

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, August 17, 1995/Sravana 26, 1917 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at two minutes past
Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Production of Coal

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*222. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH:
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are formulating any scheme for adopting modern technique with a view to boost the production of coal in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which production of coal is likely to be increased after the implementation of this scheme; and

(d) the quantity of good quality of coal likely to be produced out of the total quantity thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) and (b). Introduction of modern coal mining technologies is a continuous process. With a view to increasing underground coal production Coal India Limited (CIL) has identified four underground mines of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for introduction of powered support longwall technology with Chinese assistance. CIL has also invited global bids for introduction of modern mining technologies in seven underground mines of SECL. New technologies like longwall mining and gallery blasting method are also being introduced in some underground mines of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL).

(c) and (d). A *statement* is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

With the implementation of these schemes annual additionality of production in CIL is expected to be about 5 million tonnes per annum and about 2 million tonnes in SCCL. A large part around 80% of the anticipated increase in production is expected to be good quality non-coking coal.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through

you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the terms and conditions on which this Government is trying to import or has imported technology from China. It has not been mentioned in the reply. Further, will it be beneficial for the country or not ? Before this, the Government had imported technology and sought loan from Canada for Rajmahal Project. Out of the total foreign assistance received for this project, Rs. 550 crore were transferred for machines, Rs. 1.5 crore for consultancy and Rs. 175 crore for mining. Despite all this, we have incurred a loss of Rs. 76 per tonne.

Hon. Minister, Sir, whether it is a fact that even after using modern technology, Coal India Limited have incurred a loss of Rs. 76 per tonne ? If so, the efforts being made to cover-up this loss and the terms and conditions on which this technology has been imported from China ? Whether it is also a fact that the people, who were sent to foreign countries for training, have said after coming back to the country that since there is hard coal in India and soft coal in foreign countries, this technology cannot be adopted here.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to who is responsible for this loss of crores of rupees.

[English]

SHRI AJIT PANJA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as Rajmahal Open Cast Mine is concerned, it has been successfully completed and the information given by the hon. Member is not correct. It is producing at full rated capacity, as envisaged in the Plan. As far as the Chinese assistance is concerned, after studying the underground mining conditions in various coalfields of India the Bank of China, for the first time, has come forward to give loan assistance and they have selected four places which are, Churha West, Balrampur, Rajendra and New Kumda, in consultation with our coal experts. The loan assistance is Rs. 30 crore for Churha West, Rs. 22 crore for Balrampur, Rs. 25 crore for Rajendra and Rs. 22 crore for New Kumda totalling about Rs. 99 crore. If we take all these figures together, the overall figure comes to about Rs. 100 crore. This is one of the terms under which it is given.

When, Chinese Longwall project is of great value, as was agreed to by our experts also. So we have taken that. In fact, I personally visited China alongwith our experts and we had a thorough discussion with their experts on what has to be done. We found that it is beneficial to India under the terms and conditions. That is why it was agreed upon and it is working well.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was asking about the terms and conditions on which this agreement was signed with China. The facts should be unravelled before the House as to what percentage of profit China will give to us ?

[English]

SHRI AJIT PANJA : Sir, the details are not with me. But at present the work has been taken up because it is found that the Chinese technology is beneficial to certain case mines in India.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my first question has not yet been replied to. I am not satisfied and perhaps, the entire House is not satisfied. If he gives in writing, we will read (*Interruptions*) Secondly, there is a saying that bad association brings bad name. However, the situation today is just contrary to it. The coal has now become a black diamond.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the common consumers are facing a lot of problem due to shortage of coal ? Coal India Limited does special favour to some people and on account of it, 10 to 20 thousand tonnes of coal are distributed to the political leaders and other influential people. In this way, they are earning illegal money by giving them coal on out-of-turn basis. This is the reason that Coal India Limited has been suffering a loss of Rs. 76 per tonne. There is rampant corruption in Coal India Limited. Whether the hon. Minister is aware of the corruption prevailing in Coal India Limited ? If so, the steps being taken by him to check it ? If he is not in a position to answer it right now he can reply late. Further, will he get the list published of those people who were granted coal permits out of turn and to what extent these permits have been misused ?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The last part of the question is not allowed. The rest of the question may be tried to be replied to.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the last part of the question is most important. That is the only reason for the loss.

[English]

SHRI AJIT PANJA : Sir, if the face of the hon. Member is blackened, I cannot help it. He shall have to take steps to clean it up.

But so far as the supervision of the Government of India over this company — this company being the holding company, the CIL — is concerned, firstly, wherever any particular case of corruption comes to the notice of the company, the company takes corrective steps. If it is found that the company is not taking proper steps, then the Government in its supervisory capacity gives instruction to the company and the company follows it.

Sir, the steps that we take are as follows : first, we have got an internal vigilance department; second, there

are also outside vigilance agencies to keep check; and third, the Comptroller and the Auditor General of India audits and checks the detailed accounts of the company. This is the present structure available with us. These are the gadgets available with us by which we try to see that the Coal India is run in the best possible manner.

Sir, in such a huge operation I cannot rule out that there is no corruption whatsoever. But as a reasonable man, I can say that when specific cases come to our notice, we take sufficient steps to correct them. If the hon. Member has got any specific case, he may kindly hand it over to me. I can assure him that if there is sufficient evidence, we would take the hardest possible action.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir the coal mafia is so notorious that even murders are committed there. I had been to Dhanbad. I was told there that coal mafia people dominate the Government and the cabinet and they are harassing the people..... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is not going on record (*Interruptions*)*

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the replies given by the hon. Minister are not satisfactory but even then I would like to know from him as to who has been held responsible for the loss suffered on account of old foreign companies ? Has any committee been set up to inquire into it ? (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You please formulate your question.

[Translation]

The question is not asked like this that whether the Government has instituted a committee.

[English]

I am disallowing this question.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Alright, then I ask another question.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please come to the question in concrete terms.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : I now raise a question out of the main question. Soft coal is being imported from China. I would like to ask whether this soft coal will be useful

in our country or not ?

MR. SPEAKER : You might have understood the question. Please reply to it. Will it be useful to import soft coal ?

[English]

SHRI AJIT PANJA : Sir, so far as the first part of the question is concerned, we have neither any knowledge nor has any notice come to the Government to the effect that due to the working of a foreign company, CIL has suffered any loss. If the hon. Member knows any particular company or the place, then he may inform me about it. I would certainly look into the matter.

Sir, production by Chinese method is not applicable to soft coke. The Chinese method is good for underground mining. They have done well. The Chinese are taking our technology for open cast mining. Just the day before yesterday, the Chinese experts came to discuss open cast mining with our experts here. They are willing to take the Indian expertise for open cast mining in China.

So far as China is concerned, they are doing underground mining for mostly high value coal or 'a', 'b' and 'c' type of coal which is used for glass ceramics and other such industries. It is not a question of soft or hard coal. Wherever underground mining is required to be done, we are along with others adopting the Chinese Long Wall technology with the direct advice and consultation with the Indian experts.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Good quality of coal is available in underground mines and that is why the majority of the coal mines, about 70 to 80 per cent, in China are underground mines whereas in our country 40 per cent out of the mines are underground and 60 per cent are Open Cast Mines. May I know from the hon. Minister whether with the help of the Long Wall technology of China more and more underground mining will be undertaken in our country or not.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : It is not Longwall of Punjab
(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : 15 minutes have been devoted to one question. That way only four questions can be taken up. Please be brief.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : It looks as if slow speed news is being read.

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : There is not only Long Wall technology, but so many other technologies are also available. We have also developed the Long Wall technology in our country but Chinese technology is better than our technology. I would like to know from the Minister whether in order to boost production and to have good quality coal, more and more underground mining

would be undertaken in our country, and if so, which are those projects which are to be taken up during the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

SHRI AJIT PANJA : The hon. Member is not correct in saying that the Chinese technology is better than the Indian technology. Our technology is also very good. Chinese technology was found good in respect of certain types of mines which have the similar geological conditions as that of the Chinese mines and on which the Chinese had already conducted a study. Similarly, in China those mines which have similar geological conditions as that of ours, Chinese have found Open Cast Mining much better than any other technology and that is why they have come over here to take this Indian technology there.

So far as the projects where this new technology is to be used in the Eighth Five-Year Plan are concerned, I have got a long list with me. I will certainly supply it to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a very simple and brief question to ask. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has received any information about the abundant availability of high grade coal in Mirzapur and Sonbhadra area ? If so, whether the Ministry will immediately make efforts for exploiting these reserves in Eastern Uttar Pradesh where there is an acute shortage of coal ?

MR. SPEAKER : This is a question relating to technology ?

[English]

SHRI AJIT PANJA : I will obtain this information and supply it to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

PROF. RITA VERMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now, the hon. Minister has stated that we have not incurred loss in any of the projects set up in the coal sector with foreign assistance in our country and all the projects are running smoothly. Here, I would like to differ with him. We have incurred great losses in the Rajmahal project set up in collaboration with Canada. Despite taking a loan of crores of rupees and lapse of so much time, we are incurring a loss of Rs. 76 per tonne. Prior to this, the Government had set up another project of Futki Bahihari with foreign assistance. The technology of coal mining with waterjet also proved a flop. My question is whether the Government adopts foreign technology after considering its pros and cons or it does so merely because a foreign country says that it has a new technology and we should adopt it ? Secondly, whether any responsibility has been fixed for the projects undertaken with foreign collaboration proving a flop ? Whether any agreement was reached with these foreign companies to the effect that in case of a failure, they will bear some damages ? Will the hon. Minister like to share any such information with the House.

[English]

SHRI AJIT PANJA : In regard to Rajmahal, our information is that the open-cast Rajmahal is performing well and within the period specified in the target. If there is any specific point to be mentioned by the hon. Member, I will certainly have a re-look into it. As far as we are concerned we have information that it is doing well and its rated capacity is being met. In regard to foreign technology, it is examined mine-wise by our own experts. We have our R&D section in Ranchi and we have our own experts. Each project is studied very well and the contracts, so far as equipment and technology are concerned, are always backed by performance guarantees. If there is anything which goes against our interests and if there is any breach of contract, damages can certainly be called for. But, uptill now no such information has come in respect the new projects where there is any loss because of a foreign project.

Brain Drain of Professionals in Doordarshan

*223. **SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL :** Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether some key professionals in Doordarshan have left the job;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of such professionals who left the job during the last two years; and

(d) the strategy being adopted by the Government to check the brain drain of such professionals ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) : (a) to (c). During the course of the last two years 25 officials of Doordarshan in Group 'A' in different categories have either taken voluntary retirement or resigned from service due to personal reasons.

(d) As the number of Group 'A' officials in Doordarshan who left the job during the last two years is, relative to the total number of officials in position, not very large, no specific strategy has been considered necessary by the Government to discourage professionals, who are working in the electronic media, from leaving the jobs before their full term of appointment.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, professionals leave their jobs either due to privatisation or because they get better job opportunities in other companies of this sector. The hon. Minister has stated that they resigned due to personal reasons. I would like to know as to what personal reasons they have given. This move had started three years ago and today there is an increase in the number of professionals leaving their jobs. In view of this, should not Doordarshan pay attention to check this braindrain ?

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Sir, as I have said, 25 cases

of resignation by voluntary retirement in the last two years out of 1,039, comes to about 2.4 per cent. Should this 2.4 per cent be called brain-drain ? Out of those 25, 11 had resigned after they had completed their pensionable service, and 14 of them resigned due to personal reasons. If you want, Sir, I will cull out the information in respect of each of the 14 cases and lay it on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL : The hon. Minister first gave the number as 1,000 which includes different categories like clerk and other administrative staff. I have to say something about the intelligent and experienced correspondents and reporters. On the other hand Doordarshan is increasing the number of channels. In such a situation there will be a great need of experienced professionals because we have to compete with the foreign channels like Zee T.V. etc. Does not he deem it proper to think about the 25 people who left their jobs as they were experienced and talented people. The personal reasons you are talking about, like what happened in the Indian Airlines – create confusions. I would like to know whether there is any scheme of stopping them or giving them any incentive ?

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : I am very grateful to the hon. Member for raising this question. Sir, Doordarshan started expanding after 1982. It is still expanding. The Fifth Pay Commission is deliberating as to how to give good service conditions and emoluments which can be comparable to the general environment of competence and competition. I am sure, the hon. Member's views would be taken note of by the Fifth Pay Commission and give better emoluments to the staff of Doordarshan so that even this 2.4 per cent people need not have recourse to leaving service for greener pastures.

[Translation]

SHRI ARVIND TRIVEDI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was a time when people yearned for a Government job and made every effort to get it. Today, people are leaving Government jobs, they are doing so in the Air India, Indian Airlines and now in Doordarshan. The hon. Minister has stated that 25 personnel have left. I would like to know the reasons therefor. I would like to thank the hon. Minister for the expansion of Doordarshan but there is no staff to operate the 220 LPT towers installed here. On the one hand, there is a shortage of staff and on the other the staff is leaving service for greener pastures. One year has passed since LPT were installed at Samlaji, Idar and Bhiloda but there is no staff there. When asked about it, the hon. Minister pass the onus on to the Department of Finance saying that the latter neither allocates funds nor grants permission for the purpose. On the one hand, the staff is leaving the job and on the other no recruitment is taking place. How will this do? We have to fight with the foreign countries and for this we are ready to offer our help. Therefore, for increasing staff.....
(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK : His word 'fight' implies competition (Interruptions)