

Lastly, Sir, the workers, whose services were terminated by the erstwhile employers even when the Tribunal gave the award for their reinstatement, made repeated appeals and representations to the Minister in charge, Mr. Malaviya, and his predecessors, but they have failed to do any justice to the workers. I would once again request Malaviyaji to look into the matter. The workers, who were evicted by the erstwhile employers, contractors and *goondas*, are not being taken back. Their names are there. We have given the names. The CITU has given the full list of those workers who were evicted by the erstwhile employers, but they have not been taken back as yet, even after two years of nationalisation. Sir, it is high time Malaviyaji did something for these workers. Even in those cases where the Tribunal's award is in their favour, the workers are not yet taken back. It is a most shameful thing.

Lastly, what about the implementation of the agreement? What is the fate of it? We want to know whether it would be implemented and, if implemented, whether the workers will get the money in cash in their hands or whether it will go to dogs in the name of deposit in their provident fund accounts. That also must be made clear here. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER RE-STRIKE BY JUNIOR ENGINEERS AND OTHERS IN THE NEYVELI LIGNITE CORPORATION

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA): Sir, with your permission I would like to make a very important statement. This statement relates to the strike which has been declared by 1,200 Junior Engineers of the Neyveli Lignite Corporation.

SHRI KALYAN ROY (West Bengal): I have tabled a Calling Attention on that.

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: Please listen to it. Perhaps you will know more about it.

Sir, about 1,200 Junior Engineers and intermediary technical staff working in the Neyveli Lignite complex of Neyveli Lignite Corporation in the South Arcot District, Tamil Nadu went on strike from the morning of 11th August, 1974 in connection with their demands for higher emoluments, automatic promotion and upgradation of certain categories. Following the strike and sympathetic work-to-rule action by the Assistant Engineers, the Corporation has been compelled to close down their briquetting, fertiliser and power plants. According to information received this afternoon, the mines are, however, being worked.

The Junior Engineers and intermediary technical staff have already been offered higher emoluments but in regard to other demands, like automatic promotion, etc., these could not be conceded. The Chairman, Neyveli Lignite Corporation had offered to place the matter before the Central Government but this was not accepted by the Engineers and these officers decided to go on strike. Earlier, there were conciliation talks with the Management at Madras, which had also failed. In this context it is relevant to note that strikes in the Neyveli complex have been prohibited by the Union Government under the Defence of India Rules. Forty-one persons have been arrested so far in connection with this illegal strike under the Defence of India Rules.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame shame.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : There is no question of shame because you want to generate power...

(Interruptions)

DR. RAMKRIPAL SINGH (Bihar) : And next you will arrest them under MISA.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : You try to understand...

DR. RAMKRIPAL SINHA : Is this democracy or Fascism ?

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : I repeat, in this context it is relevant to note that strikes in the Neyveli complex have been prohibited by the Union Government under the Defence of India Rules. Forty-one persons have been arrested so far in connection with this illegal strike. This strike is illegal.

(Interruptions)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS) : Let him finish.

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : Would you like to get the information or not ? Do they like to get the information or not ? I am only trying to pass on the information for their comments.

The stoppage of work in a core-sector industry like Neyveli Lignite Corporation which produces badly needed power and fertilisers at this juncture when the country is facing serious economic difficulties and all-out efforts are being made by the Government to raise production and combat inflation is most unfortunate. I, therefore, appeal to the striking Engineers of Neyveli to appreciate the serious consequences of their unjustified and illegal strike and come back to work.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY (West Bengal) : Unjustified attitude of the Government.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : May I know from the Minister when the demands of the Engineers were put up before the management whether there was a discussion with the management either across the table or in conciliation and if so what is the chance of reopening the negotiation which reached a deadlock and which has led to the unfortunate strike ?

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : I am sorry to say that these details are not available with me here but I want to make one thing quite clear that in such vulnerable sections where production has to be continued, whether it is fertilizer or power generation, illegal strikes cannot be tolerated by the Government.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : Which strike has been declared legal by your Government ?

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : The hon. Member knows how strikes become illegal. *(Interruptions)* So when I make a statement that...

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : We have to apportion responsibility. We would like to see good industrial relations between the management and the staff. We would like to be satisfied that you are on the right track. *(Interruptions)* I can understand that in order to maintain production Government has to act on behalf of the community but let us know who is on which side and how far they are wrong.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : It is the Chairman who is solely responsible.

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA : All that I want to say just now is that it will not be proper for these highly disciplined

Engineers to resort to a strike. They could have very well carried on the process of persuasion for a little more. They could have had a little more patience. After all they got their promotions. There were only certain other questions which were rather too complicated for the leadership of the Administration to accede to. It was therefore not considered very desirable by the Government that they should have resorted to a strike and not shown a little more patience and listened to what should be done and what should not be done. The more we enter into arguments the more perhaps the matter will become complicated. I would therefore like this House to understand the position quite clearly that we are not against these officers; we want them to come back to work and we can then consider as to what the matter is and we will certainly go into the merits of it but they should also realise that at such a critical time—whether it is wage freeze or fiscal policy or crisis of production whatever you may like to call it, I do not wish to enter into arguments about it—in this vital area they should not have resorted to a strike. Therefore I thought it proper to make an appeal in this House so that they may understand the position.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: you should have settled the matter at the table instead of bringing in the police.

DR. RAMKIRPAL SINHA: Is the Government going to apply DIR and MISA like this?

(Interruptions)

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: I want to ask one question.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): Your question must be relevant to the statement made.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: Of course it is relevant. I want to know whether the Neyveli complex is under the Government of India or it is run by the State Government; secondly if it is run by the Union Government whether the entire negotiation and reconciliation were taken up by the Government of India and their Labour Department or whether it was left to the State Government and thirdly whether Malaviyaji knew all the developments throughout the period of the negotiations and whether he himself intervened in the matter before the strike took place. *(Interruptions)* Now they say that if the coal workers go on strike we shall impose DIR and arrest thousands of coal workers. That will not help you in any manner.

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: These are not coal workers; they are Engineers who have gone on strike. You must understand the entire implications of the situation—and who can be persuaded to understand a reasonable point of view if it was put before them.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Now they are being persuaded in the jail.

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: If you want to understand the position you must listen. They did not give any notice. Every attempt was made to persuade them not to do it. They should have considered that in such a critical sphere they should not do it. We asked them not to do it. So far as the question of emoluments is concerned it was accepted. At the moment I have not got the details with me but they will in due course of time come before Government and before me also and we will give all the consideration that they deserve.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: Who gave them the advice?

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: The local leaders of the Administration who were functioning on our behalf. Within the perimeter of the discipline that had to be imposed on them at that time in this sector they had to function. And they functioned normally and they persuaded them not to go on strike but they went on this illegal strike.

(Interruptions).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): The House stands adjourned till 11.00 A. M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at forty-six minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 13th August, 1974.