

declared in July ample backlog stocks at present to last till December. It is true that the price has gone up to Rs. 1,100 per quintal and it is only reasonably remunerative to the farmers. But for the last three years the farmers were suffering due to the low price and reluctance on the part of the Government to fix the price according to the report of Chief Cost Accounts Officer in the Finance Ministry and the costs of inputs and labour have gone up heavily now.

The automobile tyre industry is using all its influence and pressurising the Government in the name of workers to import natural rubber from abroad. They are also using the name of the small industrialists to meet their demand. These big industrialists, especially foreign monopolists, who are producing 80 per cent of the total automobile tyres want to continue the exploitation of the poor rubber growers by reducing the price. There is no scarcity of natural rubber and the ruse of the manufacturers is to reduce the price of natural rubber when the tapping season starts in August.

The small scale industrialists are using only 5 per cent of the total production of the natural rubber. That is also of the lower quality. The automobile tyre industry is engaging only few thousand workers, while agricultural workers alone number 1.5 lakhs and small farmers another 1.5 lakhs.

I may, therefore, humbly submit that the Government should not succumb to the pressure of the big business houses and foreign monopolies and harm the interest of the ordinary poor farmers and agricultural workers. Any decision to resort to import natural rubber will not only harm the small growers and agricultural workers numbering more than three lakh families, but it will also harm the economy of the State of Kerala. Any such action will only

create resentment in the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and will be the cause for agitation.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:** I fully agree with this.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Dhirendranath Basu.

**SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil):** Only a submission, Sir. We all gave notice for a call attention. Mr. George Mathew in a way has expressed the strong feelings of the entire Kerala in this matter and we request you may kindly convey these feelings to the Minister and ask him to make a statement in the matter.

(iv) **REPORTED BLACKMARKETING IN COAL BY TRADERS.**

**SHRI DHIRENDRANATH BASU (Katwa):** With your kind permission I wish to raise the following matter of urgent public importance under Rule 377.

Black-marketing in coal is going on in a big way throughout the country. Black-marketing by traders is one of the main reasons for shortage of coal as a result of which many industries are now remaining closed in the eastern and western regions.

The State Governments are unwittingly sponsoring parties who indulge in black-marketing in coal and make lakhs of rupees out of such sponsorship according to Coal India sources.

At present Coal India Ltd. has no discretion in the matter of supplying coal to individual users—the State governments sponsor parties and Coal India has to give them coal. But now the coal authorities have started screening the parties and have found that an alarming percentage of them are bogus ones without any factory or assets. These parties are simply cashing in on the coal shortage by presenting themselves to the State governments as genuine consumers and get-

[Shri Dhirendranath Basu]

ting allotment order. The State governments do not have a proper screening machinery to weed out the bogus units. A survey conducted in Meerut showed that no less than 106 of 165 coal allottees were bogus. In this town alone a bogus allotment of one lakh tonnes per year would have taken place if the Coal India had not detected the blackmarketeers. Another survey still in progress in Bombay has already brought to light bogus claims for allotment totalling 50,000 tonnes. More than 50 such blackmarketeers have been detected in Calcutta.

The black market premium in some northern States like Punjab is as high as Rs. 100 per tonne. Thus an allottee who gets a mere 500 tonnes can make a tidy profit of Rs. 50,000 without lifting a finger.

Indications are that lakhs, perhaps millions of tonnes of coal are in this way going into the hands of blackmarketeers instead of genuine consumers. This explains why genuine users are complaining of shortages at a time when coal despatches have hit all-time records.

The pilot surveys have made it abundantly clear that middlemen have entered the coal trade in massive way in order to get allotment and sell them at a premium.

So, may I request the hon. Minister for Energy to make all efforts to stop such malpractices and blackmarketing in the coal business.

(v) REPORTED DEATHS IN SAFDARJUNG HOSPITAL DUE TO TETANUS.

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR (Pondicherry): I am raising a very important matter and I thought the Health Minister would be here. He was here upto this moment but he has now left. Even the ex-Health Minister who was here for some time is not there. This is a matter concerning the health of the people of Delhi. So I hope the Minis-

ter will make a statement either this evening or tomorrow.

I would like to mention the very disturbing news reported about five tetanus deaths in the general wards of the Safdarjang hospital. The effects of this deadly infection in a hospital dealing especially with surgical cases, to say the least, can be extremely serious, and it is of vital importance that all-out measures should be taken to rid the hospital of this infection.

It is heartening to note that wards and theatres of this hospital are being sealed systematically and fumigated and all patients treated for tetanus.

I have no doubt that the government would enquire as to how this infection was allowed to creep into the hospital and would also ensure that the hospital is completely rid of the infection. It is also necessary that precautionary measures should be redoubled to prevent the onset of this insidious infection again.

An urgent review of position in all other hospitals in India has also become necessary.

In the other House they have raised the matter and the Minister so far has not come out with any statement. I am afraid the hospital authorities have partially denied and I wish they take a serious note of it because the other day when the two hon. Members of this House met with a serious scooter accident there was an allegation that there was no proper treatment given. These public institutions and hospitals must be properly looked after and I was expecting the Minister to be at least present to listen to me when I raised such a serious matter. I request that you may please pass on this to the Minister.

SHRI ANNASAHAB KOTKHINDE (Sangli): I have given notice under Rule 377. What has happened to that?

MR. SPEAKER: It has not been selected for today.