

[Shri Satyagopal Misra]

Parganas and parts of North Bengal and over 1,50,000 families are engaged in it. The planters live on this and their only means of livelihood of the total production of these leaves in West Bengal, 73 per cent is sold outside the State. The total income from these amounts to Rs. 67 crores per year, of which income from export to West Asian countries is Rs. 23 crores. A good market for these leaves also exist in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

But the poor farmers who grow these leaves live in a wretched condition. They do not get a good price for their products mainly due to the facts that:

- (a) the railway booking system is very cumbersome and irregular,
- (b) restrictions imposed by the Central Government on the export of betel leaves to Pakistan,
- (c) the unhealthy influence exerted on the trade by a group of people known as 'forias' (Middlemen); and
- (d) the most important of all the lack of State patronage.

The Government of West Bengal has been apprised of the situation and they have promptly taken up some measures. They have given betel leaves the recognition as 'agricultural crop'. The State Government has decided to open three regulated markets for betel leaves at Boguan in Howrah and Tam-luk and Raktya/Ramnagar in Midnapore at an estimated cost of Rs. 75 lakhs. The State Government is also extending capital grant to betel leaf farmers.

After congratulating the Government of West Bengal for all these measures adopted after duly considering the poor plight of the betel leaf plants in the State, I request the Central Government to come forward with all the resources at its disposal to save these families from total extinction. I further request the centre to lift the restrictions imposed upon the export

of betel leaves to Pakistan and try to find out the possibilities for its export to the neighbouring Bangladesh. Betel leaves should be recognised by the Centre as 'agricultural crop'. Moreover, the railway booking system, particularly at Mecheda, Panskura and Howrah Stations should be made regular and easier, so that the planters can avail of this transport. The Central Government may consider the proposal of extending financial help to the farmers and also finding out new markets inside the country for betel leaves and improving the existing ones.

All these measures, if adopted and carried out with all sincerity, would do a yeomen's service for lakhs of poor farmers who toil hard for their livelihood but who in turn are facing dire consequences.

(vi) STEPS TO EXTINGUISH FIRE IN
JALAVAN COLIERIES IN BIHAR.

श्री रीत लाल शर्मा (कोडरमा) :
अध्यक्ष जी, बिहार के 225 वर्ग किलोमीटर जलावन कोयला क्षेत्र में से 20 वर्ग किलोमीटर भयंकर आग की चपेट में फंसा हुआ है। झरिया के हिन्दी साप्ताहिक "चुनौती" के अनुसार अभी तक लगभग 3 करोड़ 40 लाख टन कोयला जल कर नष्ट हो चुका है। 4 करोड़ 60 लाख टन जलावन कोयला अभी आग की चपेट में फंसा हुआ है। विशेषज्ञों ने बताया है कि यदि फंसे हुए कोयले को बचा लिया जाय तो इसमें 2 करोड़ 90 लाख टन इस्पात अथवा 142 अरब इकाई बिजली का उत्पादन किया जा सकता है।

माइनिंग रिसर्च स्टेशन एवं ईस्टर्न कोल-फील्ड लिमिटेड के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में विशेषज्ञों एवं 150 प्रतिनिधियों (प्रतिष्ठानों) की एक गोष्ठी आयोजित भी की जा चुकी है। आग पर नियंत्रणार्थ कई सुझाव एवं चर्चा हुई है। किन्तु उपाय कारगर अभी तक सिद्ध नहीं हुए हैं। कोयला जला जा रहा है। अनाप अनाप खर्चे अधिकारी बर्ग

करते जा रहे हैं। कई बार कोयले की चोरी एवं घोटाले के मामले भी प्रकाश में आते रहे हैं। वे भी इसी आग में सच साफ करने में सफल होते हैं। अतः लगता है कि आग बुझाने की मंशा के पीछे षडयंत्र काम कर रहा है। कोयले के प्रभावित क्षेत्र में फंसे हुए क्षेत्र को मशीनों से खाई काट कर पृथक किया जा सकता है, किन्तु उनकी दौड़-धूप केवल सरकार की आंख में धल झोकने के लिये हो रही है।

अतः उर्जा मंत्री व्यक्तिगत अभि-
 हाचि ले कर इस दिशा में ठोस एवं कारगर कार्यवाही अविलम्ब कर इस राष्ट्रीय क्षति से देश को बचाय।

12.33 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair.]

(vii) DRINKING WATER AND OTHER CIVIC AMENITIES FOR BOMBAY.

SHRIMATI PRAMILA DANDAVA-
 TE (Bombay North Central): Sir I would like to make the following statement under rule 377:—

Residents of Girgaum and the surrounding areas, having the highest density of population in the world, with around 1,60,000 people per sq. mile, did not get water for three days. Failure of the Bombay Municipal Corporation to supply water drove the generally peace-loving and law-abiding citizens of the area to resort to an unprecedented, unplanned spontaneous protest, by blocking the roads and railway lines.

The traffic came to a total halt for three hours.

Unplanned and unchecked growth of the industrial cities like Bombay have become dangerous for human being. It is stated that three hundred families come to settle in Bombay per day adding to its eight million population, resulting in the breakdown of the essential civic amenities like drinkin

water, sewerage system and transport, etc.

I would request the Government to come forward with a plan to stop further expansion of the cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and create employment in rural areas with drinking water facilities and entertainment like cinema.

(viii) ESTABLISHMENT OF A SHIP BUILDING YARD AT PARADIP

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar): With your permission, Sir, I would like to raise, under rule 377, the following matter of urgent public importance in the House:—

The Orissa Government is pursuing with the Government of India, since long years, for establishment of a ship-building yard at Paradip. In answers to questions in the House, the Minister for Shipping has already said that Paradip has been selected as the best suitable site for a shipbuilding yard in the east coast in the early part of this year. The Government of India has already received the project report from the Japanese Consultants. I request the Central Government to expedite the final examination of the project report in respect of Paradip and to get the clearance from the Investment Board, so that the Paradip ship-building yard construction programme is not delayed further, which would, again, increase the estimated project cost too much.

12.35 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE.
 DISAPPROVAL OF FOREST (CON-
 SERVATION) ORDINANCE

AND

FOREST (CONSERVATION) BILL—
 Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we take up further discussion on the