

with State Governments and voluntary Association, championing the cause of regional and classical languages, the State Akademies and taking into confidence the writers and linguists working in these languages well before the launching of the 8th Plan.

I request the Government to take immediate steps for formulating such a policy so as to ensure its implementation during the 8th Plan, keeping in view the stipulation of Article 29 of the constitution of India guaranteeing the preservation and of each distinct languages, script and culture.

(vi) Need for urgent supply of pig iron and hard coke for foundry industry in West Bengal.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluboria) : The oldest Foundry Industry in the District of Howrah, with fifty thousand workers in more than three hundred factories are facing a chronic problem of acute shortage of pig-iron and coke, the principal raw materials, to run the Industry."

This foundry industry is one of the oldest in the country and had world-wide reputation for more than two and a half centuries. But they started facing shortage of raw materials since 1982-83. They use pig iron and coke as their main raw materials. Pig iron is supplied by the Steel Authority of India Ltd. During the last few years, SAIL has reduced the supply. The foundries in West Bengal need about 50,000 Metric tonnes of pig iron per year. But the supply was 39803 MT in 1981-82, 39643 MT in 1982-83, 29450 MT in 1983-84 and 3400 MT in 1984-85, 1720 MT in 1985-86, 1730 MT in 1986-87, 1696 MT in 1987-88 and no supply so far in 1988-89.

The supply of hard coke is also no better. The supply in 1987-88 was only 3000 tonne against the quota of 21,500 tonnes. While there is no supply in the current year.

In spite of repeated appeals, the situation has not improved, West Bengal is on

top in the advancement and growth of small scale industries in the country. The problem of foundry industries will have serious adverse impact on further growth in West Bengal.

I urge upon the Government to supply pig iron and hard coke to the foundries at Howrah immediately.

(vii) Need for extensive dredging of Brahmaputra to make the river navigable throughout their year.

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA (Jorhat) : While nothing with pleasure the recent enactment of an amendment declaring the Brahmaputra from Sadiya to Dhubri as a national water-way, it is hoped that early effective steps would be taken to make the river navigable throughout the year by extensive dredging all along its course in Assam inasmuch as, during the period from November to March every year, the river becomes too shallow even for plying of small ferryboats. The gradual rising of the river-bed from Sadiya downward due to very heavy siltage occurring annually during the monsoon because of topographical changes in the wake of the Great Earthquake of 1950, is stated to be the root recurring floods and resultant erosion of its banks since then. It is, therefore, felt that extensive and regular dredging all along the main course of the Brahmaputra would result in considerably lessening the magnitude of flood-level. Such a course will also open up regular water transportation of foodstuff, tea and other commodities to and fro the North East, which presently is served mainly by road transport services at comparatively higher costs. Passenger traffic from one end of the region to the other will also be possible to be resumed, along the national water-way.

The Ministry of Surface Transport is, therefore, urged to arrange for early and extensive dredging of the Brahmaputra and undertake comprehensive exploitation of this great national water-way to ensure varied benefits, primarily to the people of North East region.