

[Shri Shatrughan Prasad Singh]

Rs. four hundred crores. Import of fertilizers costs more and setting up new factories would cost twelve hundred crores of Rupees.

Therefore, the factories of our countries should be rejuvenated from every point of view.

(xii) Need to Formulate a Comprehensive Policy for Revival of Sick Public Undertakings

[English]

SHRI HARADHAN ROY (Asansol) : The present state of suspense for the sick public sector enterprises, if continued any longer, might end up doing irreparable damage to the enterprises.

The jurisdiction of BIFR to deal with the sick public sector enterprises appears to be a misconceived approach for solving the problems of the public enterprises. The delays involved in the disposal of cases by the BIFR are well known. Moreover, the decisions of the BIFR are not binding on either the Government or the enterprises or the workers or the financial institutions that have provided capital to the public enterprises. Any of the interested parties can go in for appeal in the Courts against the decisions of the BIFR, turning the entire process to an infructuous exercise.

The most urgent task for the Union Government, therefore, is to formulate a comprehensive and well-defined policy package for viability of the Central Sick Public Enterprises.

(xiii) Need to take steps to increase the production of Coal in South Karnapura area, Bihar

[Translation]

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR (Begusarai) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the South Karnapura coal belt of Bihar has deposits of high grade coal. Despite this the production of coal has been declining every year. It is being said that coal production is becoming increasingly difficult due to non-availability of the technique of thick seam mining so far. The thick seam mining technique is available in other parts of the world.

18.18 hrs.

[SHRI P.C. CHACKO *in the chair*]

Therefore I request the Government to increase the

production of coal in South Karnapura area of Bihar.

(xiv) Need for Early Completion of Certain Pending Railway Projects in West Bengal

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS (Jalpaiguri) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the long-standing demands of the people of the districts of Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar – (i) Gauge conversion of line from New Jalpaiguri – Siliguri Junction- Alipurduar Junction leading to Bongaigaon; (ii) survey for integrated Railway networks in the districts of Coochbehar leading to Dhubri, Assam have not been undertaken though these two schemes have already been included in the 1997-98 Budget. These demands have been raised from time to time and the Chief Minister of West Bengal has already drawn the attention of the Government to complete these two railway projects. The economic development of these areas depends largely on these projects and these two projects would be revenue earning routes of the Indian Railways.

I do urge upon the Government to take necessary steps so that the above-mentioned projects may be undertaken without any further delay as these two projects are hanging for a quite long time.

(xv) Need to protect the interests of betel leaf growers, particularly in Lalitpur district in U.P.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, cultivation of betel leaf is undertaken on a large scale in Bundelkhand division of Uttar Pradesh. The Farmers have to work hard and spend a lot on the cultivation of betel leaf. Sometimes the growers have to suffer heavy loss because of the damage caused by the insects and fire incidents. It is so serious that the farmers have to sell their property to make their both ends meet. The Government have not prepared any such scheme by which the betel leaf growers could get a place in world market and earn profit. The Government should implement compulsory crop insurance scheme for Betel Leaf and the State Government should bear the half of the insurance premium. The Union Government should take initiative for the implementation of such insurance scheme. In addition to it, the Government should make arrangement for pesticides and irrigation facilities to the farmers. If the Government does not pay timely need to it, the farmers would stop cultivation of betel leaf. In Pali area of Lalitpur

district in Uttar Pradesh farmers have been suffering huge loss for the last three consecutive years due to fire. The Agriculture Minister has assured that he would enquire into it and adequate assistance would be given to the farmers for the next crop.

Therefore, the Union Government is requested to give adequate assistance to the farmers.

(xvi) Need to Expedite Drilling Operations for Oil in Sunderbans Areas, West Bengal

[English]

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar) : Sir, a news item appeared in the 'Daily Ajkal (Bengali)' on 1.5.1997 that an American Organization, namely, "Energy and Geo-Science Institute" 3-man Committee led by David Hafab declared that no potential for drilling to search oil existed in the Sunderbans Area of West Bengal. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission, which had earlier failed in its attempts to locate oil, however, had now signed an agreement with the American Organization. Mr. David Hafab made an announcement that the American Institute would be conducting search for oil in nine delta areas in the world including the Sunderbans delta.

As you are aware, Sunderbans is the most backward area in the country. So, it is high time that the US experts are urged to undertake the drilling operations in the area without any loss of time, as any oil exploration will be a great boon for the Sunderbans.

(xvii) Need to take steps to Revive the Sick Fertiliser Units in Public Sector

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : I would like to draw the attention of the House and the Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers to the fact that import of fertilizers, especially urea, in the year 1995-96 was 37 lakh tonne, i.e. Rs. 2700 crore and in the year 1996-97 it was 23.28 lakh tonnes, i.e. Rs. 2000 crore. The cost price of one ton of imported urea was 240 to 250 dollars, i.e. in Indian currency it would be round about Rs. 9000 crore totally. On the other hand, the Government is spending Rs. 7000 crore for the production of urea through Durgapur Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation of India. If the import price of Rs. 9000 per ton is given to the HFC, Durgapur, it would not be a loss making unit.

In the month of August 1995 the decision of the Cabinet was to revive six units, that is, Durgapur, Barauni, Namrup (H.F.C.), Sindri, Ramagundam and Talcher FCI

with a revival package of Rs. 2200 crore. But, no decision has yet been taken. If the restructuring of the units are done, the production of fertilizer would be 23 lakhs tonnes at a time when about 20 to 30 lakh tonnes of fertilizer is still being imported.

The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers is investing Rs. 635 crore to set up a new thermal power project in Rajasthan. KRIBHCO is investing in Mangalore Fertilizer and Chemicals which is a private sector whereas the Government is not ready to invest in public sector enterprises. It is not even ready to be a guarantor of operating agencies who are ready to invest. The Government is not ready to make them stand on their own feet. If it is so, the working class will fight against the Government until and unless they come out with flying colours.

So, I urge upon the Government to please look into the matter seriously. It should not be treated the working class as a slave. The working class are the pioneer to set up India as developed country.

(xiii) Need to Improve Telecom Services in Southern Assam, particularly in Karimganj

SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS (Karimganj) : Rural telephones in southern Assam particularly in my constituency Karimganj (SC) are useless for all practical purposes. They remain dead even for local calls and STD/ISD are rare occasions. Local exchanges are not augmented and the setting up of new exchanges is yet to be taken up. The installation of microwave/UHF system in my constituency is yet to begin although approved long before. Karimganj should be made a "Telecom District" along with the creation of a post of "District Telecom Manger". There should be provision of a ten channel UHF system as stable media from Dullabeherra to Karimganj to facilitate STD/ISD.

So, I urge upon the Government to look into the matter and do the needful at an early date to facilitate rural telecommunications.

(xix) Need to lay standards for quality of Silver-wares.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA (Mumbai-South) : Sir, the Silver-wares and other items used on large scale in India. If there is the mark of 100 touch on the silver wares and the price is fixed for ₹100