

BOAT DISASTER AT MANDIRA DAM

*712. SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: Will the Minister of STEEL MINES AND FUEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether a boat carrying some passengers met with disaster at Mandira Dam on or about the 11th August 1958, causing loss of many lives; and

(b) if so, what are the details of that incident?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL, MINES AND FUEL (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH):

(a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

On 12th July 1958, the Spillway channel of Mandira Dam started functioning and the area to the left side of the channel and the right side the Earth Dam got cut off from the main colony and formed an island. In order to enable the officers and workers residing in the colony to come to their worksite within the island, a temporary suspension bridge was constructed over the spillway channel some 400 feet below the channel.

On the morning of 11th August 1958 one of the supervisors noticed that an earth slip had occurred at the right abutment supporting the temporary suspension bridge. As danger to the bridge was anticipated, traffic over the bridge was stopped at 7-30 A.M. After the authorities had visited and checked up, traffic was resumed at 7-45 A.M. During this short period when the bridge was closed to traffic, some workers had collected on the right side of the spillway. They were being transported to the island by one of the two boats maintained for transporting officers and workers in case of necessity, by the Dam authorities. The boats could carry about 25 persons each. While one of these boats was making its third trip with 17 persons on board, it got into the current and was crushed against the spillway crest resulting in the death of all the persons in the boat. The passengers of

the ill fated boat consisted of 3 boatmen 10 employees, and 4 ex-employees of the Mandira Project.

The Chief Engineer immediately sanctioned, out of his discretionary fund, a sum of Rs. 100 towards funeral expenses and other charges for every bereaved family.

A court of enquiry was set up by the Chief Engineer Hirakud. The court was of the view that the accident occurred as a result of negligence of the boatmen on starting the boat from a place nearer the spillway and also not plying it over the prescribed route.

COLLAPSE OF THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE NEAR MANDIRA DAM

*713. SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND FUEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the suspension bridge near the Mandira Dam collapsed recently; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL, MINES AND FUEL (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: May I know, Sir, how the number of passengers in the boat has been ascertained?

MR. CHAIRMAN: 25 persons each—he said.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I have given the number in the statement.

SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: Is there any register maintained to show the number of passengers in the boat every trip or the number is ascertained from tickets issued?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: There is no question of maintaining a register. We know the number of passengers and the hon. Member might recall that I have mentioned earlier that this trip

was undertaken because the bridge was not functioning for about 45 minutes. They could not wait. They thought that they could cross over and unfortunately they took a route which was near the dangerous current.

SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: May I know, Sir, if the danger area in the reservoir has been indicated by a signal?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has the danger area been indicated by a red signal—he asks.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Actually certain ballies had been put up. It was also mentioned that no one should go nearer than about 250 feet, but unfortunately these boatmen took a risk and they were plying their boat much nearer the ballies than was safe enough to do.

SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: May I know, Sir, if those persons will be paid compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: It is a legal matter about which I could not venture an opinion. If they are entitled to compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act, they will certainly be given and that will be dealt with according to law.

GERMAN WELFARE CENTRE AT ROURKELA

*714. SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND FUEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a German Welfare Centre at Rourkela;

(b) if so, who maintains it; and

(c) what are its functions?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL, MINES AND FUEL (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) German Contractors engaged in the Rourkela Steel Project.

(c) To provide social, cultural and recreational amenities to Germans engaged in erection work.

SHRI HARIHAR PATEL: May I know, Sir, if the steel plant authorities bear any part of the cost on account of this Welfare Centre?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: No, Sir.

SHRI N. M. LINGAM: May I know the number of Germans who are in this Welfare Centre?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I think there are over 800 Germans working there. I cannot say whether all of them are using the Centre or not.

PANDIT S. S. N. TANKHA: Is there a welfare centre for Indian workmen also there, either maintained by the Germans themselves or by the concerned State authorities or the Central Government?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Indian workmen employed by Germans?

PANDIT S. S. N. TANKHA: Yes.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I could not say. But there are clubs and other centres of social and cultural activities which are used by Indians.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: May I know, Sir, whether these are maintained by the Government or are they maintained by their own subscriptions?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Which one?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The other welfare centre for Indians.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I could not say.

RELIEF GIVEN TO FLOOD VICTIMS IN DELHI

*715. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any relief was given to the victims of floods that occurred recently in Delhi: if so how much; and

(b) which are the agencies which give the relief?