

COUNCIL OF STATES

Wednesday, 12th May 1954

The Council met at a quarter past eight of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*667. [For answer vide col. 6138 infra.]

ILLEGAL DEDUCTIONS MADE FROM THE WAGES OF THE WORKERS OF THE KOTMA COLLIERY IN VINDHYA PRADESH

*668. SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain cases of deductions of money from the wages of the workers of the Associated Cement Company's Kotma Colliery in Vindhya Pradesh and its being credited to 'Manager's Suspense Account' were brought to the notice of the Conciliation Officer (C), Patna and that the Manager of the Colliery was asked by the Conciliation Officer to refund these deductions to the workers concerned;

(b) if so, whether these amounts have so far been refunded to the workers; and

(c) if not, what steps Government propose to take to get this amount refunded to the workers?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI ABID ALI): (a), (b) and (c). The Kamgar Samity (Union) represented to the Conciliation Officer (Central), Dhanbad, that the management of Kotma Colliery had made illegal deductions from the wages of three workers, amounting to Rs. 12-8 in all. The management explained that the recoveries were made against damage caused by the three employees to the Company's property. At the intervention of the Conciliation Officer (Central), Dhanbad, the management has agreed to refund the amounts.

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: Is the Government aware that the cases of deductions which have just been mentioned by the hon. Minister are not confined to loss of property only, but they concern other matters also, and these cases of deductions have been brought to the notice of the Conciliation Officer, Patna? Agreeing to repay the amounts is acceptance of the principle that the Manager had no right to make deductions from the wages of labourers. Some more documents have been handed over by me to the highest authorities of Vindhya Pradesh.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Making a long speech?

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: No, Sir. I just want an enquiry to be made and I am giving some information for that purpose. And, Sir, the wages so deducted were used for bribing and corrupting even high officials for personal use of the Manager and for suppressing the genuine trade union.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: He does not accept any of these suggestions.

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: There are dozens of documents in my possession. Will the Government therefore assure a comprehensive enquiry to be made into all these cases and get all the money refunded to the workers, and take such action against the Manager as is considered necessary?

SHRI ABID ALI: As I have already replied, according to the management's version, these deductions were made because there was some damage to the property. But the management have agreed to refund the amount. If more cases are brought to our notice, we shall take appropriate action in the matter with the help of the Union.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Sir, in view of serious allegations made against the management, will the

Government make enquiries in the matter?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, yes.

SHRI ABID ALI: If some evidence is produced of course.

SHRI RATANLAL KISHORILAL MALVIYA: Is the Government aware that an enquiry has been launched against the union workers who unearthed this scandal and procured these documents and they are being dismissed by the management? And if so, will the Government give these persons some protection?

SHRI ABID ALI: Of course, whatever they deserve.

*669. [For answer, vide col. 6140 infra.]

PAYMENT OF TAXES OF LOCAL BODIES BY THE RAILWAYS

*670. SHRIMATI MAYA DEVI CHETTRY: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Administration have not yet paid the taxes levied on their properties by some of the municipalities in West Bengal;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take for the settlement of the amounts due to those municipalities?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): (a) and (b). The Railway administrations have been paying whatever taxes they were liable to pay before 26th January 1950 at the rates in force before that date. Taxes demanded by municipalities in respect of new properties or at higher rates in respect of old ones are not being paid in the absence of permissive

legislation as required by the Constitution. But even in these cases the Railway administrations have instructions to pay for specific services rendered under a contractual arrangement.

(c) Government have since devised a formula on the basis of which taxes to various municipalities should be paid and the issue of necessary orders is now under the consideration of the Ministry of Finance in consultation with other Ministries concerned.

SHRIMATI MAYA DEVI CHETTRY: Sir, may I know the names of the municipalities in West Bengal to which the Railway Administration have not yet paid their taxes?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Sir, there may be many municipalities. I do not have the list of such municipalities just now.

SHRIMATI MAYA DEVI CHETTRY: May I know Sir, whether the hon. Minister means to say that all the municipalities in West Bengal are not being paid the taxes?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Sir, this is a general question which covers the Central Government property situated all over India.

SHRIMATI MAYA DEVI CHETTRY: May I know how many representations have been made by the municipalities in West Bengal?

SHRI LAL BAHADUR: The hon. Member is perhaps referring to the Darjeeling Municipality about which she had spoken to me also. We are still looking into that matter.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY: The hon. Minister referred to contractual services. May I know what those contractual services are? The municipalities render services. Does the hon. Minister mean that they have rendered services periodically?