

[Shri I. Balakrishnaiah]

no State Government will be in a position to tackle the situation. The present policy of the Central Government to spend money within the allotment made to the State Government for any sort of emergency is not sufficient. I, therefore, appeal to the Central Government to consider this issue sympathetically and take up this matter at the national level and sanction adequate funds, keeping in view the amount of damage caused which is more than Rs. 500 crores.

(xiv) **HARDSHIPS CAUSED TO BARYTES MINE-OWNERS DUE TO CANALISATION OF BARYTES EXPORT THROUGH M.M.T.C.**

SHRI DARUR PULLAIAH (Anantapur): The Barytes export trade was canalised by the Government by an announcement in Parliament on 30th March, 1979. Even though one month and 18 days have passed, no steps have been taken by the Government or the Canalising Agency, the MMTC, to buy the barytes mineral, i.e., powder or lumps from the mine-owners and the pulverising mill-owners. Huge stocks of lumps and powder are held up at Madras harbour and at the railway stations.

There are ready orders covered with confirmed L.Cs, which were obtained before canalisation. Due to the sudden canalisation orders, the producer exporters could not honour their pre-canalisation commitments. Though the producer exporters having orders as mentioned above applied soon after canalisation for permission to the Chief Controller of Exports & Imports and to the hon. Minister of Commerce with the required documents to allow them to fulfil their pre-canalisation commitments as per rules, so far no orders have been passed to honour the commitments.

As huge stocks of barytes powder and lumps worth about Rs. 2 crores are piling up, the mine-owners are subjected to hard financial pressures, and as a result, they have closed down their mining and pulverising industries, thereby depriving work for nearly 10,000 labourers. This barytes mine-

ral is mainly produced in the backward area of the Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh where there is no other industry worth the name. This is also a chronically drought-affected area. It is very surprising why the Government is not taking any action in this matter when there is good demand for this material abroad and the quantities are also piling up, while the requirement of the material to the country is very marginal.

When there was canalisation in 1976-77 Canalising Agency, the MMTC, could not export even 3 lakh tonnes for a period of 27 months. The present Government realised that canalisation was a failure and that MMTC could not succeed in selling this mineral. Therefore, the Government de-canalised rightly on 1st April, 1978, allowing MMTC and the original producers to export the mineral to the extent they produce, eliminating middlemen who were hitherto buying from the producers and exporting. During the period of decanalisation of 12 months alone, the original producers could export 3 lakh tonnes, equivalent to the quantity exported during 27 months when there was canalisation. The original producers could also export more finished products, i.e., powder, than crude lumps, thereby earning added value of foreign exchange.

This is a small export business where personalised efforts are required for studying International market and marketing this product with prompt deliveries both FOB and C&F basis. M.M.T.C., in a big organisation which has to look after important minerals with big turnovers, will not be able to concentrate on this small trade. Evidently the Government could realise the failure of the performance of M.M.T.C. during the 27 months of canalisation period. Therefore, it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Hon. Minister of Commerce and Trade that M.M.T.C. could not handle this small trade and the original producer exporters alone would be able to handle this small trade effectively in the interest of sustaining their small

industries to give employment to 10,000 labourers and in the interest of the country. Therefore, it is requested that the Hon. Minister for Commerce would be pleased to maintain status-quo or to take necessary immediate steps to buy the material at present Floor prices and allow the producer-exporters to fulfil their pre-canalisation commitments. I hope the hon. Minister will take prompt action in this matter as in the case of other Export Trade where his performance is praiseworthy.

(xv) SILENT VALLY HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT IN PHALGHAT, KERALA.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN (Trichur): I wish to raise the following matter of urgent public importance under Rule 377.

Kerala Silent Valley Hydro-Electric Project

The Silent Vally hydro-electric project in Palghat Malapuram district of Kerala is running into rough weather again.

When the preliminary works on the project were commenced there was practically no opposition. However, scientists and naturalists soon began expressing their concern over the possibilities of the "only rain forest" in the country being denuded because of the project coming up there. The task force for the ecological planning of the Western Ghats strongly expressed itself against proceeding with the project as it might create ecological imbalance. It also pointed out an instance of the Tamil Nadu Government dropping a similar project in the Moyar River basin on the ground that it would upset the ecology in the area.

It was only with great reservation that the task force said the Silent Valley project might be sanctioned and that too subject to certain conditions which the Kerala Government would have to fulfil while executing it.

As per the suggestions of the task force, the clear-felling of the forest is to be reduced to the minimum. Trespass into the project area should not be permitted. While goats should not be reared in the area, other types of cattle should be stalled. Adequate measures are also to be taken against forest fire.

All the conditions put forward by the task force were accepted by the Kerala Government and it also agreed to the creation of a 'monitoring Committee' to supervise the implementation of the safeguards suggested. A legislation has already been enacted by the State Government in this regard.

In spite of all these, clearance has not yet been given to the project.

As this project is an important prestigious one, I request the Government to give immediate clearance to the same.

(xvi) FIXATION OF UNIFORM EX-INSTALLATION PRICE OF KEROSENE OIL

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the following matter of urgent public importance.

The ex-installation price of Kerosene oil at Mourigram, Calcutta is about the highest in the entire country. It is Rs. 1229.37 per K.L. at Calcutta as against Rs. 1193.98 for Bombay, Rs. 1196.50 for Cochin, Rs. 1201.78 for Vishakhapatnam, Rs. 1204.40 for Madras etc. This is in spite of the fact that Calcutta has both part and pipeline facilities and nearly refineries. We have been pressing the Government of India that there should be for the time being parity in the installation price of kerosene oil at least at the major ports but ultimately an essential commodity of mass consumption like kerosene oil should be sold throughout the country at more or less a uniform price.

It appears from the press statements of Central Petroleum Minister that the ex-installation price of kerosene oil