

for some structural changes to be brought about both at the management level and the financial level, so as to make the company a viable proposition.

SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND: I have before me a representation signed by 20 workers of the Bengal Immunity Employees' Union, Jullundur in which they have written to the manager that they have never been informed of any trouble being faced by the company and that they have always been loyally serving the company. And one fine morning, notice of final and full closure of the business of the company is served upon them. In view of this, will the hon. Minister assure us that the rights of these workers who have loyally served so long will be protected and that Government will see that such an important company with such a historical background, a company which has introduced life-saving drugs, is somehow or the other saved even if it has to be taken over by Government?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Well, Sir, I cannot make any proposition like saying that we shall take such and such action because it will be legally incorrect and ethically wrong. A Committee has been constituted to go into the whole question with regard to its condition, its working arrangements, its finances and the mismanagement of the company. On the receipt of the report only Government will be able to decide its future course of action.

DR. M. M. S. SIDDHU: Sir, the Bengal Immunity Company has specialised in the production of biological drugs especially vaccines and sera. Will the hon. Minister take into consideration that with the stoppage of work there is no scarcity created of these vital drugs?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: May I again say that, firstly, the company has not closed down. Therefore, the current production is on. Secondly,

some of the sera which Bengal Immunity was producing like anti-rabies vaccine, have recently been started to be produced by Bengal Chemicals also. However, I can assure the hon. Members through you, Sir, that Government will keep a close watch on the situation and nothing will be allowed to create any scarcity of life-saving or otherwise necessary drugs or sera or vaccines.

Loss suffered by the Durgapur Fertiliser Plant due to workers' strike

*392. SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-

DIN:†

SHRIMATI HAMIDA HABIBULLAH:

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISO-DIA:

SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA:

SHRI NATHI SINGH:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Durgapur Fertiliser Plant has suffered a heavy loss due to the recent strike by its workers;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to meet the demands of the workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) to (c) The workers of the Durgapur Unit of FCI were on strike from 7th January, 1978 to 18th February, 1978. The major demand of the workers was that the manpower and job description in the different plants should be decided in consultation with their unions. After prolonged negotiations an agreement was reached between the management and

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Syed Nizam-ud-din.

the unions under which the issues regarding manning and job description are to be referred to an outside expert body, preferably the National Productivity Council for study. The report of the expert body will be implemented after a discussion with the Union.

The total loss in production due to the strike amounted to Rs. 315 lakhs.

SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-DIN: Sir, part (c) of my question was: 'What steps Government have taken to meet the demands of the workers?' That has not been replied to.

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : मैंने जवाब दे दिया कि इस पर समझौता हुआ है और नेशनल प्रोडक्टिविटी कौंसिल को यह मामला रेफर कर दिया गया है।

SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-DIN: I would like to know from the hon. Minister what were the main demands of the workers, because this strike was for forty days or more and the Government was very much reluctant to negotiate with the workers for such a long time and the strike resulted in a loss of about Rs. 4 crores. Therefore, it has been totally improper for the Government not to negotiate with the workers within time. It has been our experience that whenever there is a strike, it is ignored by the Government till the consequences are very dangerous. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what were the main demands of the workers and why the Government did not move in time to negotiate with the workers. Why was the Government so reluctant to do it?

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : यह भी मैंने बता दिया था कि वर्कर्स की मैनिंग के बारे में मुख्य मांग यह थी. . .

SHRI U. R. KRISHNAN: Sir, where the question is asked in English, the answer should also be given in English and not in Hindi.

SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-DIN: This is the precedent in the House, Sir, that when a Member asks a question in English, we expect a reply also in English. We can understand if the Minister does not know English.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume.

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : मैं पहले ही जवाब दे चुका हूँ सभापति जी कि वर्कर्स की मुख्य मांग यह है कि कारखानों में जो वर्कर्स हैं उनकी भी इस सवाल पर या उनके जॉब डिस्ट्रिक्शन के सवाल पर राय ली जाए, उन्हें भी निर्णय करने का हक हो। उन्होंने चूँकि एक दिन पहले ही स्ट्राइक का नोटिस दिया था और हड़ताल कर दी थी इसलिए वह हड़ताल इल्लिगल थी और इसलिए मैनेजमेंट को बातचीत करने में दिक्कत हुई।

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, there has been an effort, at least as far as the public sector undertakings are concerned, during the last few years to see that the workers get a right to be represented on their Management Board. I would like to know whether this has been accepted as a rule in the Fertiliser Corporation as well, and if so, why the representatives were not there on the Board of this particular public sector undertaking, so that such problems are not faced and they do not have to go to the National Productivity Council to settle these problems.

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : वर्कर्स के प्रतिनिधियों को एक यूनिट में जो मैनेजमेंट होता है उसमें हिस्सा लेने के लिए बुला लिया है सलाह के तौर पर। लेकिन बोर्ड के पैमाने पर नहीं बुलाया जाता है।

श्रीमती मार्गरेट आल्वा : क्यों ?

श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र : क्योंकि ऐसा अभी तक नहीं हुआ है।

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, I asked whether there was any effort made during the last few years to give them representation on Boards. If not, why, in these public sector undertakings no efforts have been made and no action has been taken?

SHRI N. G. RANGA: Sir, the hon. Minister has not answered that question.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Sir, the principle of participation of workers in management has long back been accepted. But it requires to be spelt out clearly as to what it really means in the present context. (Interruptions). I can only submit, with all respect to Shri Ranga, for whom I have the highest regard . . .

DR. V. P. DUTT: You had?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: I said I have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not heard him properly.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: They will never hear me. That is why they are there and I am here. If they would have heard me . . .

DR. V. P. DUTT: He is only talking of principles all the time.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: I am talking of the principles. But they never believe either in talking about them or acting on them. Nevertheless, I would like to say to them that workers' participation in management has many shapes. For example, in France, it is one concept. In Yugoslavia, it is one concept. In India, this plan which is coming up will indicate the Janata Party's total view on it. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour have already constituted a working group. I can assure the

House that as soon as the recommendations of the working group come it will be our endeavour to find out what can be done in relation to FC.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN: Sir, I am quite happy to know what the hon. Minister has said. It has been rather my education when he said that this principle has been well-understood, well-accepted and well-appreciated. But in regard to implementation, he does not understand it he does not appreciate it and he does not want to implement it. Besides this, I would also like to know another thing. He has mentioned about the concept in France, England and other places. I would like to know: What is his own concept in this country? What are they going to do in India in regard to this matter? What will be the level? Will it be at the management level or at the middle level or at the factory level? What will be the level? Besides this, are they also going to allow the financial participation of workers in management?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The first part is only a general observation. The second part is to be replied.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Sir, with respect to the hon. Member, may I inform him that it is not given to me to express my views? I have said that this Plan document which will be before the National Development Council and this House soon will be able to spell out the totality of the view in a concrete form in relation to the spirit and the content thereof. This Committee which has been constituted by the Labour Ministry will assist in this. This committee in which various organisations of trade unions and various interests have been represented will spell out what it really means under the Indian conditions. But I am sorry to say that he has been less than fair to me when he said that I do not believe in acting on them or in appreciating the principle. This is far from the truth. Secondly, I never referred to the U.K. I know very little about this practice in those countries. Primarily,

my interest has been located towards the French and the Yugoslavian experience.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Sir, this Government is committed to the Gandhian philosophy. It is a well-known principle that if a strike takes place, arbitration should be offered. Or, if there is an offer for arbitration from the trade union, the management should agree to it. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, in view of the huge loss of Rs. 315 lakhs, whether there was any offer made by trade union for arbitration. Or, did the management offer to the trade union the settlement of the dispute through arbitration which would have resulted in the avoidance of this loss?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: I am sorry to say and I must say with deep anguish that in spite of our best efforts and an offer even to abide by the decision of the Labour Minister of West Bengal, unfortunately, our trade union friends did not appreciate the position including our offer to have the matter referred to adjudication or arbitration, whatever you call it.

*393. [The questioner (Shrimati Aziza Imam) was absent. For answer, vide col. 35-36 infra.]

Guarding of the railway track

*394. DR. V. P. DUTT:†
SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of the Railway Board has recently stated that despite their best efforts, the Railways were not able to effectively guard the entire length of the railway track in the country; and

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. V. P. Dutt.

(b) if so, how much expenditure is being incurred monthly on the 25,000 men at present deployed to guard the railway track and what is the requirement of men and money for guarding the entire railway track in the immediate future?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS
(PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) About 11,000 Railway Protection Force personnel and 14,000 gangmen have been deployed to guard the railway track in vulnerable areas. The average expenditure incurred on gangmen alone is about Rs. 30 lakhs per month. The Railway Protection Force personnel have been deployed by withdrawing them from their normal duties. There is neither a proposal to guard the entire 61,000 kilometers of railway track nor is it feasible.

DR. V. P. DUTT: Sir, I am sorry to say that even the decent and hon. Minister has in a recent statement minimised the gravity of the problem and the sense of insecurity among travellers on railways. In fact, many people have stopped travelling by railways out of fear. On the one hand, the hon. Minister says that there is an organised gang. On the other hand, he feels chary of blaming the organisations which are behind them. I would like to know why there is hesitation on his part in naming the organisations. After all, he has in a speech reported in the papers yesterday stated that 20 persons were arrested in connection with these sabotage cases. Now, I would like to ask him whether he has made inquiries about their political affiliations and their political group affiliations and what has been the evidence so far in this regard.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, in the beginning, I refute the aspersions that I am trying to minimise the significance of the dangers of accidents. I go by facts. Unfortunately, that is the case with me. You have