

File

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Pros. Nos.  
Serial

III-54-10

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Subject.

Re-appointment of Mr. Harrison as  
Coal Commissioner

Previous References.

Later References.



New Delhi,  
The 9th March 1947

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*Sy. Ram Vallabh*

Many thanks for your  
letter of the 8th instant  
about the post of Coal Commissioner

Yours sincerely,

*Sy. Ram Vallabh*

The Hon'ble  
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,  
Member for Home and Broad-  
casting, New Delhi

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NEW DELHI, 8.3.47.

Many thanks for your letters of the 26th and 28th February 1947 regarding the post of Coal Commissioner.

I am still not convinced that you cannot have a suitable Indian to fill this post. However, since you insist, I would acquiesce in the appointment for a period not exceeding one year. But under the terms of the Cabinet decision, it is incumbent upon the Department to take suitable steps to train an Indian to fill this post. I do hope, therefore, that you will take the necessary steps to select a suitable Indian to under-study Mr. Harrison and acquire the necessary knowledge and experience which would fit him to take Mr. Harrison's place as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari,



3  
28.2.47

My dear Valabhabhai

I write to you regarding  
about the Coal Commission.  
The Coal & Transport  
position being closely inter-twined,  
and the Coal Commission being  
also Railway Board's Ex-Officio  
Mining Engineer, I consulted  
the Transport member about  
the matter. He is positive  
that we should not swap  
buses now, as what  
with all kinds of difficulties,

U

it is not unlikely  
we may face a  
crisis soon over  
coal; ~~and~~ we should not  
experiment with a new  
man now. I agree with  
him. The work requires  
considerable direct knowledge  
and familiarity with the  
problems, relative importance  
to. I hope you will  
agree with me and  
let me keep Harrison  
for some period until  
we feel it would be safe  
to carry to change.

Yours sincerely

C. R. P. Mahabhar

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND SUPPLIES.

D.O.No.HM-21/47.

NEW DELHI,  
26th February 1947.

*Hyder Valla 6262*

I have given your letter of 19th February about the proposed reappointment of Mr. Harrison as Coal Commissioner the full thought it deserves. I have looked into the matter very carefully.

Harrison was recruited as Asst. Superintendent of Railway Collieries in 1916. He became the Chief Mining Engineer, Railway Collieries, under the Railway Board in 1935. When the coal situation became extremely serious in 1943, the Government of India asked HMG to provide an experienced colliery administrator as Coal Commissioner. HMG sent out in December 1943 a Mr. P.C. Young, who had managed mines in China and had been Coal Controller for Scotland. In June 1944, Government placed the control of production and distribution of coal under the Supply Department, with Mr. Harrison as Deputy Coal Commissioner (Production) and Mr. Faruque as Deputy Coal Commissioner (Distribution) under Mr. Young. Mr. Young was not a success, and left in December 1944, when his year's contract was up. Thereafter for 15 months the post of Coal Commissioner was left unfilled. Sir S.N. Roy was appointed to this post in March 1946, but resigned in the middle of October 1946, when I appointed Mr. Harrison. (Mr. Faruque had meanwhile reverted to Railway Service, and is now General Manager of the East Indian Railway).

A very marked improvement in the raisings and despatches of coal took place in 1945 and was maintained in 1946. But, owing to the slowness of the Railways in moving coal and in returning empty wagons to the coalfields, despatches are again much below what they should be at this season of the year when traffic is normally at its peak, and when stocks are built up by the Railways and Industries against the monsoon. We may have a Fuel Crisis in the next few months unless things unexpectedly improve. The Coal Commissioner has an extremely busy time meeting the most urgent demands by various Railways and Industries in order to avert stoppages. For this work we require, not a general administrator but one with intimate knowledge of production and distribution of coal. This is what is meant by 'technical qualification' in this connection. The men next to Mr. Harrison in seniority are all Europeans too: Mr. Fairfield (Chief Mining Engineer, Railway Collieries), Mr. Morgan, Superintendent of Collieries, Kargali, and Mr. Carver (Dy. Coal Commissioner). They are not fit to succeed Mr. Harrison, but could not be passed over in appointing an officer of tried practical experience in coal production and distribution as his successor.

My Department has been directed to implement the report of the Coalfields Committee. One of the Committee's recommendations is the setting up of a Public Corporation. Pending the setting up of the Corporation which will require great consideration and time before being finally decided on, we require to keep the administrative machine going and to get the best advice based on life-long experience of the day-to-day and complicate problems of production and despatch. I feel we should be committing a serious mistake if we do not utilise Mr. Harrison's experience and keep him for another year, while we cope with these matters.

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I feel bound to advise this and so write at this length in spite of the suggestion in your letter.

Yours Sincerely

C. R. K. K. K.

Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,  
1, Aurangzeb Road,  
NEW DELHI.

7  
NEW DELHI, 27.2.1947.

I have not had any reply from you to my letter of the 19th instant regarding the re-appointment of Mr. Harrison to the post of Coal Commissioner with effect from the 25th February 1947. I hope you would have reconsidered this matter by now and shall be glad to have your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari,  
1 Clive Road, NEW DELHI.



8  
NEW DELHI, 19.2.1947.

Your Department has referred to us the question of the re-appointment of Mr. Harrison to the post of Coal Commissioner with effect from the 25th February 1947. The reasons in support of the proposal are the critical coal situation, the consideration of the Report of the Indian Coalfields Committee and Mr. Harrison's experience.

2. The central idea of the existing instructions governing the appointment of non-Indians is to ensure that no non-Indian is appointed to a post where a suitable Indian can be found. It is difficult for me to believe that for the post in question a suitable Indian cannot be found. Mr. Harrison's predecessor was Sir S.N. Roy, a retired I.C.S. Officer, who did not have any technical qualifications or departmental experience of the type which Mr. Harrison has. It seems to me that what is required is an administrator of wide experience and ability. If you feel any difficulty, I can suggest a suitable Indian for the post.

3. I hope in the light of these you will reconsider the matter. As it is, I feel it very difficult to agree to Mr. Harrison's re-employment under the existing orders.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari,  
1 Clive Road, NEW DELHI.