

12 Noon

STATEMENT RE DISCOVERY OF A COAL SEAM IN SINGRAULI IN MADHYA PRADESH

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH): On behalf of Shri Keshava Deva Malaviya I wish to take this opportunity of informing the House that our geologists in the Geological Survey of India, in the course of drilling from the top of the plateau in the Singrauli coal-field of Madhya Pradesh, struck a 54-foot coal seam (Turra seam) at a depth of 140 feet some time back. While drilling for proving its extension further north, I am glad to inform the House that our geologists have now discovered a new seam which has a total thickness of 90 feet with a 15-foot parting in the middle. This is entirely a new find, the existence of which was not known earlier.

The discovery of these new seams opens up the possibility of quarrying along a width of 1 mile. The strike length of 1 mile of two seams mentioned above, which may extend further, may give us quarriable reserves exceeding 50 million tons. Further drilling, however, is likely to reveal considerably larger reserves. We are, however, unable to increase the tempo of our drilling programme on account of shortage of coal drilling equipments. This quantitative assessment which may have been studied howsoever carefully has to be taken with a note of caution because the figures of these reserves at the present stage are based only on a general assessment of the available data. The precise data relating to these reserves will be known only after drilling programme has been completed.

This important find is likely to help in considerably stepping up the output of coal particularly from a region which is so centrally situated.

I should also like to pay a tribute to our geologists for the good work done by them which is not a mere

stroke of luck or fortune favouring us but is the result of laborious and accurately scientific work put in.

STATEMENT RE CLOSURE OF COTTON TEXTILE MILLS IN THE VIDARBHA REGION OF BOMBAY STATE.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATISH CHANDRA): Sir, on behalf of Shri Nityanand Kanungo I beg to make a statement in respect of closure of cotton textile mills in the Vidarbha region of Bombay State, in particular that of the Model Mills Limited, Nagpur.

This is a one-and-a-half page statement. Shall I read it or lay it on the Table of the House, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many pages?

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: One and a half pages.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Bombay): It may be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO (Andhra Pradesh): We can seek clarification on any point if he reads it. He may read it, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right; you read it.

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA: Model Mills Ltd., Nagpur, the Vidarbha Mills Ltd., Achalpur, the Berar Manufacturing Co., Badnera and Bansilal Abhirchand Mills, Hinganghat, of the Vidarbha region are reported to have been closed down.

The Model Mills closed down on the 6th April, 1959, initially for two months due to uneconomic working and paucity of working capital. A recent survey of the Mills showed that its machinery is in workable condition and it could be reopened and run smoothly under a competent

management. In view of this an Investigation Committee has been appointed on the 24th April, 1959, and the possibility of reopening the mills will be fully examined in the light of the recommendations of the Committee.

The Vidharbha Mills Ltd. closed down on the 1st April, 1959, for about six months initially due to uneconomic working. The state of machinery and chronic financial difficulties are reported to be the main reasons for not reopening the Mills. The management of the Mills met the Textile Commissioner. It transpires that they will consider reopening the Mills, particularly as the workers are reported to be agreeable to a reduction in the total wages.

The third Mill, namely the Berar Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Badnera, has been closed down since October, 1958, for reasons of financial difficulties. The machinery of the mill is reported to be old and outmoded, and management has no funds for rehabilitation or modernisation. The only course in this case appears to be for the Mill to be wound up. Closing down of such mills with old and outmoded machinery is not an unusual or uncommon feature in the industry.

As regards the fourth Mill, namely Bansilal Abhirschand Mills, Hinganghat, there was a fire break-out in March, 1959, in which a number of cards, draw frames, roving frames and ring frames have been destroyed. Expenditure for replacement and repairs is estimated at Rs. 7.27 lakhs and the Insurance Surveyors have already started survey work of the damages. On receipt of the money the Mill Management propose to start repairs and replacement of the machinery.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE (Bombay): I seek a clarification, Sir. I had given notice of a motion for papers on this subject on the 18th April and now it is more than 18 days. I think it is rather inordinate

delay in giving the information to the House. It is seen that this information was released to the press long before, and various statements were issued from day to day to press through some other labour leaders. When the information is sought in the House I cannot understand why it is released to the press earlier than it is given in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not clarification; you are discussing.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: This is only my submission, Sir. What I want to say is that if information is sought in the House, it should be given first in the House. Then only it should be released outside. I want one clarification, Sir. As the Government have been kind enough to appoint an inquiry committee to inquire into the affairs of the Model Mills I ask why no other inquiry committee has been appointed to inquire into the affairs of Bansilal Abhirschand Mills at Hinganghat, because it has been mentioned and it has been published . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are making a speech; you are discussing the whole thing.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: I want that clarification, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What clarification?

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: My submission is that when the other committee has been appointed . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: My submission is also correct that when the Parliament is in session, if it is possible, information must be given to Parliament and not to private agencies.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): What happens? We table a notice; Government gets the information; then things go to the press and do not come here and we are not told as to what it is. This is what I am telling you.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI LAL BAHADUR): As far as I am aware, as soon as we got this notice, we were prepared to make a statement. We informed the Parliament Secretariat here, and in the case of one mill, the Model Mills, action has already been taken; the Bombay State Government is willing to take it over and we are prepared to finance them. As regards the other mills the hon. Member has asked, in fact, the Textile Commissioner is already enquiring into those mills and some enquiry has already been completed. Then as far as the press is concerned, what happens? Suppose I visit Berar tomorrow and certain questions are put to me. Am I not expected to answer them there?

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: I would like to know whether any committees under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act are being appointed to inquire into the affairs of the textile mills at Achalpur, Badnera and Hinganghat.

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: They are in different stages. First a preliminary enquiry is made, and then action is taken under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act. We are doing the needful where necessary.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: Thousands of workers are without any employment. The enquiry should be completed as early as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is taking action. Papers to be laid on the Table.

DR. R. B. GOUR (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, before you proceed I beg to submit that Shri Lal Bahadur's statement leads to another question, that he was prepared to make this statement to the House long ago. Now how is it that it was delayed for 18 days?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: These things we should know sometimes.

Our contention is not that he should not answer questions when he is asked but then, Sir, there are other Ministers who can make the statement here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Wherever possible, in ordinary circumstances, information must be given to the Parliament and not to the press.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: As the Minister of Commerce and Industry was ready to make the statement in the House, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs owes an explanation as to why provision was not made for that statement to be made.

SHRI B. D. KHOBARAGADE: This amounts to disregard for the House.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

STATEMENTS SHOWING ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON ASSURANCES, PROMISES AND UNDERTAKINGS GIVEN DURING VARIOUS SESSIONS

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA NARAYAN SINHA): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table the following statements showing the action taken by the Government on the various assurances, promises and undertakings given during the sessions shown against each:—

- (i) Statement No. XVII—Fourteenth Session, 1956.
- (ii) Statement No. XVIII—Seventeenth Session, 1957.
- (iii) Statement No. XVI—Eighteenth Session, 1957.
- (iv) Statement No. XI—Nineteenth Session, 1957.
- (v) Statement No. VIII—Twentieth Session, 1958.