

Exhibition at Durgapur

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*409 { Shri Daji:
 Shri Surendranath Dwivedy:
 Shri Mohammad Elias:
 Shri Warrior:
 Dr. Saradish Roy:

Will the Minister of Steel and Mines be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government advised the Hindustan Steel Ltd. and some other public undertakings to set up exhibitions at Durgapur during the last Congress Session;

(b) if so, the total amount spent on this and the amount of ground rent paid by various public undertakings for the land taken from the Durgapur Congress Organisers for the purpose; and

(c) whether any electricity and-water facilities were extended to the Durgapur Congress Session by Durgapur Steel Plant and the amount spent on it?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Steel and Mines (Shri P. C. Sethi):

(a) So far as Hindustan Steel Ltd. and Bokaro Steel Ltd. are concerned, no directions were issued by Government for setting up an exhibition at Durgapur during the last Congress Session. The request received from the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee regarding participation of public sector enterprises in the exhibition arranged by them at Durgapur was forwarded to these two companies for consideration. Information relating to other public sector enterprises of the Government of India is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Hindustan Steel Ltd. had taken up a pavilion in the exhibition to display models, photographs of steel plants and the range of their manufactures. That total expenditure incurred on this account is estimated to be about Rs. 3 lakhs, including payment

of Rs. 55,650 as ground rent. Information relating to other public sector enterprises of the Government of India is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) No, Sir.

Shri Daji: I would like to know whether the Government considered the utility that actually came out of the exhibition, out of the Rs. 3 lakhs spent at the exhibition at Durgapur by the steel plants? What utility did the Government think it would have in the business of HSL?

The Minister of Steel and Mines (Shri Sanjiva Reddy): As was stated in the reply, it was HSL that took the decision, and this Rs. 3 lakhs is for the structures and so many other expenses. Land rent is only Rs. 55,000 while structures cost about Rs. 1,17,000 and naturally other expenditure is there like telephones, electricity etc. The utility is that lakhs of people seeing the products naturally would encourage the Hindustan Steel people and also keep the public informed.

Shri Shinkre: When you cannot cope with the demands.

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: It is not a question of demands alone. Ultimately it would be very useful in general.

Shri Daji: Was the Government aware of the agreed clause of the National Integration Committee, to which the Congress Party and other parties were party, that the State machinery shall not be used for furtherance of any party ends, and therefore in view of that does not the Government consider this . . .

An hon. Member: No party interest.

Shri Daji: The Congress also is a party. In view of that, does not the Government consider this to be a drain on the State treasury only in the interests of one particular party?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: I am sorry I am not able to agree with the hon. Member. In such gatherings where lakhs of people meet, naturally industries not only in the public sector but also in the private sector spend some money—you cannot call it a big amount—on publicity.

Shri Daji: Will you give it to us also?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: If I heard him aright, the letter for entering the exhibition or taking a stall at the exhibition was sent by the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee to the Government of India and the Government of India forwarded it to the HSL. What were the recommendations made by the Government of India verbally or in writing to HSL in asking them to open this exhibition at the Durgapur session? May I know if this is the only case in which this has been done, or it has been done in any other case?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: I can only speak about this. The letter was forwarded for consideration to HSL. About others I have no information. The letters were forwarded for consideration.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: My question has not been answered.

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: The hon. Member must patiently hear. If she does not hear, I cannot help it. The letter was forwarded for consideration. I said that. She did not hear it.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know the area of the ground for which an amount of Rs. 55,000 was paid as ground rent, and the number of days for which this land was rented out by the Congress Party to the Government?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: It is not the Congress Party. There is a separate Exhibition Committee. About 200' x 100' was taken on lease. I think it

was for a month or so. Also, fixed rates are there. It is not only for HSL. Hundreds of other stalls were there. The rates were fixed for the land.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if the Government does not encourage our public undertakings to exhibit their products at places where there is a congregation of a large number of persons, and if so, whether Hindustan Steel Limited has erred in having this exhibition at the Durgapur session of the Congress, and whether a large number of persons did not attend that Congress?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: There is nothing wrong. We feel that a large number of people could see and appreciate the activities of the Hindustan Steel.

Shri Hem Barua: The number of people attending the Durgapur Session of the Congress was not large. (Interruptions).

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: Whatever may be the number of people in the Congress Session, in the exhibition it was unusually large. I myself was there.

Shri Daji: More than the Congress session?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: I am not answering supplementaries about the Congress session.

श्री बड़ै : अभी माननीय मन्त्री महोदय ने श्री दाजी के प्रश्न के उत्तर में कहा कि हम इस तीन लाख के खर्च को गलत खर्चा नहीं समझते। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि जो जनसंघ पार्टी और कम्युनिस्ट आदि पार्टियों के अधिवेशन होते हैं उनमें भी हिन्दुस्तान स्टील का स्टाल लगाने के लिए इस प्रकार का खर्चा किया जाता है ?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: Out of these three lakhs spent on construction, I think we will recover some money;

(Interruptions) I am coming to the second part. They must have a little patience. I am not so intelligent as the hon. Members; that is the misfortune. Therefore they must tolerate me and give me time to answer the question. If the authorities concerned are convinced that a large number of people would attend, they may take similar action.

Shri Krishnapal Singh: Was the stall intended to give greater importance to the Congress session or was it meant for the display of the goods produced?

Shri Sanjiva Reddy: Congress has got its own importance; by a stall it is not going to gain greater importance. It has had its importance all these years.

Shri Hem Barua: It is back-door donation, Sir. They should admit it.

Shri Daji: It is front-door donation.... (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: What else are we talking about? There is nothing to be talked about. Next question.

Rubber Cultivation

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*410. { **Shri D. D. Puri:**
Shri Himatsingka:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:

Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pilot project for the development of rubber cultivation in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been inaugurated; and

(b) the extent to which the rubber cultivation in these Islands is expected to meet the rubber requirements of the country?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Commerce (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to surveys conducted by the Rubber Board, an area of about 15,000 acres of land might be suitable for rubber cultivation in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This area, when cultivated, is expected to produce about 10,000 tonnes of natural rubber per year, equivalent to about 1* per cent of the country's estimated requirements of natural rubber at the present rate of consumption.

Shri D. D. Puri: From the data gathered from this experiment, have Government been able to work out the cost of production of natural rubber and how it compares with the cost of production of synthetic rubber?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: We are just now having a pilot project and getting it ready. We have not worked out the cost yet.

Shri D. D. Puri: Is it the intention of Government to start pilot projects elsewhere in the country also?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy. There was land available in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the climatic conditions were suitable, they were similar to Kerala climate. Therefore they could use it for the pilot project.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: The hon. Minister said that we were short of production in natural rubber. If so, will Government consider tax or other concessions on rubber cultivation just as in the case of tea plantations, to promote rubber production?

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: No such measures are needed. We are subsidising and giving loan assistance to several schemes and we are stepping up production. In 1950 the production was about 15,000 tons and it has steadily increased to 44,000 tons in 1964; it is still going up.

Shri Mantyangadan: May I know whether the Government propose to set up some corporation for the plantation of rubber in the public sector?