

past many years, trade apprentices are being imparted training and on the successful completion of such a training they are absorbed in service by the ordnance factories. Till 1985, the trained young trade apprentices upto 22nd Batch had been absorbed in service by the ordnance factories and thereafter, a restriction was imposed on the new recruitments.

For the last five years, many such trade apprentices are jobless, even after undergoing the said training.

During the past few years, a system of purchases from the private sector has been in vogue in the ordnance factories and a major portion of their spare parts' and machineries' requirements are being purchased from the private parties. While on the one hand, this has encouraged corruption, on the other, the number of unemployed, trained, trade apprentices is also increasing on that account.

I would like to request the hon. Defence Minister to stop forthwith the ordnance factories' practice of making purchases from private factories and also to provide jobs to these thousands of trained trade apprentices, who have remained unemployed.

[English]

(vi) Need to direct ONGC to explore oil potential in Bengal basin

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, according to experts, the Bengal Basin is positively believed to have a very large oil reserve. ONGC has also admitted this. A section of Geologists, some of them involved in exploration work since the days before the birth of ONGC maintain that the Bengal Basin has actually given indication of nearly 28.5 billion metric tonnes or 28,500 MMT which can put some Middle-Eastern countries in shade. But in spite of this very large deposit of oil and gas in Gangetic West Bengal, authorities like ONGC have been consistently showing a very indifferent attitude in the matter of drilling. Only a few drillings in the Bengal Basin have so far been

undertaken.

In a recent seminar organised by the West Bengal Science Forum held in the Geology Department of Calcutta University, the matter has been discussed in some detail. In a subsequent discussion more details in the matter have come out. For a country like India whose oil import bill is about Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 7,000/- every year, no further neglect of this great oil potential of the Bengal Basin should be allowed.

I would urge upon the Government of India to immediately ask the ONGC to take up the matter in right earnest.

(vii) Need to launch dredging operations for desilting rivers in Sunderbans Area of West Bengal

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, while nature was bounteous to the Sunderbans area in West Bengal by giving it scenic beauty and unique flora and fauna, it remains poverty-ridden. Only profession for its inhabitants is small-time agriculture and that too on the mercy of the rains and rivulets which are fed by the high tidal waves from the adjacent Bay of Bengal. All these rivulets are highly silted and the water does not pass through their sluice gates to the fields which are situated on the lower level. These rivulets which are becoming cause of sorrow for these small agriculturists—who do not have any other means of livelihood pass through Canning, Basanti, Ghoshaba, Kultali Police stations in the Sunderbans area. Now, Sir, it is high time that the Government launch upon a dredging scheme for these rivers/rivulets and remove the accumulated silt. Sir, as you know, the West Bengal State is already in the grip of acute industrial unemployment and is unable to spare any sizeable funds for desilting operations in these rivulets.

I, therefore, request the Central Government kindly to come to the rescue of the poor inhabitants of these areas and launch upon desilting operations before it is too late.