

(a) whether Government are aware that huge coal stocks have piled up at the pit-heads in West Bengal and Bihar in between November 1970 and April 1971 ;

(b) if so, the total amount of coal stocks which accumulated at pit-heads in these two States during this period ;

(c) the pit-heads stocks in between 1969 and 1970 ; and

(d) the reasons for this huge accumulation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (ISPAT AUR KHAN MANTRALAYA MEN RAJYA MANTRI) (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a). Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Information is available up to March, 1971 only. As at the end of March, 1971, the pit-head stocks in Bengal-Bihar coalfields were estimated at 7.58 million tonnes, as against 7.06 million tonnes at the beginning of November, 1970. The pit-head stocks in the corresponding period of 1969-70 were 5.22 million tonnes and 4.151 million tonnes respectively.

(d) This was due to non-availability of adequate number of wagons for the movement of coal and poor off-take of coal by steel plants, Railways and other consumers whose coal requirements had been affected by strikes.

#### Unauthorised Mining by Companies near Asansol

465. SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES (ISPAT AUR KHAN MANTRI) be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to unauthorised mining by some companies near Barachak Railway Station and Kalipahari area, near Asansol, seriously endangering the railway lines ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the steps taken by the Coal Board in this direction and the expenses involved to rectify the situation ; and

(d) the measures Government have taken or propose to take against this unauthorised mining ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (ISPAT AUR KHAN MANTRALAYA MEN RAJYA MANTRI) (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a) The Coal Board has come to know about unauthorised mining of coal due to which the main railway line between Asansol and Barachak stations has been threatened with danger of subsidence. The Board has also come to know of some unauthorised mining of coal in the Kalipahari area near Asansol, which has, however, not affected any railway line.

#### (b) (i) *Details of unauthorised mining near Barachak Railway Station.*

Inspection has revealed that in an area of about 120 m x 100 m, mostly beneath the railway acquired land, unauthorised mining was going on recently. Underground coal pillars were reduced to very small dimensions causing a dangerous condition which posed a serious risk of subsidence of the railway line.

#### (ii) *Details of unauthorised mining in Kalipahari Area.*

On investigation it was found that three small quarries had been opened without statutory permission from the Coal Board, in the Kusadanga seam along the Numia river, in the Ghusick mouza near Kalipahari in the Asansol sub-division.

#### (c) (i) *Towards unauthorised mining near Barachak Railway Station.*

The Coal Board, in consultation with the Director-General of Mines Safety took immediate action in erecting fortythree (43) B.G. sleeper cogs (wooden chocks) in the underground galleries in question in order to support the roof temporarily to guard against any possible collapse of the surface above, over which the railway line passes.

Further precautionary measures adopted included the slowing down of trains by the Railways, while passing over the area, regular inspection of underground workings by the officials of the Coal Board, the D.G.M.S. and the Railways, and the posting of guards.

To provide for permanent stability of the area in question, the following measures have already been adopted by the Coal Board and work to this end is in progress :

- (a) construction of cement concrete pillars ;
- (b) cement concrete walls encasing the weak coal pillars in the underground workings ; and
- (c) the filling up of the remaining voids with sand.

The estimated expenditure of the protective measures outlined above is about Rs. 4-40 lakhs (four lakhs forty thousand rupees only)

*(ii) Towards unauthorised mining in Kalipahari area.*

As these unauthorised mining operations have not endangered any neighbouring mine railway or road, no protective measures and consequent expenditure are involved.

(d) Action against the offenders has already been initiated by the Coal Board.

**Decline in production and profits of National Coal Development Corporation**

466. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES (ISPAT AUR KHAN MANTRI) be pleased to state :

(a) whether the production and profit of the National Coal Development Corporation have sharply declined in 1970-71 in comparison to the previous years and if so, the figures thereof ;

(b) the factors responsible for it ;

(c) whether Government propose to probe into the working of the National Coal Development Corporation in view of the serious criticisms of wastage, lack of planning and general inefficiency and anti-labour policy ; and

(d) if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (ISPAT AUR KHAN MANTRALAYA MEN RAJYA MANTRI) (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN) : (a) The production of the National Coal Development Corporation has not declined in 1970-71. The production during the year 1970-71 was 13.77 million tonnes as against 13.75 million tonnes in 1969-70.

The annual accounts for the year 1970-71 have not yet been finalised. The provisional estimate indicates a loss of about Rs. 42 lakhs as against the profit of Rs. 106.42 lakhs in 1969-70.

(b) The factors responsible for the likely loss in 1970-71 are :

(i) Increase in variable dearness allowance of the workers, increase in power tariff, and higher cost of machinery and equipment without corresponding increase in the selling price of coal ;

(ii) Inadequate demand for coal in the first half of the year ; and

(iii) Unsatisfactory transport position.

(c) and (d). The performance of the National Coal Development Corporation during the year 1970-71 (which was an unfavourable one for the entire coal industry) has been fairly satisfactory. It is not correct to say that the Corporation has been following an anti-labour policy, or that there is wastage, lack of planning and general inefficiency. Hence, Government do not propose to conduct any probe into the working of the Corporation at present.