

dum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the National Aluminum Company Limited and the Ministry of Mines.

[Placed in the Library, See No. LT 2263/92]

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) **Need For Setting up a New Gas Terminal at 4 SAR**

[English]

SHRI ANKUSHRAO RAOSAHEB TOPE (Jaina) : The problem of reducing flaring of natural gas in the Bombay High Fields has been under the consideration of the Government of India for a long time. There has been lot of correspondence between the Government of Maharashtra and Government of India on the subject. The Government of Maharashtra had written to the Prime Minister making a detailed case for the off-shore gas being used in the western region by setting up of a second gas terminal at USAR instead of its diversion to Hazira through a new pipeline between South Bassein and Haxira. The alternative schemes suggested by Maharashtra could be implemented at a relatively lower cost and in a shorter span of time which would benefit a large number of people in Maharashtra.

It appears that the Union Government has not taken cognizance of all relevant aspects of the alternative schemes suggested by Maharashtra and has accorded approval for laying of the second off-shore pipeline between South Bassein and Hazira for diversion of gas for use of prospective users in the north at exorbitant cost. This measure would starve the people of Maharashtra.

I urge upon the Central Government to reconsider the matter and give an opportunity to the Government of Maharashtra to present an alternative proposal with better economics for reduction of gas flaring and also declare USAR as the site for the setting up of second gas terminal for Bombay High/South Bassein gas.

(ii) **Need to ensure that regional office of Railway Recruitment Board was not shifted from Kerala.**

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum):

There was a news item that the Railway Recruitment Board Regional Office at Trivandrum is being closed and arrangements for shifting certain sections from the Regional Office to Madras are being made. The people of Kerala are agitated over this. Kerala is the most highly educated State of the country and the problem of unemployment of the educated is very acute there. The largest number of applications for the recruitments in the Southern Railway are from Kerala. If the Regional office which is now functioning in Trivandrum is shifted from there, it would create undue hardship to a very large number of candidates who are now having their interviews and psychological and other physical tests in Trivandrum.

I, therefore, earnestly urge upon the hon. Minister for Railways to intervene and drop the proposal, if any.

(iii) **Need to provide more funds to Madhya Pradesh Government for drought relief in Mandla district.**

[Translation]

SHRI MOHANLAL JHIKRAM (Mandla) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mandla is one of the many districts of Madhya Pradesh which is hit by drought since last year. Both the

[Sh. Mohan Lal Jhikram]

crops were destroyed least year for want of rain. Consequently, thousands of people left their villages and migrated to other districts to earn their livelihood. Starvation death is many districts and two deaths have also been reported from the district of Mandla. No relief measures were taken in the first and the second phase and only some measures were taken in the last phase. Supply of ration though PDS was bad from the very beginning. It is very difficult for the people to get their ration. Even this year, the whole region is hit by drought in absence of rain. The paddy crop sown by the farmers in the first rain weathered after sprouting. Farmers are in acute crisis of seeds. The problem of drinking water has become all the more acute. Wells and hand-pumps have been dried up in different places. The water level has gone down.

It is therefore requested to the Central Government that it should provide adequate amount to the Government of Madhya Pradesh so that relief measures can be taken on large scales. At the same time, immediate arrangements should be made to make drinking water available and special attention should be given to facilitate water and fodder for the cattle.

(iv) Need to Control the prices of essential medicines.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, presently there is acute shortage of medicines in the country and the prices are every high. Medicines for tuberculosis, cancer, heart disease, epilepsy diseases of children and for many other similar diseases are not available in the market and are out of stock in hospitals on the other hand, the medicines that are easily available in chemist shops are being sold at exorbitant prices and cost of these medicines have been increased from 70 to 150%

and in certain cases the increase in price is even more. Some companies have changed the names of medicines with the changes of their prices. There are also the cases in which prices has been increased and the quantity of medicines has been reduced. For example the syrup of a particular medicine which was initially available in 100 m.l. packing has now been reduced to 75 m.l. packing.

There are many reasons for shortage and this arbitrary increase in the prices of medicines. The Problem has gradually come up in the last one year. The Government has not taken any appropriate step in this regard. The long awaited Drug policy has not been announced as yet. I would therefore request the Central Government to elaborate their policy in this regard and take proper steps to check the rising prices of medicines immediately.

(v) Need to ensure that vijayanagar Steel Plant at Hospet In Karnataka was not closed.

[English]

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI (Bellary) : People of Karnataka are very much agitated over the closure of Vijaya Nagar Steel Plant at Hospet.

The statement by Essars Gujarat Group that they are not interested in starting the plant due to non-feasibility of the project is not correct according to the consultants, that is Mecons who have prepared the feasibility report.

Hence I request the Government of India and Karnataka State Government to come together immediately and try to set right the whole issue before people start agitation.