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Title: Regarding problems being faced by the workers of Dunlop India Ltd. in West Bengal.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGHLY): Sir, several times in the past in this House we have discussed the issues concerning the Dunlop India Limited. It is a 72-year old major Company. It has been contributing to our national economy, not only in the tyre segment but also in our defence sector. During the Kargil War, on the request of the former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the starving workers had facilitated opening up of this Company in order to provide tyres, which were urgently needed during the Kargil War.

The new promoter who had taken over the Company through the BIFR, the Central body, is not at all interested in running this important industry, which has got large assets, acres and acres of vast tracts of land in West Bengal, in Tamil Nadu and in many other States. This Company, on the plea of global meltdown and economic crisis has, very recently, on 13th November, declared suspension of work.

The hon. Prime Minister, while declaring the packages for these industries to tide over the meltdown, has appealed to the industrialists that they should not opt for lay-offs or for lock-outs.

This Company has nothing to do with the global meltdown. It is a non-performer. According to the survey conducted by *The Economic Times*, many non-performers, in order to cover up their own non-performance, have taken the plea of global meltdown and have requested that the State Governments should come forward with a package, which they cannot do.

In such a situation, we urge upon the Central Government to take suitable action in this regard. There was a promise from the Government. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, when he was the Defence Minister, made an assurance that since this industry is contributing to the defence needs, the Government may examine the issue of tie-up with the defence industry so that this Company could be saved. The Central Government can do a lot to save this Company. It has got a lot of assets, skilled manpower and a brand name, which is internationally known. It has got a good market. Thirty per cent of the share of the Company was owned by the Central agencies till as recently as 1997-98. Most importantly, it is covered under the Defence of India Rules. I urge upon the Government to do something.

MR. SPEAKER:

Shri Santasri Chatterjee is allowed to associate.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, the hon. Minister of Labour is present in the House. He must respond.
...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot compel any Minister. I have not stopped him, but I cannot force him to get up.

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): Sir I will take up the matter.