.