

[Shri K. T. Kosalram]

Nadu—nil; Kerala—nil; Karnataka—nil.

Government should immediately re-organise the distribution pattern of soft coke and ensure adequate supplies of soft coke to the Southern States. In any case, the present discrimination against the Southern States must be ended.

(iii) Reported danger being faced by coal field areas after the rains and floods.

SHRI ROBIN SEN (Asansol): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, under Rule 377, I make the following statement on a matter of urgent public importance.

After the rains and floods, the coal field areas are facing yet another serious danger, that is, subsidence of land over the mines. Knowledgeable sources are seriously concerned about such possibilities, particularly as the soil dries up. 25 such places are thickly populated, namely, Jamuria Bazar, Ranijung, Barakar, Kundue Bazar of Kulti, Barachak, Fatepur, Haripur, Jemahari, Khairadanga, Aluthia, Kali-pahari, Bharatchak, Palashban, Chotadimo, Kuardihi, Central Kenda, etc.

Total population in these areas is about 4 lakhs. About 1500 inhabitants from Khas Kajora area had to be evacuated recently following subsidence and development of cracks. Before the nationalisation of coal mines, the erstwhile owners had resorted to slaughter mining for huge profits and yet did not do the obligatory operations like sand stowing or timbering in these mines. The fear of subsidence has its roots here. The most distressing point is that during emergency, in the name of higher production the same kind of slaughter mining was started and that has enhanced the danger.

(iv) Reported agitation by the Employees of General Insurance Corporation.

PROF. DILIP CHAKRAVARTY (Calcutta South): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your permission, under rule 377, I would like to make the following statement:

Refusal of the management of the General Insurance Corporation to negotiate with the representatives of the Union for more than 18 months now on the basis of a character presented by them and the resultant harassment of the employees.

The suspension of the entire union leadership in South India and consequent harassment through arrest etc.

It is common knowledge that the management of 106 Indian and foreign general insurance companies were taken over by the Government on 13th May 1971 which were subsequently nationalised by the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972.

There are three trade unions viz. the National Confederation of General Insurance Employees, the General Insurance Employees, 'All India Association and the All India Insurance Employees' Association. The National Confederation of General Insurance Employees is independent of any political affiliation and is the strongest. The management of New India, it is learnt with the support of GIC, are not happy with this mighty strength of one organisation and for obvious reasons, it is reported, they are out to weaken the said organisation by patronising other rival trade unions in the industry.

The employees were hopeful that on nationalisation of the industry, the management of a nationalised public sector undertaking will give a fair deal to them in accordance with the declared labour policy of the Government. Unfortunately, these vested interests and feudal elements who are heading the industry have borne a grudge against the employees' trade union for the following reasons:—

(a) Those persons who were in power during pre-nationalisation days were exposed by the employees' trade union for various malpractices and anti-national acts. The organisation continues to expose the misdeed of the management even now.

(b) Employees' trade unions were responsible for CBI raids on the offices and residences of various corrupt officials which had received

large scale publicity in national dailies and weeklies.

(c) In view of their fraudulent acts as above, the employees had demanded the removal of such corrupt executives and unfortunately the Government retained them in the respective places and when they were not even changed and/or transferred from their original positions, they are now emboldened to freely indulge in fraudulent acts and they are also bent upon liquidating the employees' trade union for what was done in the pre-nationalisation days.

Despite this, the following atrocities were committed on the employees during the Emergency in 1975 and 1976:—

(a) Provident Fund contribution was reduced from 8 per cent of the gross to 10 per cent of the basic (which in effect means less than 6.1/4 per cent of the gross which is the statutory minimum);

(b) Sick leave was reduced from 30 days to 15 days per calendar year;

(c) LTS facilities were reduced drastically in case of low paid employees;

(d) Canteen subsidies were stopped in case of Class III and IV employees but the same continued to top executives of the company; and

(e) Fundamental rights of the employees were taken away by imposing on the employees obnoxious CDA rules.

Though the management was inviting the Regional Secretaries of the said Federation for finalisation of pending problems through negotiations, this practice was abruptly stopped.

After the withdrawal of the Emergency, the Federation adopted a resolution urging upon the Management to settle all pending issues by inviting the Regional Secretaries to the Head Office. In spite of repeated reminders thereafter, the Management turned a deaf ear to the legitimate request.

At present all employees all over India are on agitation. For adopting

legitimate, democratic and peaceful methods for ventilating the grievances, the Management of NEW INDIA has indulged in the following cases of victimisation/unfair labour practices:

(i) The entire Managing Committee members of the Southern Region Employees' Association are suspended from services on and from 9th November 1978;

(ii) The important functionaries at Bangalore, Coimbatore, Goa and other places are also suspended from services, bringing the total number of suspension to 21.

(iii) Efforts are also being made to suspend the General Secretary and one of the Joint Secretaries.

(iv) The company has issued circulars advising the employees that they will not be paid any salary for the month of November 1978 though there are no cases of work stoppage;

(v) The company refuses to regularise the service of 67 temporary hands in the Eastern Region against the permanent vacancies though the said temporary employees have completed written test and interview conducted by the Management.

(vi) The constitutional and legitimate trade union activities of the employees are stopped by the management by obtaining injunction from the court and by falsely implicating the active members in criminal cases;

(vii) In order to prevent the organisation from functioning, the Management has illegally locked up the trade union offices in Madras;

(viii) The Company has taken a decision in its Board of Directors' meeting to effect total and/or partial lock-out.

An immediate amicable settlement of all issues in dispute is possible if the Industry takes the following steps:

(a) Withdrawal of all suspension orders;

[Prof. Dilip Chakravarty]

(b) Withdrawal of false criminal and civil proceedings implicating the employees;

(c) Withdrawal of injunction restraining our union from carrying on peaceful agitation for redressal of grievances;

(d) Stopping the Management from implementing the threatened wage cut for the period of agitation;

(e) Immediate absorption of 67 temporary employees against declared permanent vacancies in the Eastern region;

(f) Immediate negotiations on all pending problems of the employees all over the country.

I urge the Management of the Industry as also the Ministers concerned to take expeditious steps to resolve the deadlock by sitting round the table and having a discussion with representatives of the union.

14.23 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE. ANNUAL RAVAGES OF FLOODS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY—*Contd.*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we will proceed with the discussion on floods in various parts of the country. I call Mr. Tridib Chaudhuri.

SHRI SAUGATA ROY (Barrackpore): Before we start the discussion on floods I want to represent—of course the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation is not there—that the problem is that the demand of the flood affected States is for more finance and more loan assistance. So Ministers for Finance and Planning should be there.

MR. SPEAKER: There are several Ministers here. I hope they will convey it.

Now Mr. Chaudhuri.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI (Barrackpore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, 1978 has been a very bad and unfortunate year for floods all over the country. From Kashmir, Punjab and Haryana, from Delhi and Uttar Pra-

desh up to Bihar, Assam and West Bengal, all have been more or less affected—some very badly and some less so—by the floods. Similarly, only recently, this month in South India, in Kerala we have had very heavy rain-falls, land-slides and floods which caused serious damage and havoc. But as the time is limited. I will not go into the details of floods in other regions: I will mainly concentrate on some aspects of the floods in West Bengal which, it is generally agreed, has been the worst sufferer this year. As a matter of fact, the damage that has been caused to West Bengal this year has laid the entire States economy prostrate, and it is not known when the State can again be put back on its feet at least so far as the economy is concerned.

This year, West Bengal suffered three waves of floods. Of course, floods started, as usual, from the onset of monsoons, from June. But the real, serious floods occurred in three waves: first in late August, then in mid-September; and then in late September and early October.

So far as the mid-August floods are concerned, they affected very seriously only two districts, Murshidabad and Malda and were due, mainly, to on-rush of water from the Ganga downstream Farakka in several areas of Murshidabad and Malda districts.

But before the State could just revive from the shocks administered by these floods, in mid-September came heavy rainfall and heavy water releases from Damodar, Kansavati and Swarnarekha dams which badly affected the lower Damodar area and certain areas in Midnapore District; the Ghatal sub-division, in fact the Ghatal town itself, and some parts of Howrah district were completely submerged and inundated.

Then the last wave of floods, flash floods of a frightful nature, on an unprecedented scale, took place from the night of 28th September and lasted upto the first few days of October, which practically destroyed nine more