

PROF. G. RANGA: How can they?

DR. P. C. MITRA: Who will do that—the Government or the cultivator?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: The money is collected by the State Governments. It does not come to the Centre. Three or four years ago we had sent a circular letter to the States which collected cess and we informed them that the cess is intended to be spent on the development of sugarcane or the means of communication between the factories and the cane-growers. The Bihar Government informed us that they were spending that amount for the purpose for which it is being collected. U. P. said that the amount of cess forms a part of their budgetary purposes and they are not in a position either to reduce it or to spend it only for sugarcane development.

DR. P. C. MITRA: Will the Government be prepared to remind the State to utilize it only for the purpose for which it is collected?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: The reminder is helpful where the State is agreeable to spend for that purpose only but when the State Government says that it may be spent for whatever purpose they like, then reminder is not helpful.

PROF. G. RANGA: Under whose authority is the cess being collected? Is it on the authority of the Central Government and if so, is it not possible for the Central Government to take suitable action either to stop the cess being collected or to see that it is utilized for the purpose for which it is collected?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I wish I had the authority. Let the hon. Member study the Constitution. The cess is part of the State Government subject. It is in List II.

DR. P. S. DESHMUKH: It is levied by the States by legislation.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY: What is the basis on which the cess differs from State to State?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: If they want to spend it on the development of sugarcane or the development of the means of communication, then it depends on their requirements. If it is levied for their general budgetary purposes, then it depends upon the requirements of the State for their general expenses. In one State, for instance, in Madras, they are collecting at Re. 1 per ton, in Mysore the charges are Rs. 6 per ton, in Bihar, U. P. and Bombay it is three annas per maund. It differs from State to State for the purpose for which they collect.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY: May I know if any State has used this for general purposes?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: U. P. has said that and about Bihar it is doubtful. Bihar has said that they have spent it for cane purposes and that they have got some tube-wells constructed for this. 20 per cent. of that area is covered by sugarcane as well as other crops but they say it is for sugarcane purposes that they have constructed those tube-wells.

APPLICATION OF THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT TO THE PORT EMPLOYEES

*392. SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Commissioners for the port of Calcutta have made a representation to the Government of India requesting that the port employees be exempted from the application of the Minimum Wages Act; and

(b) if so, whether any decision has been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI V. V. GIRI): (a) and (b). A suggestion was made at one stage that all major

Port Trusts might be exempted from the purview of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, but this was not accepted by Government. There has since been no application for exemption.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Is it a fact that the Port authorities at Bombay assured the employees that the arrear sum of Rs. 75 lakhs would be paid to them and now they are trying to avoid paying that and so they have made some representation to the Government?

SHRI V. V. GIRI: It is not correct. The Port Trust is prepared to pay and it will be paid.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: May I take it that the same will apply to the port employees at Calcutta who also went on strike and demonstrated for payment of arrears?

SHRI V. V. GIRI: We have directed the port authorities in Calcutta also to look into the matter.

ACCIDENT AT THE MAJRI COLLIERY IN MADHYA PRADESH

*393. SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Will the Minister for LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the serious accident that occurred at the Majri Colliery in the Chanda district in Madhya Pradesh on the 5th August, 1953, resulting in the death of a number of workers;

(b) if so, what is the total number of deaths; and

(c) what are the causes that led to the occurrence of this accident?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (SHRI V. V. GIRI): (a) Yes.

(b) Eleven.

(c) The accident was due to an inrush of large volume of water through a subsidence on the surface which was inundated by flood water. The water rushed into the mine

through the subsidence in great quantity and at high velocity as the workings in the seam were dipping at about 1 in 6. Eleven persons who were in the northern part of the mine had their retreat cut off by the inrush of water and were drowned. 38 workers, who were in the southern part, managed to escape.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Is it a fact that due to the complete absence of all safety measures and appliances, the rescue operations could not be successfully carried out?

SHRI V. V. GIRI: It is not correct. Everybody tried his best to avoid the accident, as this note of mine will show. The accident occurred on the 5th August 1953, at 5:30 P. M. and the Inspector of Mines whose headquarter is at Chindwara reached the spot at 4-30 P.M. on 6th August. He has enquired into the accident and the Chief Inspector is taking even stricter measures to safeguard and avoid such accidents in future. I wish to tell the House that they do take great precautions; but now they shall take even greater precautions to see that such accidents do not occur.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Is it a fact that there is no telephonic connection at the different levels and that even the warning bell did not go up to the 15th level where the miners were working?

SHRI V. V. GIRI: There is, I think, telephonic communication, but most probably it was not in order.

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: May I know whether it is a fact that there is no electricity in this mine?

SHRI V. V. GIRI: I do not think that this mine has electricity.

SHRI K. C. GEORGE: Will the hon. Minister be pleased to enlighten us as to what were the rescue measures taken?

SHRI V. V. GIRI: Does the hon. Member want information as regards