

[Dr. K. Mathew Kurian]

(b) The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India shall also finalise the details of the set-up of separated audit offices and revised pattern of their functioning and publish them for general information by the 1st day of August, 1976.

(c) The terms and conditions of audit personnel to be transferred to these accounting formations shall then be finalised in consultation with the Employees' Organisation by holding discussions in the form of the Departmental Council of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department with an objective of ensuring that reasonable expectation of the employees in Audit Department are preserved, or equal prospects are provided in the Departments to which such employees are eventually transferred. The loss of promotional prospects to employees left in the audit offices after the separation of accounts shall also be evaluated and made good through appropriate measures.

(d) The employees posted to various Ministries on the 1st day of April, 1976 and 1st day of July, 1976, shall be treated as having been provisionally transferred as because the above steps had not been taken and the Presidential Rules indicating principles of allocation of personnel were not there when these persons had been selected. Another Advisory Committee shall, therefore, be constituted to finalise the allocation afresh in respect of those Ministries as well by the 15th day of September, 1976.

(e) The allocation of staff to remaining Ministries too shall be finalised by the 15th day of September, 1976.

(f) The final transfer and orders in respect of employees transferred to all the Ministries, having the effect of

severing their connections from the Audit Department shall then be issued and become effective from the 1st day of October, 1976."

The questions were put and the motions were negatived.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : Since the ruling party is so adamant in passing this Bill, in protest we walk out.

(At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA) : The question is :

That clause 2 stand part of the Bill.

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill.

Clause 3 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI: Sir, I move:

That the Bill be passed.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

I. THE IRON ORE MINES AND MANGANESE ORE MINES LABOUR WELFARE CESS BILL, 1976

II. THE IRON ORE MINES AND MANGANESE ORE MINES LABOUR WELFARE FUND BILL, 1976

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY) : Sir, with your permission, items 4 and 5 of the agenda may be taken together, as these two Bills are dependent upon each other.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA) : All right.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on iron ore and manganese ore for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of person employed in the Iron ore mines and Manganese ore mines and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, I also move:

"That the Bill to provide for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of persons employed in the iron ore mines and manganese ore mines, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the welfare of workers is an important function of any welfare State. In developing countries like ours, Governments have to play an active role to ensure welfare of workers because they are either not organised or their organisations are too weak to bargain with the employers for such facilities as they need. The Directive Principles of State Policy laid down in our Constitution speak of the promotion of welfare of people in general and of securing just and human conditions of work, in particular. In this context, the improvement of the living conditions of the workers assumes great importance.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: The way in which he reads out his speech shows that he has no heart in the Bill.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: It is very much there.

In fact now the main emphasis of the 20 Point Economic Programme is on improving the living conditions of the weaker sections of the society.

Mine workers from a class by themselves because they have to live and work in remote areas where none of the modern urban facilities are available. It was not until the outbreak of the Second World War that Government of India and the State Governments realised the need for improving the living condition of workers as a

means to increase workers' efficiency and boost their morale. The earliest attempt in this direction was the setting up of Coal Mines Welfare Organisation by an Ordinance in 1944. Encouraged by the success of this organisation, the Government set up similar welfare funds for workers employed in mica, iron ore and limestone and dolomite mining industries. The role of these welfare organisation is to supplement and not to supplant the efforts of the State Governments and the employers to improve the quality of life of the workers and their dependents. The welfare activities undertaken by these organisations are financed out of the proceeds of cess on the minerals concerned.

As the hon. Members are aware, the National Labour Commission had recommended the setting up of a common welfare fund for all mine workers. The Commission had, however, suggested that welfare funds for those minerals which were under consideration may be set up without waiting for the common welfare fund. It was in accordance with this recommendation that we had set up the Limestone and Dolomite Mines Welfare Fund and we now propose to set up a Joint Fund for Iron Ore Mines and Manganese Ore Miners. We have already initiated action for setting up a common welfare fund for most of the remaining minerals and this would be set in not too distant future.

As the hon. Members are aware, the iron ore mines welfare organisation has been in existence since 1963 under Iron Ore Mines Welfare Cess Act, 1961. Since Manganese ore generally occurs in the same areas and locations as the iron ore, it is but proper that the manganese workers should not be denied the benefit which accrue to the iron ore mine workers nearby. Since there is already in existence a well-knit organisation to look after the welfare of iron ore mine workers, this organisation could also be made responsible to attend to the needs of the manganese ore mine workers. There are about 52,000 workers employed in iron ore mining industry and about 28,000

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workers in manganese ore mining industry Taking on an average 3 dependents per worker the total number of beneficiaries of this joint fund would be about 3,20,000.

The present rate of cess on iron ore production is @ 25 paise per tonne and at this date a total amount of about Rs. 90 lakhs is collected. The cess is proposed to be levied on manganese ore at the rate of Re. 1 per tonne with an enabling provision of its increase upto a maximum of Rs. 6 per tonne, which will bring in a revenue of about Rs. 17 lakhs. If a uniform levy of welfare cess on both the minerals is aimed at, then either the rate of levy on iron ore will have to be increased or the proposed levy on manganese ore will have to be brought down. There is no case for increase in the levy of iron ore just now, because even at the present rate there is an accumulation of about Rs. 3.31 crores in the fund. On the other hand, if the proposed levy on manganese is decreased the collection will be too small to serve any useful purpose. It is, therefore, proposed to prescribe separate rates of levy of welfare cess on the two minerals in the proposed enactment for the creation of a joint welfare fund. The total cess collected on the two minerals will, however, form a common fund which will be utilised for providing uniform welfare facilities for the workmen employed in iron ore and manganese mines.

The proposed cess on manganese will be on the same basis as provided under the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Amendment Act, 1970 (41 of 1970) which envisages a levy both on exports and internal consumption. The internal consumers are mostly the iron and steel plants and other metallurgical factories. While the cess on that portion of these minerals which is exported will be collected by the Customs Department as a duty of customs, the cess on the minerals internally consumed will be collected by the occupiers of steel plants and metallurgical factories from the persons by whom these minerals are supplied. The occupiers of such plants and

factories will then make over to the Government the cess collected. In cases where such plants or factories captive mines, the owners of such plants or factories would themselves be responsible for the payment of cess on the minerals consumed by them. This procedure of collection of cess through the agencies specified above follows the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946, and the Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972, respectively. The Government will, however, be empowered to exempt any factory or class of factories from the levy, if in its opinion, the administrative cost of collection from such establishments will be disproportionate to the cess collected.

When these Bills are put on the Statute Book, the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act, 1961, will be repealed. This Fund, like the other welfare funds for the miners, will be administered in consultation with Regional Advisory Committees. There will also be a Central Advisory Committee to coordinate the activities of the Regional Advisory Committees to ensure their effective functioning. The constitution of these Committees will be almost similar to that now prevailing under the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act, 1961. The welfare amenities in the proposed Acts shall include medical, housing, water supply, educational and recreational facilities as already provided under other mines labour welfare organisations.

The opportunity of repealing the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act, 1961, as amended in 1970, will be taken to make good certain deficiencies in that Act and to introduce such modifications as have already found a place in the latest welfare fund legislation, the Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972, namely :—

(a) the metallurgical factories and not the middleman who sells the ore to these factories will be made responsible for collection of cess and its payment to the Government.

(b) labour employed in the mines will be defined to include all those persons indicated in clause (d) of section 2 of the Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972.

(c) provision will be made for the imposition of penalties for non-payment of cess on the defaulting mine owners/ persons by whom the ore is disposed of on the line of sections 13, 14 and 15 of the Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972.

To sum up, the proposal is :

(i) To create a joint Iron Ore and Manganese Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund on the lines of the latest Welfare Fund, namely, the Limestone and Dolomite Mines Labour Welfare Fund and to the consequential repealing of the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act, 1961.

(ii) The collection of Welfare Cess on export and internal consumption by the iron and steel plant and other metallurgical factories at the following rates :—

(a) Iron ore : at the rate of 25 paise per tonne with a permissible limit of Re. 1/- per tonne.

(b) Manganese ore : at the rate of Re.1/- per tonne with a permissible limit of Rs. 6/- per tonne for the provision of uniform welfare facilities to workess employed in iron ore and maganese ore mines.

(iii) payment of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the duty collected as customs on the iron ore and manganese ore exported to the Department of Customs ;

(iv) increasing the rates mentioned at (ii) above, when necessary, in consultation with the Department of Expenditure and the Ministry of Commerce.

Sir, I do not think that there is any necessity for me to make any elaborate speech.

Therefore, Sir, with your permission, I beg to move that the House may be pleased to take into consideration the two Bills.

The questions were proposed.

SHRI KALYAN ROY (West Bengal) :
Sir, I welcome this Bill. I hope the Minister will not make too much out of it. When this was set up, there was no 20-point programme. Has he reviewed the functioning of the Iron Ore Welfare Advisory Board which is already in existence? And, Sir, what is the situation in the iron ore and manganese ore mines today? What is the position of the workers who are going to be benefited by this cess?

Sir, I am surprised that when we ask questions, the two Ministers give two different sets of statistics. Here are the question and answer of 21-3-75 regarding the number of workers engaged in the manganese mines. It is said that 29,342 workers are employed on an average in the manganese mines.

Mr. Raghunatha Reddy gave some other figures. Sir, let me give the figures which were tabled here on the 26th March, 1975 about the number of iron ore mines and manganese mines which are in the private sector. In 1973, there were about 366 iron ore mines in the private sector. In 1974, the number went down to 335. In 1975 it was 348. In other words, the number of iron mines, I find, has gone down from 367 to 348. This means that quite a few mines have been closed down or have been locked out.

Similarly, the number of manganese ore mines in the private sector in 1973 was 292. In 1974 it was 277. In 1975, according to the Minister of Steel and Mines, it went up to 311.

[Mr. Deputy Chairman in the chair.]

Now, Sir, the position as it is existing today in the iron ore mines, is extremely grave and the workers are faced with massive unemployment, retrenchment, and thousands have been thrown out. Sir, this is one part of it.

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The other part is the nature of the industry. Sir, this question came up in the House again and again. And in spite of the persistent demand of the trade unions, of the INTUC, AITUC and others, iron ore mines are not being scientifically worked, these are being recklessly slaughtered and there is no planning or perspective of the mine-owners, which is leading to destruction of the mines. As a matter of fact, what was prevailing in the coal-mines, which led to the nationalisation of coal-mines, is exactly being repeated in iron ore and manganese ore mines in the private sector.

Sir, today, according to the Government, there are over 300 mines. In the public sector there are 33 mines producing 33.12 million tonnes; in the private sector there are 368 mines producing 28.35 million tonnes. But what is the finding of the Iron Ore Board which was set up to help the mine-owners? I read from the reply of the Minister of Steel and Mines on 14th March, 1975, and I quote :

"The recommendations and the findings of the Iron Ore Board are as follows :

- (1) Selective mining by private mine-owners.
- (2) Requirement of steel plants and the exports not being matched with the resources of iron ore.
- (3) No proper exploration in private mines."

This is the finding of the Iron Ore Board under the chairmanship of Shri R. C. Dutt. So, slaughter mining is admitted by the Government, Unscientific mining is admitted by the Government. And we have got only 900 million tonnes of iron ore, and according to Mr. Pai, who was then the Minister of Steel and Mines, at this rate the production will be very soon exhausted. The tragedy is that the bulk of the best iron ore is being exported. There has been a serious criticism about it. The profit of this export is being shared by the MMTC

and private owners. And who are they ? They are Birlas, Rungtas, Biju Patnaik's concerns and Chowgles. This is something grave. On the one hand, there is slaughter mining and unscientific mining, and on the other, the profit is being expropriated by these few concerns who dominate the private sector. And yet the Government have no plan to nationalise. They are watching the destruction of this wealth. I do not know for whom. I will just read from an article written by Mr. Kanti Mehta who is the President of the Indian National Mine-owners' Federation. He has stated :

"While the workers in the larger mines have a minimum wage of Rs. 325 per month, the smaller mines have not as yet cared to implement the recommendations of the Iron-Ore Wage Board which came into effect from 1-1-1967 and the workers in these mines get less than Rs. 100 per month. It is hoped that the recommendation of the Iron-Ore Board will lead to the formation of large viable units resulting in better working and living conditions for the workers."

Regarding the Manganese mines, he has stated :

"It was with great difficulty that our Federation could get the minimum wages in this industry raised to Rs. 4.00 per day."

This is the position regarding the wages and the Minister is talking about the Twenty-Point Programme. I have quoted from Mr. Kanti Mehta that the wages in the bulk of the private sector industries is less than Rs. 100 per month and in the Manganese mines Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 per day. This is the situation. I have written a letter to Mr. Reddy on March 18, 1976 which he has acknowledged.

I am reading it.

"About 4000 mines workers in Barbil area of Keonjhar District have been forced out of employment due to lack of work in Iron and Manganese mines. The M.M.T.C. which the sole buyer

of the Ores has reduced its order resulting in reduced working in mines. Secondly, due to failure of the mines department to issue working permission in time, the contractors and the mine-owners are closing the work in the mines resulting in unemployment. Thirdly, the mine owners are taking advantage of the situation to force the workers to resign their jobs. The dwindling earnings makes the workers life miserable and impossible to carry on the hard and arduous work of mining. The employers by these means are trying to deprive the workers of their legitimate dues and lawful privileges. The employers are resorting to employment of more and more contractors labourers in place of permanent departmental workers which has been affecting the workers very adversely."

What is the dimension of retrenchment ?

"The break up of the 4000 workers who lost work belong to the following companies :

M/s. S. Lal & Co.	500
M/s. Runguta Mines	500
Orissa Mining Corpn.	700
B.D. Patnaik	500
Mohd. Siraj Uddin	600
Kalinga Mining Corpn.	50"

Sir, like this I have given the names of 11 concerns belonging to the big companies who are resorting to this sort of throwing people out of jobs. This is the situation. So far as mining is concerned, it is in a mess. Workers are thrown out of jobs. The minimum provisions of the Wage Board Agreement have not been implemented, as pointed out by Mr. Kanti Mehta. It was signed as early as 1-1-1967 and this article has come in 1976. What is the Department doing ?

Also what is the position about inspections. Sir, as you know, the accidents in the non-coal mines are increasing and that the production is also increasing. The mine-owners who are resorting to unscientific slaughtering of mines would naturally care

too hoots for the lives of the workers. Naturally, I expect that the Mines Department of the Director-General of Mines Safety and Mr. Raghunatha Reddy will be more serious to protect the lives and health of the workers engaged in non-coal mining industries, particularly in Iron Ore and Manganese. I will tell you how many inspections the Director-General of Mines Safety has carried out in the non-coal mines. Sir, in 1972, there were 5575 inspections; in 1973 it came down to 4319 and in 1974, it further came down to 3846.

Regarding hygiene and other parts of inspections, in 1972, there were 392 inspections, in 1973 there were 284 inspections, in 1974, there were 226 inspections, and in 1975, there were 172 inspections. If this is the record of your Ministry regarding the implementation of the Wage Board agreement if this is the record of your Director-General of Mines Safety in regard to inspections, what do we expect in future? So, I would expect the Minister to give in the House a proper review of the functioning of the Iron Ore Advisory Board which was set up in 1961. Sir, I will read from the minutes of the 6th meeting of the Central Advisory Board for Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund held on 1st February, 1973 at New Delhi, under the chairmanship of Shri Raghunatha Reddy. Unfortunately, he was there for 15 minutes and then left. Sir, what were the minutes ? I will read only a few : (1) When the review of the work of the Welfare Organisation was taken up, it was found out that on the housing project, State-wise, Andhra Pradesh had implemented hardly 25 per cent of the sanctioned scheme, Bihar—50 per cent, Madhya Pradesh—50 per cent, Mysore—50 per cent, Orissa—52 per cent, Goa—60 per cent, and Maharashtra—zero. These are the minutes of the Welfare Advisory Board meeting. And the representatives of the AITUC and the INTUC pointed out that contrary to the decision taken earlier, the Board has failed to meet not only once in a quarter or in six months but the present meeting was taking place after 15 months, regarding the construction of houses,

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regarding the setting up of central hospital, etc. not much progress was made. I would like to know the Ministry as to how much cess was collected. What is the cess in arrears? How much was spent on the overhead expenses? How much is actually being utilised for providing drinking water facilities in the iron ore mines? Sir, he said that the mines are scattered in forest areas. Therefore, there is more need to build houses. There is more need to at least provide them with drinking water. What does your minute say? Hardly there is any advance in the supply of drinking water. Sir, I am a member of the Safety Advisory Board, constituted by the Government of India, and it is being presided over by Mr. Prasad, the Director-General of Mines Safety. We met in Dhanbad, and it was found out that out of the 3,000 non-coal mines, only 185 mines have any arrangements to supply drinking water to the workers. If this is the grim, sordid position of the workers underground, if this is the rate of inspection which is leading to an increasing number of serious injuries, by mere increase in the cess or collection of the cess, Mr. Reddy, you can be satisfied that you will have more money, but the situation will not improve. I am more concerned with how you are using it. I have serious grievances that the money which you are getting is not being properly utilised. Not at all. That is one point. Secondly, the Advisory Board is being emasculated. The Advisory Board is not meeting regularly. As it happened in the case of Coal Mines Welfare Advisory Board, it is giving jobs to certain bureaucrats and officers. The people who are to benefit by it remain in darkness and in *jhuggis* without water, without sanitation, and without light. This is the position. And, Sir, in view of this glut in steel, in view of the world-wide recession in the steel industry, the iron ore export is going down. Our entire iron ore industry—I will come to the manganese industry later on—is export-oriented. Your target in the Fifth Plan is about 42 millions tonne export to Japan and other countries. Now, Sir, who are getting

the benefit? The cess is not coming from the producers. This cess will be paid by the steel factories. But people like Biju Patnaik, the Birlas, etc. are getting the benefit. But workers are suffering as it happened in the case of Coal Mines Welfare Fund. We know that money taken from the Coal-Mine Welfare Fund was diverted not to build quarters for the workers but to build buildings for the managers and to set up beautiful bungalows for the owners. That is the experience of the Coal Mines Welfare Fund. That is the reason why, the AITUC and the INTUC now want that the Coal Mines Welfare Fund should be merged with the Coal India Ltd.

Exactly this is happening in this place. Exactly this is happening in the Iron Ore Labour Advisory Board. It is not at all functioning properly. Its progress is hardly anything. As I said, in Maharashtra the housing for these people is nil. When you come forward with this Bill, instead of talking about 20-points programme and great socialistic advance and welfare approach, give us some statistics and we will be happy. Leave the theory to us that the position of the mine workers in the Indian iron ore mines is just horrible. The manganese mines are in an even worse shape. One of the biggest manganese concerns is the MOIL, the Manganese Ore India Limited, which is in the public sector. It is concerned with huge stocks of manganese. We discussed it in the Consultative Committee meeting. Large number of workers have been retrenched, they are not being taken. I have been told that this public sector concern in manganese is not even able to pay wages regularly. This is the condition of the manganese mines. Sir, whether you take manganese mines or iron ore mines, the position is grim not only in the private sector but also in the public sector. I may point out to you, Sir, that one of the biggest iron ore public sector concerns is the Bailadila iron ore project. Sir, Bailadila iron ore project belongs to the NMDC. Now, it is the happy hunting ground of the contractors. I have personally written letters to Shri Chandrajit Yadav and Shri Raghunatha Reddy but I have yet to get

replies. Sir, it is a happy hunting ground of contractors, most of whom are ex-colliery owners. And, who are they? I will give you the names. They are : Umedrey Worah, he was one of the biggest coalmine owners; (2) Ashok Mining Company, (3) Laxminaraian Bhagwan Trust, (4) Gurdial Singh, (5) J. P. Mishra. There are 13 to 20 iron ore contractors who are raising float ore in the public sector. How do you except N.M.D.C. to make proper profits? You have huge machinery, you have workers yet for the advantage of the bureaucrats, these contractors have been kept. Repeated allegations have been made. I am reading from a reply of the Minister of Steel and Mines dated the 7th March. The complaints were from the AITUC Union which is a recognised union regarding grievances of the workers, violation of the Mines Act. Repeated letters have been sent to the Minister of Labour and the Minister in charge of coal mines that these contractors are violating the labour laws, the Mines Safety Act resulting in a grim accident in the Bailadila mine year before last where seven workers were killed but no court of inquiry was set up. The grievances about violations of Mines Act relate mostly to the lack of safety boots and drinking water. So, Sir, there is gross violation of Mines Act and safety laws in relation even to the mines which are owned by the Government but run by the contractors. So the position is rather bad. I do not know how many workers are going to be thrown out within a few months. Already the number of unemployed is increasing in these two particular areas, iron ore mines and manganese mines, which are giving you perhaps the maximum amount of foreign exchange because the biggest amount of foreign exchange is earned by exporting minerals and we are going to export more minerals but the poor Harijan, the poor tribal, about whom you talk so much is being thrown out of his job. Is it a part of the 20-point programme that there will be a welfare cess and he will lose the employment. I say do not have the welfare cess but protect the employment. What about the Contract Labour Regulation Act?

According to one of the provisions of the Act, if a contractor makes short payment, the principal employer is liable to compensate the workers. Has it been implemented in the Iron Ore Mines and the Manganese Ore Mines? May I ask in how many cases have your Regional Commissioners prosecuted the contractors and owners of iron ore mines and manganese ore mines? These are the figures which I want, I have pointed out, Sir, about the welfare fund which is already there. Unfortunately, some of the Lok Sabha Members did not know that already they have in existence a Welfare Advisory Board. All you are doing is to amalgamate it with manganese. So, do not quote twenty-point programme; there is no twenty-point or twentyone-point programme here. Let us stick to the facts and the facts are rather unpleasant to you, I know that. I have pointed out earlier that you should have a scrutiny; you should follow up and ask the Chairman of the Advisory Board as to why the Board does not meet. You should find out as to how much money has been spent and where, how many quarters have been built in Rungta's or Birla's or Biju Patnaik's iron ore mines. These are the facts which are part of the twenty-point programme.

May I ask what step have you taken on representation we have given about the massive unemployment which is growing up in the iron ore mines and the manganese mines? What steps have you taken to protect the workers from the ruthless exploitation by the contractors in the Bailadila iron ore mines? I know you get letters everyday. All you have to do is to file them up. What steps have you taken in relation to the lesser and lesser number of inspections by the Director General of Mines Safety? Are you supplied with figures that I have given you about the declining number of inspections? There is a rise in the fatal accidents, rise in permanent disabilities among the workers and rise in occupational diseases. There is no protection at all. We talk of welfare of Harijans, welfare of tribals. Why not straightway face the facts? Facts are

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rather grim. But I want a straight and a precise answer as we wanted from the Deputy Finance Minister, that how many meetings have taken place so far of the Advisory Boards which you have set up since 1961? How many houses have been built up in each area? How many workers are temporary, casual and under the contractors? How many workers have been thrown out? How many hospitals have been built and how many patients are there? There may be big beautiful hospitals when Mr. Raghunatha Reddy goes there, but as soon as he leaves the place, the hospital is wound up. Only that sort of situation is prevailing there. It is an unfortunate situation. We saw similar thing in Chasnala. Whenever the Minister, Shri Chandrajit Yadav, went, everything was provided, limousine cars and everything and when he left the place, we heard the wailing of the widows. This is the unfortunate position in the iron ore mines and the manganese mines. They are only increasing the cess. It would not help. I know the Minister basically is sympathetic; perhaps, he is in a wrong company or a right company, I do not know but the question is that you cannot play with the lives of the miners any more. His safety, Sir on the surface is as much a matter of concern to the nation as his safety under ground. His job is as much a matter of concern to the nation as his welfare. All are being neglected. Only certain offices have been set up; certain cess has been collected and I am sure whatever cess is collected, is not properly deposited also; otherwise, the amount of cess collected would have been more than the amount spent.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please wind up now.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : Although I support the Bill, I say that this sort of whitewashing will not do. You may fool some people for some time but not all people for all times.

SHRI N. K. BHATT (Madhya Pradesh) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise

to support the two Bills which have been moved by the honourable Labour Minister, one to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on iron ore and manganese ore for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of persons employed in the Iron Ore mines and Manganese ore mines and the other to provide for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of persons employed in the iron ore mines and manganese ore mines. Sir, these are very welcome and much-needed measures. The national Labour Commission did make a very strong recommendation that there should be a common welfare fund for all mine workers. In spite of this unanimous recommendation, it was unfortunate—this had also caused dismay among the workers engaged in these mines—that no steps were taken in this regard. Though belated, this is a welcome measure, in the wake of Emergency and the twenty-point programme.

Sir, much has been said about the condition of the iron ore mine workers. The condition of the workers in the manganese ore mines is most deplorable compared to their counterparts in the iron ore mines. For the production of steel, manganese ore is as much important as iron ore. It is, therefore, only proper that there should be a single welfare fund for the manganese ore and iron ore mine workers, with a view to making them available the basic minimum welfare amenities such as housing, drinking water, electricity and so on, without any discrimination. The need for the creation of such a fund is felt all the more strongly when one looks at the miserably poor condition of the workers in the manganese ore mines especially those under the Manganese Ore India Limited. Sir, the Manganese Ore India Limited is not exactly a public sector organisation. The Madhya Pradesh Government, the Mararashtra Government and the Central Government each own 17 per cent of the shareholding. The remaining 49 per cent is owned by the CPMO, the old organisation of the Britishers, which is known as the Central Provinces Manganese Ore Com-

pany. When such is the position, it is unfrotunate that in spite of the powers which the Government have, nothing could be done to improve the condition of the workers in the manganese mines. Sir, as a result of a lot of pressure and agitation by the workers and after complaints in the Consultative Committee, a sub-committee was appointed by the Ministry of Steel and Mines. The sub-committee went into the problems of these workers, especially the wages part. You will be surprised to know that the wages paid to the workers in the manganese ore mines are very low and unthinkable. This includes the cash wages earned by time-rated or piece-rated workers, interim payment at the rate of Rs. 1.35 per day, grain compensation at the rate of 91 paise per day per head and good attendance bonus. Fortunately, the prices of foodgrains have come down. As a result of a lot of agitation and pressure on the Ministry of Steel and Mines, these payments were amalgamated. The decision was taken in regard to the minimum wages payable. While all the above payments are considered as part of the wages for the purpose of calculating the minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act, for the purpose of recovery of provident fund contribution, payment of gratuity and payment of bonus under the Payment of Bonus Act, none of these payments are considered as part of the employees wages, except the cash earnings. However, a breakthrough was made in this direction. The amalgamated pay was introduced in August 1975. It is common knowledge that workers in the manganese ore mines of the Hindustan Steel Limited are getting much higher minimum wages. However, in full realisation of the peculiar situation of the Manganese Ore India Limited, its over 13,000 workers have been maintaining industrial peace and are extending every cooperation to increase production and productivity. The workers are now restive. They want revision of their wages with a view to bring themselves on par with the iron ore mine workers. Sir, this is just an expression of the feelings of the

workers. The position is that while coal-mine workers are getting a minimum wage of Rs. 14 to 18, while the limestone, dolomite and iron ore mine workers are getting Rs. 10 per day, the minimum wage fixed for the manganese ore mine workers comes to just Rs. 4 per day. While in the open cast iron ore mines it is possible for both husband and wife to work and add to the family earnings, in the underground manganese ore mine only a male member of a worker's family can work. Even then, the prescribed minimum wage for an underground manganese ore mine workers is only Rs. 4 per day.

Today the total pay packet of a worker in the manganese ore mines comes to just Rs. 5.80. How does it compare with his counterpart in the coal-mines or the iron ore mines who gets such an increased pay? Therefore, the manganese ore mine workers are passing through very difficult days.

The condition of housing for the manganese workers is pitiable. Manganese ore mines are probably the oldest in the country. It was 70 years ago that exploitation of the manganese ore started in this country, and there was a time when manganese ore mines were supposed to be gold mines; people earned large profits out of them. But, so far as the workers in these mines are concerned, they have been living in almost sub-human conditions. A worker's house comprises of just one small room with one door and no windows. The position of drinking water supply is practically as good as what my previous speaker has pointed out. The conditions in the hospitals and dispensaries are very bad. It would be a misnomer to call them hospitals or dispensaries, there are no medicines in the dispensaries, no compounders in the hospitals.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : If there is a compounder, there are no medicines; if there are medicines, there is no compounder

SHRI N. K. BHATT : That is what I mean. If the dispensary is there, there is no medicine. And the compounder will not be found in the so-called dispensary. This is the condition there. Therefore, I should say that while many measures are being brought about under the 20-point programme, I still have my apprehensions as to how far it will be possible for the Government to ensure justice to these workers. Why I am saying this, Sir, is because there are various reasons.

Of course, the manganese ore mines are not in the public sector, they are not nationalised in that sense. But, when the Government is holding 51 per cent of the shares, it is difficult to understand why there is no serious thinking to find out ways of improvement and proper management. We have been constantly impressing upon the Ministry concerned that the ore produced by Manganese Ore (India) Limited should be lifted first instead of the ore from private mines. Why is it so? How is it that the ore produced by the private mines is being given priority over the ore produced by Manganese Ore (India) Limited? This is one of the reasons why there was a huge pile-up of stocks and Manganese Ore (India) Limited was in loss. When there was a demand for rise in the wages of workers, the management said, "We are in loss; we cannot pay more". Sir, this is a matter for which the workers cannot be blamed. Their production has gone up; productivity also they are trying to increase. But Sir, productivity cannot be increased by workers alone, without the complete co-operation and understanding of the management. What had happened there was that knowing it fully well that the wages of the workers are much below the required standard, the wages and benefits and other allowances of the officers were increased by the management. Sir, it is just like my having a feast while there is starvation in my neighbourhood. And when we raised our voice about this, they said, "All right hereafter nothing will be given to the staff till the workers' case is decided".

Of course, I am not in the habit of speaking in the language as my other friend has said, but the fact remains that no care has been taken to improve the lot of these workers. Once upon a time, these workers occupied a place of pride in the family of mine workers because Manganese ore was exported and huge profits were earned. Of course, at that time the cost of living was not much. There were workers who had gold, who had very good standard of living. Now, with the increased cost of living, there is no increase in their emoluments. The result is, I have seen the cases myself where certain families do not have cloths to change after they return from their work. They somehow or other wash the same cloths and wear. They have nothing to put on. It is such a deplorable plight of manganese workers. I demand that the minimum wages should be raised. I had an occasion to discuss the matter and I have written both to the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Steel and Mines. Though they have shown their sympathy but to my greatest disappointment, no step has been taken to increase the minimum wages of the manganese workers. We do not want to resort to measures which will probably put people and authorities to an uncomfortable sort of situation but the fact remains that there is a limit to the patience of the workers.

Coming to the question of contract system, there is already a law, for its abolition and yet this contractor. Still the old and outdated pernicious system of contract labour is prevailing in the manganese and iron ore industry.

Regarding Bailadilla. I had also an occasion to go there. It is such a nice site with rich deposits, very precious deposits of iron ore but less said about the workers is much better. There is no use repeating the story but I have not been able to understand when the NMDC is in the overall charge of the Project, why the various process including transportation

of ores are not managed by the corporation itself. Today the former Colliery owners are contractors there and what are they doing? Well, the Corporation has very sophisticated and costly machines by which they themselves can handle the job but it has been given to the contractors on very handsome rates with no responsibility to the workers wages and welfare. I do not see any justification why this contractor system is still there. On the one hand, it is our policy to abolish this system and on the other, this is being done in open daylight as a hunting ground for all those who want to mint money.

There are other matters, particularly about drinking water, health and all these things. All these good things have been stated but I have my own doubts, how it will be possible for us to achieve the objectives that we have in view in the existing circumstances.

Now, the hon. Minister has said about the cess. I have not to say about iron ore but I personally feel, on the side of manganese ore, there is a room for increasing the cess to Rs. 5 at least. Now they have started with rupee one. I have discussed the economics of this cess with the Chairman of the Manganese Ore India Limited and he feels convinced that there is a room for increasing it to Rs. 5. Well the matter can be examined again. The point is, on the one hand you want to give facilities and on the other you do not have the funds. We know the difficulties of the Government. Wherefrom the funds will come? As regards the proposition to put a levy of Re. 1, I would request the hon'ble Labour Minister to give a second thought to it and to increase the rate from Re. 1 to Rs. 5 because conditions in respect of their housing are so bad. Today, what is the position? For the workers working of the iron ore mines new houses have been constructed but for the manganese workers the houses are no good, they are living in dilapidated houses even 70 years old, where even dogs would not like to go and stay. We know it fully well that both manganese and iron ores are required for steel. Why

this discrimination then? Why this preferential treatment for the iron ore workers and why are the manganese workers given this sort of treatment? So, from this point of view, it is a welcome measure that a common Fund is being created both for the manganese and iron ore workers so that the Fund could be utilised according to the exigencies, according to the requirements of the situation. I have every hope that while making these provisions, due regard and fullest consideration will be given to the needs of the situation, and while giving representation to the workers on various committees, these factors will be taken into consideration.

Sir, in the case of the underground workers in the manganese mines, their condition is still worse. I do not want any mercy so far as their life is concerned. But, how is that even just things are being overlooked by the Ministry concerned? I do not want simple assurance but would demand early positive steps taken in that direction.

Sir, when we are talking about welfare measures, I would like to make mention of a company in Orissa viz. Bisra Lime Stone Company, Birmitrapur. This company is supplying lime-stone to the various steel companies in the public sector. They have supplied huge stocks to the steel plants but when the question of payment comes, it is not made in time. The company says that since city had not received payments from the steel plants it cannot pay wages to the workers. May I draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister to this unfortunate situation and request him to look into such matters to ensure that public sector organisations help make timely payments to the workers? They are being paid wages for one week in a month. They are simply given assurance after assurance. Therefore, Sir, when such welfare measures are taken up, it is necessary that these questions are also looked into in all their comprehensiveness. I would again draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister to the urgent

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steps that he should take to see that contract system is abolished not only in letter but in relation too, more so when this pernicious system creeps into public sector organisations. I would request him to consider raising the rate of cess from one rupee to a still higher amount because that will not yield substantial money which could be utilised for construction of houses; giving drinking water to the workers, construction of hospitals so badly needed and other welfare activities as I said in the manganese mines of Bailadilla.

With these words, I support the measures.

SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, this measure is for the first time being introduced in the manganese industry, though it has been there in the iron ore industry since 1961. Sir, it is a welcome measure that the welfare of the manganese workers is being thought of and certain amenities are to be given to them.

Sir, before I refer to all these welfare measures, I would like to say that in the area from where I come, Nagpur and Bhandara districts, there are a large number of manganese workers. But it will be seen that instead of expanding this industry—though production is going up in manganese ores of India—the labour force has been reduced from time to time. The hon'ble Minister has said that there are 28,000 workers working in the manganese ore mines. Sir, as per the figures given in the 1974 labour statistics, in 1961, there were 46,953 male workers and 17,697 female workers. So, in India there were 64,650 workers employed in the manganese industry. Their number was reduced in 1966. In 1970, it came down to 29,295 for male workers and 11,617 for female workers. In 1972, the position was : male workers were 29,342 and female workers were 11,619 and the total employed came to 40,961. We hear from the Minister that in 1976 the number is 28,000. Sir, for an industry which is very important from the rural area point of view—the reasons are

very basic—the Government has no cared even to work out welfare measures. It is the one public sector which is exploited by the foreigners getting Rs. 35 lakhs without any investment. The Central Provinces Manganese Ore Limited is a British concern which has been having the share alongwith the Government of India, in M. O. I. Ltd. (Manganese Ore India Ltd.) and for the last ten years they are making profit without any investment. They have got 49 per cent shares in this company. Sir, they are not investing any money; nor are the Central Government investing any money because they have 51 per cent share. The net result has been that the workers have suffered. Their wages are very low. It is a disgrace that this is the situation in such a public sector undertaking. I would like to inform the House about the wages, which information is given in the 1974 statistics. In 1969, the Government fixed Rs. 2.40 and it was raised in 1973 to Rs. 4 per day. In a public sector undertaking of which we are proud—we say that the Government should be the ideal employer—Rs. 4 is the minimum wage for a worker in the manganese ore industry. And in the nearby coal mines a worker gets Rs. 15 to Rs. 20. In these circumstances, how can he purchase medicines ? Even if a house is given to him, how can he maintain it. Therefore, apart from welfare, the basic question is providing a proper wage structure, with increased wages. Manganese being a Central subject, the Central Government has powers to revise the minimum wages to at least Rs. 8 or Rs. 10. Now, farmers' wages in different parts of the country have been revised under the 20-Point Programme. The wages have been increased from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8. But the poor manganese ore workers even today are getting Rs. 4 per day only. I urge upon the Minister to take up this matter very seriously; otherwise, it will have its own consequences.

Then, Sir, I do not understand this—for every industry there is a Welfare Commissioner. And the most important point

in 20 point economic programme is the reduction of Government expenditure. But we are opening new departments, are making new appointments of officers and are creating new authorities. Manganese ore industry is a very small industry; here also we are having a Welfare Commissioner; this is an industry employing only 28,000 people. And we have got four Welfare Funds—for mica mines, for coal mines, for iron ore and for dolomite and limestone. And we have four Welfare Commissioners also. We are also going to add one more. On the other hand, there should be only one Commissioner to administer all these Funds and one set of staff only; otherwise, there will be a heavy expenditure. For this industry, they have provided 10 per cent for the expenditure for the staff and the machinery to be created.

I suggest that the Government should seriously consider reduction of expenses in this industry on overhead charges. This is most important for the successful implementation of the 20 point programme. In this industry where the wages of the workers are so low it will not be proper to have a Welfare Commissioner or inspection staff. Shri Kalyan Roy has already stated what type of inspection they conduct. When the workers in this industry are paid very little, it is particularly important to see that the money is properly utilised like the University Grants Commission. Money should not be spent on huge staff.

About iron ore Government should decide what their policy should be. We are exporting about 2 million tonnes of iron ore to Japan. Japan is having the highest production in steel and 80 per cent of their steel is used for producing manufactured goods. If we export such a huge quantity, it will cause great difficulties for us in future. It is high time that we start manufacturing industries.

From the Bill I do not know what the Government is going to do with the ferro-manganese plants. We have six such plants in our country. They are making huge pro-

fits. They are all in the private sector. The internal demand for ferro-manganese has gone up to 1,81,440 from the original figure of 1,60,020. The demand is thus increasing. I do not understand why the Government is not taking over the plants when they are making huge profits. There is, of course, the Manganese Ore India Limited. In this industry, the condition of workers is very bad. Many workers are facing retrenchment. Today there are about 28,000 workers. Tomorrow the number may go down. If we have the interests of workers at heart, then it is essential that the industry must be stabilised. Their welfare conditions are not as good as those of workers engaged in coal mining industry. Unless we give them good wages and unless the industry is stabilised, the condition of the workers will not improve. Now the British company in the manganese industry is having 49 per cent shares. First of all this should be taken over and nationalised. Secondly, the six ferro-manganese plants...

SHRI N. K. BHATT : If there are any legal difficulties, Government should find out ways and means to overcome these.

SHRI S. W. DHABE : Legal question was already raised in the House. The CPMO is selling its shares to one Kapur who is a U.K. citizen. If the law is not sufficient, a fresh law can be passed. I suggest that the six ferro-manganese plants which are making huge profits should be taken over and nationalised and brought under the Manganese Ore India Limited. In the end I would like to repeat that reduction in expenditure should be brought about for the purposes of welfare administration. We do not want top-heavy administration with the Welfare Commissioner or other inspection staff. Let the Commissioner for Coal Mines look after this work. Even ten per cent is very high for administrative expenses.

Sir, this is a very important measure and it is coming for the first time for the manganese ore miners. There has been a demand for a long time for this from these

[Shri S. W. Dhabe]

workers and I congratulate the honourable Minister for fulfilling the needs of these people by bringing forward this Bill. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI MAQSOOD ALI KHAN (Karnataka) : Sir, I rise to support the two Bills under the consideration.

Sir, these two Bills are directed towards the welfare of the iron and manganese ore mine workers. A study of the living conditions of these workers is a study in grief, sorry and misery. Sometimes, Sir, I feel why the honourable Minister, who is present here, whenever he visits Bangalore, should not make a dash to the iron ore mines in the Hospet area and see for himself in what conditions these workers are living. On an earlier occasion also, I raised my voice regarding the living conditions of these iron ore mine workers in the Hospet and Ballary areas. I think since 1951 till today this iron ore mine workers welfare cess is being collected and the amount that has been collected so far as Karnataka is concerned, may be of the order of five to six crores of rupees. How much of it has been spent on these workers is a big question. I know that a hospital was there to be opened for them it took nearly six to eight years. We now learn that hospital, with only twenty five beds, is ready. What about the medical facilities that should reach every worker in that region? They live by the roadside, in unhealthy hutments. They are in with shabby dresses, poor health, and with no educational or medical facilities for their children. They live in such conditions that are in appalling. It is a pity to see these workers. Though the cess is being levied, the Welfare Fund is there, a proper utilisation of that fund has never been thought of. It has been rightly pointed out by the honourable Members of this august House that the first thing that the Government should do is to see whether these funds are properly utilised or not. Again it has been justly pointed out by the earlier speaker that we should not spend much money on the collection of this

cess. I think the state agencies which are now collecting royalties can be utilised for this purpose. Why should there be a separate agency? You may have a Board if you like. But, so far as the collection of the cess is concerned, the present machinery which is working in the different States can be geared up and provided with the necessary personnel to collect this new cess.

Coming to the Bill as such, Sir, I was just wondering why should be these two Bills at all. When we passed the Limestone and Dolomite Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1972, we had both the things together; the cess was there and the fund also was there. But, in this case, both are separate. Why have two Bills been brought forward in this House? They could have amalgamated the two and one Bill would have been enough to meet the purpose.

Coming to clause 3 in both the Bills, it defines what a cess is and it includes both the levies, the Customs levy and the Excise levy. Both these levies have been defined as cess.

Then, Sir, clause 4 says that any person who exports iron ore or manganese ore shall be leviable with Customs duty. So far as iron ore is concerned, ninety per cent of the production of ore goes to foreign countries.

May be, something of the order of 10 per cent is used within the country for our steel mills. Now, who has to pay the cess? Section 4 says that it is the person who sends it abroad. The MMTC is the agency which buys iron ore from others and sends it abroad. So the exporter under this Bill is the MMTC I think that the incidence of customs will fall on the MMTC would be of the order of Rs. 1 crore or so, if I am not mistaken, will the MMTC in the present instance be able to bear this cost, and if they bear this, what will be the repercussions of the same? They will naturally reduce the purchase price of iron ore which they are getting from the producers who will be hit hard ultimately. Either this levy of customs should not be

on the MMTC or it should go direct to the producers.

Another thing, Sir you have said in the Bills that out of the two categories, the exporters should be levied the customs duty and the producer should be levied the excise duty, provided he sells his material to any metallurgical factory. As I know for the last 14 years you have been collecting iron ore cess from the producer under another Act in force. Now, by passing this Bill, you are virtually, giving the producer an exemption from payment of metallurgical cess if he does not export or if he does not sell to a factory. If it is a question of export the MMTC comes into the picture if it is a question of any individual, namely he sells the material to the factories as most of the factories have their captive mines. So, it means in practice that you want to exempt the producers from the payment of the cess on iron ore, which up till now they have been paying. Is it the intention of this Bill? I would like the Minister to make this quite clear in his reply.

Sir, I come to the last question about disparity. On iron ore, you have said, the cess would not exceed one rupee per metric tonne while in the case of manganese, the Bill says that it may not exceed Rs. 6 per metric tonne. Why should there be a disparity at all? As hon. Members have just now made it clear, the condition in both the mines are the same. Even, coming to the selling price of iron ore and manganese ore of late the price of manganese has been picking up. In the last three or four years, it has picked up. Manganese, again, is a canalised thing, so far as export is concerned. Whether disparity in price. If it is iron ore or manganese, the producer does not suffer much we want to see that the working conditions in both the mines should be maintained on a par with each other, then, I think there is no point in having a disparity in cess. I would like to be enlightened very much on this point by the Minister in his reply. Why should this disparity be observed?

I now come to the general question of working conditions in mines in India. I would request the hon. Minister to see that the working conditions in all the mines, irrespective of the material which is mined, improves. Sir, in foreign countries in mines like quartz, granite, asbestos and the like such safety conditions are maintained that we cannot ever think of them I know in Kolar gold fields, workers go underground and work for 8 hours or so. After some years of work, they suffer from silicosis. The dust of granite goes deep into their lungs and they develop the disease. They are afflicted with poisonous diseases and have to leave off the work. So is the case in asbestos mine. If it is a quartz or a granite mine, it is silicosis. If it is an asbestos mine, it is asbestosis. I have myself seen a lot of workers working under very unhealthy and unsafe dusty environment.

No precautions are taken to see that the workers are kept away from dust. I think the Minister, who is present here, will take note of my suggestions. The working conditions will have to be studied and at least a certain minimum level of health will have to be maintained in all the mining areas and fields. With these words, I again welcome the two measures that are now proposed to be taken because they are for the betterment of the mine workers who are spread all over the country. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, at the very outset, permit me to thank all the hon. Members who have participated in the debate on the various provisions of these two Bills and extended their whole-hearted support. Of course, a number of observations have been made critically and various suggestions have also been made to improve the working of these organisations. Sir, Shri Kalyan Roy, as usual, made a very massive speech mobilising all the facts at his command. Shri N. K. Bhatt and Shri Dhabe made certain points out of their personal experience of the working of these various welfare organisations and of the conditions of living of the workers in the Iron Ore and Manganese

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mines. One technical point was raised by the last speaker, my friend from Karnataka. He asked as to why there are two Bills. The two Bills have been put up because of the Speakers ruling. Our desire was to frame one legislation. The Speaker has ruled that in these matters there must be two Bills and not one. That is the reason for two Bills. Another point made by the last speaker from Karnataka was about the expenditure in Karnataka. I do not want my friend to go home with a feeling that we have not spent sufficient money in Karnataka. The fact is that the expenditure in Karnataka has exceeded its income and accumulations. There is now no accumulation left to the account of Karnataka in the cess that has been collected from Karnataka. Therefore, you can be happy about it. I would like to get a little more money and spend a little more.

Another point that has been made by my friend is about Hospet that whenever I visited Hospet. I should have gone to the Iron Ore mines. I can tell my friend that I know Hospet as much as my friend knows. I have been to these mines. I have visited the Hospet area and after visiting that area, I requested our Department to hasten up the construction of the hospital. The hospital has been inaugurated more than a year ago by the Chief Minister and our Deputy Labour Minister from here.

Another point was made about the M.M.T.C. charging welfare cess from the producers. The cess in respect of welfare and other matters also is charged from the producers. Therefore, the producers are not left without being charged. I hope I have made this point clear and the hon. Member has no doubt about it. My friend, Mr. Kalyan Roy asked as to how much we are collecting and how much we are spending. In the year 1968-69, 77.16 lakhs had been collected in respect of Iron Ore and 28.80 lakhs had been spent. In 1969-70, 75.43 lakhs had been collected and 43.18 lakhs had been spent. In 1970-71 89.80

lakhs had been collected and 60.68 had been spent. I do not want to burden my friend with many figures. There is a progressive increase both in collection as well as in expenditure. In 1974-75, we collected 97 lakhs and we spent 96.78 lakhs. Nearly 3 crores of rupees are left in the account of Iron Ore Welfare Fund. And this Fund is meant to be utilised for the manganese ore and iron ore mines. And as far as my friend, Mr. Dhabe's point is concerned, I do not propose to expand the organisation in the name of Manganese Welfare Organisation and burden the organisation with this expenditure. I would like to use the entire Iron Ore Welfare Organisation set-up itself for the purpose of this welfare fund also. I do not like to increase even one paise expenditure unless it is absolutely compulsory and called for. I can assure the hon. Member, Mr. Dhabe, and other friends that it is not our intention to increase any expenditure by increasing one more piece of legislation. We do not want to increase expenditure on this account.

Sir, I do not want to take much time of the House. With regard to the disparity in levy that had been pointed out, I made it very clear in my speech itself earlier the reasons why it has been done so. With regard to the iron ore, we have fixed Re. 1 though 25 paise are being collected. We can go up. The power is given to the Government to do so. Sir, with regard to the point made by Shri N. K. Bhatt as to why we are keeping it at Re. 1 and not at Rs. 5, the fact remains that the power is taken by the Government to increase it to Rs. 6. If the facts and circumstances are such that it is necessary that we should increase the levy to Rs. 5, and the situation is such that without doing that we will not be able to collect the necessary money for the purpose of providing welfare, certainly, the Government will not be feeling hesitant if it is so advised to increase the levy to Rs. 5.

With regard to minimum wages, well, I am myself not very happy. Still, the Labour Ministry is struggling to increase

the minimum wages for these unfortunate workers in the mines. It is true that there was an appealing minimum of rupee one and odd at one stage. We struggled to raise it to Rs. 4 and now we are struggling again to increase it to a higher limit, and this process of increasing the minimum wages is going on. Sir, I do not want to go into all the questions that had been raised by my friend, Mr. Kalyan Roy, for the simple reason that he had made a speech on a very wide campus or canvas including the various welfare organisations, accidents, safety measures and all that. This is a very limited campus, a limited measure with regard to the levying of cess and the way how the iron ore welfare fund has to be administered. I would like to dispel some of the apprehensions wrongly or sometimes by way of misapprehension that had been entertained by my friend. It is not correct to say that no house has been built by the Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund. I may give the figures for the information of the hon. Members. Sir, in Bihar, 1459 houses were sanctioned, and the number of houses constructed so far is 1059, and 50 houses are under construction. In Andhra Pradesh 24 houses were sanctioned, and 24 houses have been constructed. In Madhya Pradesh, 4,121 houses were sanctioned, 2,420 houses have been constructed and 593 houses are under construction. Similarly, in Karnataka, 1265 houses were sanctioned, 635 houses have been constructed, and 535 houses are under construction. In Maharashtra, 72 houses under the low cost housing scheme were sanctioned, 42 houses have been constructed and 30 are under construction.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : I give you the first clap for this.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, this is a small welfare scheme for a small section of the population. We are not dealing with the 600 million people here. Therefore, the scheme will not be so high sounding as my good friend, Mr. Kalyan Roy, would like it to sound.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Will be you able to say as to how many of the 29,382 manganese workers and 58,000 iron ore workers have been provided with quarters both in the private sector and the public sector? It is a simple question.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, I do not want Mr. Kalyan Roy to feel that this a very major scheme. This is a very modest piece of legislation with very modest aims. Therefore, within the framework of this modest approach, we will have to deal with this problem.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, he started with a thunder, and you now see that he is whimpering.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Well, as far as the thunder is concerned, that is always reserved for Mr. Kalyan Roy, and I do not want to claim any privilege with regard to that.

Sir, with regard to hospitals in Bihar, an emergency hospital has been set up in Brajamba. A mobile medical dispensary has also been set up there. In Orissa a primary health centre has been set up at Joda and another at Joruri. Besides there is a mobile medical dispensary at Barbil. Similarly, hospitals and dispensaries have been set up in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Goa and some other places. Sanatoriums have also been provided. In some cases grants-in-aid have been given to the mine owners in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Karnataka and Goa regions for maintaining dispensary services of the prescribed standard. The type of work that had been done by the Iron Ore Welfare Board is sought to be done by the Manganese Welfare Fund, which is now being raised as a part of the cess. As I said, we would not like to incur any kind of additional expenditure as far as the Manganese Welfare Fund is concerned.

Sir, with regard to the other points that have been raised by Mr. Kalyan Roy though they are not germane to the subject-matter contained in both the Bills, I

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would like to assure him that as far as the Iron Ore Welfare Fund Review Committee/meetings are concerned, it is unfortunate that they could not meet as often as they should have but hereafter I would expect that these meetings will be held as many times as possible without casting any unnecessary burden on the Welfare Fund. While it is necessary to see that undue expenditure is not incurred as a result of overhead expenditure on the organisations, the Welfare Fund Advisory Committee should meet for certain purposes but it should avoid unnecessary expenditure.

The question of mines safety has been raised by Shri Kalyan Roy several times and it can be the subject-matter for a discussion. We have discussed it several times and I do not want to go into this matter here.

With these words, Sir, and with your kind permission and with the kind support of the hon. Members, I move that both the Bills be taken into consideration.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now, I will put the motion.

The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on iron ore and manganese ore for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of persons employed in the Iron ore mines and Manganese ore mines and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 14 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY : Sir, I move :

"That the Bill be returned."

The question was proposed.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, I just want to raise two points. Is the Minister aware that the Dongari manganese mine has been closed since 1970 and all the workers have been retrenched and now the total strength there has come down to 234? Will he inquire into this matter? Secondly, the Minister says so much that he is concerned with the vital aspect of safety. What explanation has he got to give when I say that the number of inspections carried out by the Director General of Mines Safety in relation to iron ore and manganese mines are steadily falling affecting the life of workers. From 392 inspections carried out in 1972, their number has come down to 172 in 1975, in regard to inspections regarding hygiene. In regard to general inspections, the number has come down to 3,846 in 1974 while their number was 5575 in 1972. Therefore, mines are giving more production is increasing and on the other hand, the number of inspections by your Department has been steadily going down.

SHRI K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: As far as the coal mines are concerned, the answer is very simple. Why the Director General of Mines Safety should not exercise its powers and inspect the mines is due to the fact that after the nationalisation of mines when the public sector has come into existence, naturally the responsibility of the management has increased and they take full responsibility with regard to safety measures. In such cases, therefore, we must draw a distinction between the private sector and public sector. The public sector have a very heavy responsibility; they have also taken up the responsibility of safety measures. That is why, to some extent, the responsibility is shifted. When there was the private sector only, naturally the Department of Mines

Safety inspected every mine more than often. After the nationalisation, the Mines Safety Officers in the public sector mines are also looking after this aspect. But it does not mean, Sir, that the Safety Department is not inspecting the mines. In fact, some of the mines which were not considered to be safe, have been inspected quite a number of times.

With regard to iron ore mines, and their inspections, I do not have the necessary information immediately. If the hon. Member desires, and if he finds time, I am prepared to discuss with him.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be returned."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of persons employed in the iron

ore mines and manganese ore mines, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 12 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, I move.

"That the Bill be passed."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at forty-eight minutes past five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 1st April, 1976.