

12.00 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**REPORTED VIRTUAL BREAKDOWN OF
POWER SUPPLY IN WEST BENGAL**

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI (Bengal): I call the attention of the Minister of Irrigation and Power to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The reported virtual breakdown of electric power supply in West Bengal and the decision of imposing a 40 per cent blanket cut in electric power supply to all consumers including industries."

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI K. C. PANT): In West Bengal, State Electricity Board is responsible for the generation, transport for the area supplied by the Damodar Valley Corporation in terms of its statutory responsibility. The West Bengal Government has also licensed the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd. and a few other small licensees to generate and distribute electricity.

The anticipated demand for power in West Bengal is estimated to be about 900 MW, excluding the DVC area. Of this, the demand in Calcutta itself is about 560 MW. The installed capacity in the State, including the licensees, is 1160 MW. In addition, a 120 MW unit has been commissioned at Santaldih, though its generation has not stabilised.

The actual supply of power has, however, been considerably less. The fire accident in the power station of Durgapur projects Ltd. in January, 1974 has mainly been responsible for reducing its ability to generate only 160 MW against an installed capacity of 285 MW. The capacity of the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd. has been derated due to the old

age of the sets from 420 MW to 337 MW. The actual generation is about 270 MW. According to West Bengal Government, at the Bandel Station, the average generation is only about 170 MW, against the installed capacity of 330 MW due to outages and difficulties on account of coal quality etc. The total average generation in West Bengal in March has been about 638 MW. The energy shortage in West Bengal has been about 15 per cent.

The Fourth Plan target for additional generating capacity to be created in West Bengal was 251 MW. The actual achievement was only 131 MW. The failure to create the targeted generating capacity, coupled with the reduction in the output of the existing stations, while loads continued to grow, resulted in creating a shortage of power in the State. Consequently, the State Government had to impose a 15 per cent cut in the demand of power in the State, including Calcutta.

The DVC has been supplying power not only to areas within its statutory responsibility, but also to the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd. and the West Bengal State Electricity Board. The contract with the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd expired in 1969 and has not been renewed. A decision had also been taken in 1965 that the DVC would be relieved of the responsibility of supplying power to areas outside its statutory responsibility by 1969. However, due to the inability of the State Electricity Board to meet this commitment, this decision could not be implemented. Keeping in view the importance of Calcutta, the DVC continued to supply power according to availability, to the CESC. These supplies have normally ranged between 50—70 MW. West Bengal has not been able to get help from other neighbouring system like Bihar and Orissa due to their own problems.

In the last few days, the generation in the Bandel Station of West Bengal has declined to below 170 MW. The actual average generation in the past 3 days has been reduced to 110 MW

at Bandel. The generation at Santaldih which was 50 MW has also reduced to zero. The generation in the DVC system has declined to below 400 MW, against an average of 530 MW attained in March 1974. The DVC is required to meet the needs of the loads within the valley as its primary responsibility more particularly of the coal mining, railway and steel sectors which are of national priority. Consequently, the DVC has been able to supply only between 25 and 30 MW to the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation Ltd. As a consequence of all these reductions, the shortage situation has been further aggravated during the last week.

The West Bengal State Electricity Board has reported that it has not imposed any 40 per cent blanket cut in supply to all consumers. It has, however, had to resort to load shedding from time to time, in accordance with the actual availability of power. This is in addition to the 15 per cent cut which has been in existence for quite some time.

The situation in West Bengal and Calcutta is likely to improve when the 120 MW unit at Santaldih in West Bengal stabilises its generation and the functioning of the other West Bengal Stations improve. The Damodar Valley Corporation would continue to assist West Bengal as in the past and when its generation exceeds 550 MW, West Bengal would get additional assistance upto 20 MW.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: In view of the colossal under-statement that has been made to explain away what the *Economic Times* has said today that there is complete power chaos in West Bengal which we fear is leading West Bengal to an age of darkness and also, in view of the shelter that the statement elicited from the West Bengal, State Electricity Board has sought to take behind the way in which my Call Attention motion was couched, I owe an

apology to you. Sir, and also to the House and I want to place before the House the actual situation as it obtains.

My Call Attention motion was given on the basis of newspaper reports in all Bengal daily papers that the West Bengal Government on 18th April, 1974 had decided that they would impose a power cut. They had, actually informed the representatives of all Chambers of Commerce and Industry that they had no other alternative but to impose 30 to 40 per cent blanket cut. That was on the 18th and, particularly, on that day, for 12 hours, the major part of the city of Calcutta and the industrial suburbs had no power supply.

I am giving you the day by day developments. On that day, the Chief Minister made a statement to the representatives of all Chambers of Commerce and Industry that the West Bengal Government had no alternative arrangement except to have a blanket cut. That was the statement made by the Chief Minister in his chamber of the Assembly. He said that unless the generating agencies ensured a firm supply of 415 MW, the actual cut for Calcutta, as against the demand of 500 MW, was to the tune of 175 MW. But the short-fall was 35 per cent that day. Then the next day this statement about a blanket power cut was denied when there was an outcry in the State of West Bengal. The Power Minister of West Bengal Government denied that there was any plan to impose a blanket cut and said—this was the next day, i.e. 19th April—that the Government was trying to evolve a new power distribution formula on the basis of 400 megawatts and would try to make available 350 megawatts for industries but that there was no plan for imposing a blanket cut. Then the next day the Chief Minister asked the Power Minister to introduce a new rationing formula. From the 20th April upto 23rd, that is, yesterday, the situation has gone from bad to worse and on the 22nd the shortfall in

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supply was 205 megawatts, that is, 41 per cent cut and yesterday it was a 46 per cent cut. That is, the cut was to the tune of 230 megawatts. That is 46 per cent as I have stated. The position you find is that the West Bengal State Assembly had to adjourn its sitting in the midst of darkness yesterday and also the day before yesterday. Already industries are hard hit. The biggest industry in West Bengal is the jute industry. I have here a notice published by the Indian Jute Mills Association. Here is the advertisement:

‘Chaotic Power Supply
Hastening
Jute Industries’ Closure

Power cuts are squeezing life out of jute.

A large number of jute mills had virtually no power for six days running.

Most of the others get it for 4 to 8 hours a day.”

The new formula which is now being discussed for the last 3-4 days has not been finalised but from the indications that we have got and the indications that have been given to the representatives of Industry and Chambers of Commerce, it seems that the amount of power they are going to make available to the industry would make it possible for the factories to work only for 2-3 days. This is about factories round about Calcutta. But as far as the mofussil areas are concerned, you can imagine what is the position from the fact that in the Midnapore-Kharagpur areas there is a cut of 75 per cent. The export potentialities of jute which is the biggest export industry have been as it was never before, there are orders, but nothing can be done because the factories cannot run.

Same is the position with regard to coal mines and coal washeries. Same is the position with regard to tea,

coal and even railways. The Railway Board, I understand, has already written to the State Government that they would be forced to cut down railway services because of this, what is euphemistically called, load shedding which is not really load-shedding but which is virtually a break-down in the electric supply system.

The Labour Minister of the State Government called all the trade unions and he requested them to agree to lay-off of 2 million to 3 million workers because of these breakdowns in electric supply. That is with regard to the effects. So far as causes are concerned, nobody knows what actually is the cause. For three or four days we have been seeing in Bengal papers that the Chief Minister is shouting at the failure of the Central Government to do this thing or that thing. So far as Santhaldih power station is concerned, which has been newly opened by the Prime Minister, the State Government has said that electric machinery which was supplied by Heavy Electricals was defective. It asked the Centre to send one top official from that establishment to look at the working at Santhaldih and Bandel power stations and I do not know what has happened. The Central spokesman here started blaming the West Bengal Government. He said, they are to be blamed as they failed to put up transmission lines, the generation is all-right, but in Santhaldih there were no proper transmission lines, etc. Then the West Bengal Government changes its position and now the situation is it is because of bad machinery supplied by the Central Government and also because of the bad quality of the furnace oil and bad quality of crude nothing can be produced there. With regard to the DVC the Minister does not hold out any promise beyond 20 M.W. So, I leave it out.

SHRI K. C. PANT: 20 M.W. additional to what is supplied now.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: Any-way the present affairs of DVC power

generation is at a very serious state. Whatever power we could draw from Durgapur, whatever West Bengal could obtain from Chandrapura, that also is gone. There has been explosion at Chandrapura last night. I do not know what would be the effects.

The people of West Bengal feel that they are plunging into an era of darkness and the wheels of industry would simply stop moving causing serious consequences. This is a serious explosive situation which may lead to anything. Therefore, I want to ask, firstly, whether in view of the need for export in respect of jute and other commodities, export-earning industries, and the serious consequences with regard to railway communications and other things round about Calcutta, will the Government institute an immediate enquiry for knowing as to what extent the Central agencies have been reponsible for the state of affairs which developed for the last one week in West Bengal, particularly with reference to Santhaldih and also with reference to Bandel power stations where equipments are mostly supplied by the Bharat Heavy Electricals; and, thirdly, with regard to D.V.C. as a whole. In view of this situation, has there been any investigation carried out from the nearby sources, say, from U.P., Orissa or other places, to tide over the present difficulties till the situation in West Bengal improves a little?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI K. C. PANT):
First of all, let me say that I share fully anxiety of my hon. friend in respect of this part of West Bengal, more particularly, in the Calcutta Area particularly because of the impact on industries, possibly, the impact on other vital sectors in the economy. I have mentioned in the main statement the reasons which have brought about the situation in the last few days.

I would like to assure him that we have been in touch with the West Bengal Government and I have myself talked to the Chief Minister and whatever help or assistance has been desired by the West Bengal Govern-

ment has been given by us to the extent possible. For instance, Shri Chaudhuri mentioned that West Bengal Government wanted some experts from the Bharat Heavy Electricals to be sent to Santhaldih and Bandel. Actually, when I was in Calcutta some time back, this was mentioned to me by the Chief Minister and the Irrigation and Power Minister. I assured him of all help. Firstly, what I did on coming back here was to get in touch with the concerned Ministry. An expert did go immediately the very day or the next day to look into the problem.

It is possible that there have been break-downs in this new machinery. I can say positively that there have been break-downs in Badarpur and in some of the other areas. So far as Bandel goes, this not an indigenous machinery. And B.H.E.L. is not involved. As far as Santhaldih is concerned B.H.E.L. has supplied the plant. I would like the House to bear in mind that these are units manufactured in the country for the first time. Some difficulties have arisen. The reasons have already been given by the West Bengal Government. Among them is the variable quality of coal and viscosity of oil and so on. But, I assure him that it is not a question of West Bengal Government's putting the blame on the Centre and the Centre's putting the blame on West Bengal. He said that the Chief Minister of West Bengal Government has been saying this that the centre is to blame. I have not seen any statement by the Chief Minister putting the blame on the Centre. It is not a question of putting the blame on someone; this is a serious matter. The West Bengal Government and we are trying our level best to get over this situation and to see that power is restored. So far as D.V.C. is concerned, he said that the Centre should look into it. I may tell Shri Chaudhuri that for the last so many months, I have been getting daily reports of generation of power in D.V.C. I can say that over a period of months, generation had improved in D.V.C. except in the month of

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February. It had improved considerably. It had been an all-time high. But, lately, it has come down. There were certain amounts of labour trouble in D.V.C. But, I am very glad to tell the House that an agreement had been arrived at day before yesterday in Calcutta between the D.V.C. and the management with the help of Labour Minister of West Bengal. I have every hope that DVC will pick-up again. In fact, speaking of today the latest figures in the morning were 385 MV and later today it was expected to be 495 MV

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: What part of it was made available to West Bengal?

SHRI K. C. PANT: Our first charge is steel, coal and the railways and within that we have been able to supply 20 to 30 MW. I would like to give more. We have been supplying around 50 to 70 MVA and if this production goes above 550 MW then we will supply another 20 MW. That means we can supply upto 90 MW. That does not mean if the situation is more comfortable we will not supply more but this is the kind of projection that we have made so that West Bengal Government can also see how to plan ahead.

I might tell the hon. Member that a Member of the Central Water and Power Commission, who is one of the top-most engineers in the country on thermal side, has been in West Bengal for four to five days. He has been visiting the power plants there. Unfortunately, he met with an accident yesterday and get fractured his leg. But he has been in West Bengal for the last four to five days to see what are the defects and how can they be got over quickly. We are trying our level best to help in any way. We have approached the Bihar Government to step up their generation still further. They did step up their generation but, unfortunately, three of their units tripped at Pathratau. Two of them were brought back on 20th and the third was expected to be back

today. I shall certainly look into it again whether Bihar can spare more power to West Bengal.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHAKRYA (Serampore): I am glad to note that at least the new Irrigation Minister has with great enthusiasm expressed his pious wish that something will be done to remove power crisis in West Bengal. But from the reality of the situation it is abundantly clear that both the Central Government and the State Government are most callous. It is not a matter of few days. The Statesman and other Calcutta newspapers including some of the Delhi papers have also repeatedly announced that there is a serious crisis in power so far as West Bengal is concerned. There are some comments in the issue of Statesman of 18-7-1973 which should amply prove that the Central Government did not at all take any serious measure to see that the power position improves in West Bengal.

On the 16th July, 1973 The Statesman had reported:

West Bengal is a special case for at least two reasons. No other State was so severely hit for so long and the situation is steadily deteriorating. Promises of improvement have long lost all credibility."

Nobody has any confidence either in the State Government or in the pious which expressed now by the hon Minister. The day the Santaldih plant was opened and the ceremony was observed, the Prime Minister flew to Santaldih in a helicopter, but the next day this plan was not in a position to generate any power. People were given to understand for so long and it was also publicised and propagated throughout the country that as soon as Sandaldih was commissioned, the power shortage would be removed. May I know what steps Government are going to take regarding this fun which the West Bengal Government had indulged in by installing a machine which had no generating power?

The Statesman has also pointed out that industries in West Bengal are losing 60 per cent of their capacity, and they are not in a position to reach even 40 per cent of their total capacity because of this power crisis. Not only factories, but hundreds of small units have had to stop their operation because they are not getting any power. Besides small industries, even hospitals and other essential institutions have had to suffer. Government have always said that in respect of hospitals, newspapers and the telephone and wireless departments, there would be no load shedding or power crisis and the arrangements would be such that these institutions did not suffer from power shortage. Recently, however, it has come out in the Calcutta papers that in the course of an operation on a pregnant lady, suddenly there was load-shedding and as a result the operation could not be successful and the child died.

The hon. Minister has said in his statement that about 1000MW is necessary for Calcutta, excluding the DVC area. But we know how, this Government is functioning. Regarding the constitution of the State Electricity Board, you will find that it is constituted of men who do not know anything about these electricity matters; only some administrative heads are there. They have no knowledge about the generation of electricity.

As regards the Bandel power station, there are four turbines I met the engineers there and they told me that one turbine should be kept as a standby for any emergency. But what has happened? Mr. Siddhartha Shanker Ray after coming to power by rigged election announced that he would see that 100000 villages would be electrified. But what is the actual position now? Every house in the town area has to buy a lantern. But even with the lantern they are finding it difficult to manage, because only a few days back, the Government have curtailed the quota of kerosene to

West Bengal. Will Shri Pant be kind enough to go to Calcutta and see whether these things are happening or not? For hours and hours there is no light.

MR. SPEAKER: Ask your question.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: This is my question. In spite of this fact, there is gas shortage, there is no kerosene, there is no electricity. Now what will the students do?

AN HON. MEMBER: Candle.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: Candle has become ten times costly. Regarding thermal power, will the Minister kindly inquire into the functioning of the Baudal thermal power stations? I categorically state that in spite of the objection of the persons at the top in the thermal power station, they were forced to run all the turbines with the result that now only two turbines are working and two are idle because of breakdown. So naturally there will be a cut in the power supply.

As regards the Calcutta Electric Supply Company, many things have been stated here. There was a demand that the previous agreement having expired, it should now be taken over by Government. But nothing has been done. I make this charge that you are not taking it over and you also not permitting it to increase its generating power. My point is that you should immediately take it over and change the old outmoded machinery which is there and there may be some improvement in power generation. You must take some steps immediately. The old outmoded machines should immediately be replaced by new ones. Are Government going to take any action in this regard?

So my first question is this. Do not talk of future. You have got no future. In ten years there may be nothing. So the people of West Bengal

[Shri Dinan Bhattacharyya] have no confidence in your future planning etc. I know there is a power crisis throughout India. But it is not as serious as in West Bengal where for hours and hours you will find no light. So what steps are you going to take by way of immediate remedial measures?

Siddhartha Ray has set up a committee to go into the matter as to how the Bharat Heavy Electricals supplied that generator, whether there was bungling or not. But I know this for certain. The member chosen for that committee may be a High Court Judge. But I know what a type of man he is. He is always appeasing the authorities.

MR. SPEAKER: Come to the question now.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: You do not know what is happening.

MR. SPEAKER: I know

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: You will understand it when students and other citizens force you to understand what is happening in West Bengal. It is not an easy matter. The whole economy is collapsing.

MR. SPEAKER: You had better ask your question.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: What steps is he going to take immediately at least to see that the minimum requirement of power in West Bengal is met? Secondly, what are you going to do with regard to the Calcutta Electric Supply Company?

Sir, I charge the Government with corruption. Something has happened in Santhaldih and for which Shrimati Indira Gandhi was taken there to inaugurate it, but the day after it was seen that it had no power generating capacity. What is the Government going to do. It is not enough to simply express a wish that "we will see what is the real cause in regard to

the generating capacity at Santhaldih." My question will be this. Mr. Pant, you can do one thing. From your own sources, you can at least give a clear-cut statement as to how this BHEL happened to supply that kind of machinery. I say they have got—

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. 45 minutes have passed.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): It is a very serious matter. The whole State is suffering in darkness. He must be allowed to speak out.

MR. SPEAKER: But it is your decision that the first Member will have five to seven minutes and the others will have five minutes each. Now, already 45 minutes have passed.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: It has been taken by two Members so far. So, I will finish.

MR. SPEAKER: You do not finish at all.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: Only one thing. That is—

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta—North-East): For three or four days now I have been in West Bengal. If you were in Calcutta for the last three or four days, you would have gone off your chump.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take you to Punjab and you will have the grievance almost removed.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, on a point of order. That statement is not correct.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra): Both of you come to me and I will eliminate all your darkness.

MR. SPEAKER: First, remove your own,

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I will ask the hon. Minister, what is he going to do regarding the sort of supply made by the BHEL. The industries are suffering already.

MR. SPEAKER: For God's sake please sit down.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I am finishing. The jute mills alone suffered a loss of about Rs. 25 crores during this time. What are you doing? Our economy has collapsed, our agriculture has collapsed, and everything is in the doldrums there.

SHRI PILOO MODY: And the Congress has collapsed.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: The Congress is collapsing. Anyway, they are trying to patch up. So, these are my questions. Please answer them. Even the *Jugantar*, your Congress paper, has said that for God's sake, you must attend to West Bengal regarding this electricity.

SHRI K. C. PANT: Sir, the pious wish that the Congress will collapse is not borne out by the news today; there elections have been won by them, and it has come out in the papers today. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI K. C. PANT: First, he mentioned that the Centre has not taken the situation seriously. In my reply to the questions of my hon. friend Shri Chaudhari, I had spelt out exactly how we are concerned with the problem, and how we are trying to come to the assistance of the West Bengal Government in every possible way. I do not think I need repeat it. The hon. Member referred to other States. (*Interruptions*) It is not a question of individual help. I had mentioned it and I had referred to the point earlier. In fact, he has covered much the same ground. But he has referred to the

situation in other States. If his suggestion is that the Centre is more concerned about other States than about West Bengal, I can assure him that that is absolutely not true. We are as much concerned about West Bengal as about the other States. I told you, the steps we have taken I told you, we had been in constant touch with the West Bengal Government. They had asked for somebody to be sent there. We had sent our men. We had sent our own experts. Our own experts have been there for the last four-five days. In DVC, we had some trouble which we have sorted out luckily. I mentioned to you that all these things have been engaging our attention daily in the last few days. The main point which he made, I thought was about the machinery which has been supplied by BHEL to Santaldih.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: What about Bandel?

SHRI K. C. PANT: The trouble is, he has not been listening to me carefully.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: I am hearing very patiently.

SHRI K. C. PANT: Machinery to Bandel plant has not been supplied by BHEL. That is what I told Mr Chaudhuri.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: My point is this. Everywhere there are four turbines. At least, one turbine must be a stand-by. You have violated that.

SHRI K. C. PANT: I will find it very difficult to get into a designing argument with my friend across the floor, whether there should be a stand-by turbine or not. It is a technical question. It has to be determined on the basis of various considerations and perhaps. I have a little more acquaintance in this field than my hon. friend. One cannot jump to a general con-

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clusion and say that there should be a stand-by generator in all cases etc. If there are suggestions, if they concern me, I shall certainly look into them. If it concerns the West Bengal Government, which he says is my Government—I thought it was his Government also—if he passes it on to me. I shall certainly pass it on to the West Bengal Government for their consideration. I welcome constructive and helpful suggestions from him. I would repeat that it is not fair to cast doubts about BHEL machinery for the simple reason, anywhere in the world where machinery is made for the first time, there are teething troubles and one learns from experience. BHEL has picked up in the last couple of years. It is doing well now and if there are teething troubles, we will get over them. I do not think we should be unduly perturbed over this. If so happened, there is difficulty in the power supply situation just now. There have been breakdowns. One should expect teething troubles when new plants are manufactured in the country for the first time. I do not think one should be unnecessarily perturbed over this. Our Ministry has been in touch with BHEL several times over this matter. Whenever they send any complaints to us, we refer it to the BHEL. We shall certainly look into it again in respect of this particular plant. Sir, the other major point which he made was about the Calcutta Electric Supply Company. West Bengal Government has not sent any proposal that they want to take over the company. As far as the replacement of old machines is concerned, some of these machines are very old and probably will require replacement. I have noted the very constructive suggestion which he made that if there is a proposal from the West Bengal Government that these should be replaced, we should agree to it. I have made a note of his suggestion and I certainly welcome this constructive and helpful suggestion. If proposals

come from them, we will certainly look into them with great sympathy considering the present situation in West Bengal.

I think I have covered the points along with the answer I gave to Mr. Chaudhuri. There, I have outlined the specific measures we have taken recently to help the West Bengal Government.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE: Sir, on a point of order. Is this in order for the Minister, specially Mr. Pant, who is very careful in giving answers, to evade as answer to a question which he himself has specified, namely Santaldih matter, which was opened with a great deal of fanfare by the Prime Minister and which West Bengal people consider to be a practical joke, cruelly perpetrated on them. He said he was giving an answer. He has not given the answer so far.

SHRI K. C. PANT: I would submit that there is no question of a practical joke there. It is true that the plant has taken a number of months to come up. It was actually synchronised in January. Thereafter, it did generate power. Then it ran into some problems, and the problems are similar to the problems ran into in some of the other new plants. Therefore, it is not an isolated case. We have been looking into the problem of not only Santaldih but also Badarpur and another plant, whether the same kind of problems are responsible for breakdown and, if so, to what extent we can identify the causes. I do not want I create any unnecessary controversy. One of the causes which has been mentioned in all these units is the uneven quality of coal that is supplied. That is a matter which we have to sort out with the coal Ministry. We do not want to raise it here. It is something that has to be sorted out within the Government. I will go into it. Santaldih will generate power, once the teething troubles are got over. There is no question of Santaldih being basically weak or badly planned out.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GOSWAMI (Gauhati): Thought it may sound somewhat paradoxical, everything is gloomy on the power front. We hear every day, and we are experiencing, load shedding resulting in partial or total closure of industrial units. A serious news has appeared in the papers that in hospitals even operations and X-rays have come to a halt because of load shedding. Another Calcutta paper has reported that three telephone exchanges, namely, Nos. 45, 47 and 48 were not working for more than five hours because of shortage of power. It is a very disturbing news that the economy of the States is being crippled by the shortage of power. The only persons who may be happy because of power shedding may be the prisoners who have the intention of running away from jails, because a report in the *Hindustan Standard* says that the jail authorities have warned that regular power cuts may lure some prisoners into attempt of jail break. I hope the Minister of Irrigation and Power will not create a situation where his predecessor Ministry, which is having enough troubles, may have further troubles.

Coming to the serious aspect of the whole matter, it is not only West Bengal that is suffering because of power cuts but the entire eastern region is today being crippled with power cuts. In the original notice that I gave for the Calling Attention, I included Assam also and, therefore, Sir I crave your indulgence to refer to some of the factual matters relating to Assam.

It is very unfortunate that even in Assam the industrial establishments are working much less than the desired limits because of the power shedding. It is extremely unfortunate in view of the fact not only because Assam and the entire eastern region is backward but because the per capita consumption of electricity in Assam and Meghalaya is the lowest in this country. According to statistics Delhi,

which is the centre of all power, consumes the highest amount of electricity per capita with 288 kw, as against the all-India average of 94 kw, while the per capita consumption in Assam and Meghalaya is a lamentable 23 kw. My purpose in giving this figure is to say that there has been something wrong in the entire approach of the Power Ministry because, if the potentialities are properly tapped, the north-east region could give power not only to the north-east region but even to Bengal because, according to some scientific studies, the hydel power potentiality of the north-east region is 13.5 million kw as against 41 million kw of the entire country. Up till now the installed capacity in that region has been 1,60,000 kw, which is 1.1 per cent of the all India figure.

My purpose in mentioning all this is to show that there has not been any serious well-planned effort to tackle this problem, even though a warning was given by such an important person as the late Dr. Bhabha that India will have to face a power crisis at some point of time. I do not understand why no effort was made up till now to speed up the completion of projects, like the Gantak project which was commissioned in 1961. Its schedule was revised in 1969 and yet it is nowhere near completion.

Coming to Bengal and particularly Calcutta, even though there has been an acute power shortage in the last few weeks, even prior to that, according to the statistics given by the Governments concerned, it was apparent that at no point of time was the Government capable of supplying the total requirements of Bengal, or even of Calcutta.

The total supply to Calcutta, according to one estimate, in 1971-72, was 795 MW as against the demand of 150 MW. Though it was expected that the situation may ease with the power

[Shri Dinesh Chandra Goswami]

units coming in operation, that has also failed to bring the desired result. Even in regular times, as against the supply of 931 MW, the total demand is 1362 MW. It shows that even in regular times, the entire north-eastern region is suffering from the power crisis which has become very acute because of the failure which Mr. Pant has tried to explain

As the time at my disposal is very limited, I would like to ask the hon. Minister to reply to certain queries. Firstly, what steps the Government is taking to explore the immense power potentialities of the north-eastern region and, particularly, at what stages the projects, like, Kemeng, Loktak and Kapili, at the present moment stand. In fact, I think, if you really tap the immense power potentialities of the Brahmaputra itself, to a great extent the prospects of the north-eastern region can be changed. In that connection, I would like to know what happened to the Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission Bill which was brought last year before the House. It is not coming.

Secondly, one of the reasons of shortage or at least mal-adjustment is the persistent overdrawals by industrial units regardless of their permissible offtake. I would like to know what steps are being taken to restrict the consumption by these units within their permissible limits.

Thirdly, considering the fact that the production of essentials is the prime need of the day, what steps the Government is taking to introduce some system of rationalisation and equitable distribution of electricity so that essential services and essential production units may not suffer because of the arbitrary load-shedding without any rational basis.

Lastly, I want to know what steps the Government is taking to repair the damaged thermal units and other units for adequate supply of coal and to

prevent sabotaging and mal-adjustments which are taking place in those units.

SHRI K. C. PANT: About the north-eastern region, when my hon. friend quotes the figures, the general figures for hydro-electric potential in the north-eastern region are very impressive. But he knows that it is all largely related to harnessing the Brahmaputra. That certainly is a colossal task. He knows it better than anybody else, as he lives near the Brahmaputra. He knows the attempts that have been made in the past to even control the flooding of the Brahmaputra. Even that has posed problems. The possibility of creating hydro-electric power lies at the bend where the Brahmaputra flows from Tibet into Arunachal Pradesh. That is the only point where it offers the real possibility of generating hydro-electric power. There is the difficulty in tapping that even if one had the resources to do it in today's circumstances.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GOSWAMI: What happened to that Bill?

SHRI K. C. PANT: He refers to that Flood Control Bill.

The Loktak project is coming up and it is nearing completion. I think, the first part should be commissioned very soon. I do not remember the exact date

As to what are the plans for West Bengal for future, I can only tell him that so far as the Fifth Plan period is concerned, the continuing schemes, the new schemes and the D.V.C. schemes, all these taken together in the Central sector would provide an estimated benefit of 1668 MW to West Bengal

13.00 hrs.

So far as overdrawals by the industries are concerned, as he himself said, the problem now is power supply to

industries except in those cases where the industries not paying for the power, etc. about which there are some disputes between the State Electricity Boards and industries and I am not going into that aspect. But, generally speaking, the problem is to supply power to industries, and I agree with him that rationalisation is necessary. Actually, we have drawn up some guidelines and those guidelines were sent to the States last year itself to ensure precisely what he has in mind, that essential services should get priority and those industries which are crucial to the national economy should get priority and the cut should be applied beginning with the wasteful use of energy and ostentatious use of energy like at marriage etc. These guidelines were drawn up and have been sent to the States. Recently we have revised these guidelines and they are now in the Planning Commission. After their seeing them, we shall again get in touch with regard to these matters.

I have got a piece of information. Mr. Tridib Chaudhuri has told us about an incident. I want to confirm that there has been an accident in Chandrapur and unfortunately a technician has been seriously injured. I do not know his present condition.

SHRI SAKTI KUMAR SARKAR (Joy nagar): Last Saturday and Sunday the cut in supply as he expressed is quite contrary to what we experienced the other day. I heard there about 16-17 hours load-shedding was going on in Calcutta for the last few days. So, I feel what he has stated now is quite contrary to the grim reality there.

I want to express some of the views of the newspapers in a concise way. Yesterday's newspaper has expressed that the Durgapur thermal power station went out of commission. The DPL

supplied 60 megawatts against 150 megawatts in the evening. DVC supplies 40 megawatts against 75 megawatts. Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation supplies 225 megawatts against 230 megawatts and Santaldih went out of repair.

This is the condition. The daily average shortage varies from 60 to 189 megawatts causing serious damage to our economy as well as the public life.

What has been expressed by other speakers I do want to repeat again. But as it is stated in the newspapers, I am again repeating that 60 per cent of the capacity in the major industries now remains idle. Mr. H. Hardley, Chairman of the Associations of Indian Engineering said that the total loss in production since January 1974, is Rs. 76 crores. He has also stated that the power cut is causing excessive damage to the plant and machinery. Massive exports orders for capital equipment, consumer goods and other items are held up in the pipeline. Penalty implications arise in delayed deliveries. Moreover, in the jute industry, it is said that there has been a recurring loss of Rs. 25 crores for the last three months.

In view of all these facts, it can be firmly said that the power generation by the public sector DVC, the Electric Supply Board and the Durgapur project have become a total failure causing unlimited sufferings for the people and the industries including agriculture in the State of West Bengal.

It is also true that they are not capable enough to maintain their machi-

[Shri Sakti Kumar Sarkar]

neries. Many of the public sector enterprises are white elephants. Our consumers are being unnecessarily taxed for the upkeep of these public sector enterprises. They are making losses year after year. The only hope against hope is the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation, which has been serving people anyhow and their efforts deserve praise and thanks; otherwise, the city of Calcutta would have been plunged into darkness. There are radical patriots constantly crying for takeover or nationalisation. Even the target date was fixed as 1980. As a result of this threat they are not taking proper interest in the matter, in regard to maintenance. The machinery is pretty old and it may collapse any day. Please do not disturb the Calcutta State Electric Supply Corporation by this childish talk of takeover and allow them to generate more and more power.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: What is 'childish talk'? Is not the Industrial Policy Resolution very clear about it?

SHRI SAKTI KUMAR SARKAR: We should allow them to set up the extra unit of installation which they have asked for till our own public sector earns maturity and experience. It is a pity that public sector units in power generation are still minors and not adults and the country is not safe in their hands. I would like to know as to what amount the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation is sending to England as a part of the profit every year and whether that drainage is bigger than what we earn by exports of the products produced by the factories run by the power of the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation? My next serious point is this. I want to know why the Santhaldih power project went out of order which was commissioned practically yesterday by our dear Prime Minister. Is it not a fact that the machinery supplied by BHEL a public sector undertaking, is of in-

ferior quality? Is it not the fact that the Chief Minister Shri Siddharatha Shankar Ray has complained about that matter? BHEL is our prestigious plant, at least, we claim it openly; is this the sample of their production? We want a thorough probe about the supplies made to Santhaldih as well as a thorough enquiry into the functioning of BHEL to avoid recurrence of such things in future, in the interest of the country.

Sir the Durgapur Projects Limited could not function according to their capacity and the needs of the people due to the short supply of coal and also inferior quality of coal. So, the State Chief Minister requested the Centre to tag some mines with the DPL. Why the Central Government is silent about this matter? I want to know whether the Irrigation and Power Minister will pursue the cases and persuade the Minister of Mines to take immediate action.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not very essential that you should finish this whole speech?

SHRI SAKTI KUMAR SARKAR: These are only vital points...

MR. SPEAKER: I see something written is there.

SHRI SAKTI KUMAR SARKAR: I am mentioning only vital points. We see this sort of crisis throughout the length and breadth of the country. It has also been developed and heightened within the last two years. We suspect foulplay and sabotage effort from somewhere either from within or from outside the country. So we demand for setting up of this High-powered Committee immediately by the Central Government to look into the matter thoroughly in the interest of the very existence of the nation's economy.

SHRI K. C. PANT: Sir, my hon. friend referred to the failure of the D.V.C. I have already dealt with that.

On the question of maintenance, he said that the public sector units were not functioning well. This kind of sweeping statement is not correct. Many of the units are working well. Even the Durgapur Project Limited was working well; it was generating, on an average, 175/180 M.W. of power prior to the fire accident in January 1974. It was only after that the generation level had fallen. The fire resulted in affecting the production in 27 units directly. Three have been taken out for overhaul. That is a regular feature. So, I do not think it would be right to make such a sweeping statement. I can even give the names of several public sector thermal stations which are functioning well.

So far as Santhaldih unit goes, I have already dealt with the point. The Chief Minister did speak to me on the phone and mentioned to me the difficulties encountered in Santhaldih. I have also mentioned to him some of the steps we have taken in that direction. I would again repeat that this is not the question of public or private sector plant; or B.H.E.L. is supplying the wrong or bad machine etc. It is unfortunate that we have adjustments to the quality of coal etc., etc. It is unfortunate that we have come to a stage where coal supplied is bad in quality. And therefore that imposed certain strains on the power unit. This has to be understood and appreciated and a way out has to be found just now. Thermal power stations are not the choosers because of the present situation in the field of transportation of coal.

All this has got to be sorted out. I do not think it is correct to say that the B.H.E.L. supplied wrong plants, or it had supplied bad plants. In fact, many of their plants are functioning well in many thermal stations. The B.H.E.L. has stepped up its production in recent months. In fact, we are not getting the units from outside. B.H.E.L. has supplied several units. Therefore, I do not think that

sweeping statement is called for. Whatever teething troubles we have encountered in the plants our experts or their experts and experts in the State Electricity Board get together and sort out those problems.

I agree completely with the concept that the mines should be linked to thermal stations. It is not always possible to anticipate the quality of coal even if a certain amount of analysis is carried out. Quality of coal varies. But, nevertheless, we should do sample checking and link the coal mines to power stations. If possible before the power stations are designed, so that the quality of coal can be taken into account in designing the power stations. It is not merely the poor quality of coal that has let down our power stations. We are getting different quality of coal than what was assessed while we designed the power station. This has caused some difficulty.

SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE (Basilrhat): Sir, the list is before us that Calcutta was once upon a time Number One city in this country from the industrial point of view, from the population point of view and from the cultural point of view. Now, it has come down to Number II position. Calcutta was once upon a time Number I port and it has stepped down to the tenth position among the Asian ports.

Sir, Calcutta was desired city. Everybody from Bengal or for that matter from India wanted to be in Calcutta to enjoy the beauty of Calcutta. Calcutta is now a city wherefrom everybody wants to run away. There are selected areas in Calcutta where load-shedding goes for more than seventeen to eighteen hours a day. The other day when I was in Calcutta I was told because of power shedding people cannot maintain their temper and casual fights are going on. This the nature of power crisis. Yesterday the West Bengal Legislative Assembly became the victim of power shedding and the

[Shri A. K. M. Ishaque]

business of the House had to be conducted in candle light. The micro-phone system failed and a micro-phone had to be hired. That is the depth of the crisis.

May I ask the hon. Minister when we are living in coal belt how is it that we could not plan our needs? How is it we could not meet this demand? It has already come in the newspapers that West Bengal Government is asking the industrialists to go in for a three or a four day week and the industrialists have already made a demand to seek the permission of the West Bengal Government to lay-off casual and temporary workers. If power cannot be produced and supplied many industries are going to be affected and many people are going to be laid off. If that happens what would be chain reaction in the economy. Already we are having enough of unemployed people there. If these people also entered the multitude of unemployed people what will happen to West Bengal Government. Therefore, I want to know from the Minister whether any industry will be allowed to lay off casual or temporary workers now. There are so many cultural centres in Calcutta and each one is dependant on power. All of them are in the private sector and some of them belong to marginal people. They will have to close down and in case they close down all these persons will go out of employment. Therefore, I want to know as to how this power crisis is going to be met?

My next point is so far as Fourth Five Year Plan is concerned distribution and generation of power in the different regions of India is almost equal, that is, in the northern, southern eastern and western zones the generation is almost equal. It is 4,000MW. It may be a bit more in one zone and a bit less in another zone but it is almost equal. The position at the end of the Fifth Plan in regard to generation, according to

Bengal (C.A.).

the targets set by the Planning Commission, would be as follows: Northern zone: 9626 MW; Western zone: 8158 MW; Southern zone: 8575 MW; Eastern zone: 7303 MW. Why is it so low in the case of the eastern zone? Why are they killing the golden goose? Why are they killing the eastern zone which has fed India so much, the eastern zone which has brought so much of foreign exchange to develop India? Why are they developing other regions at the cost of this region? We want to know from the hon. Minister why this disparity has been allowed to peep in the matter of generation of power? Why is the eastern zone which is in the coal belt itself being denied of power, when the whole economy of the State has been power-oriented and power-fashioned?

There is a feeling among technocrats that all this power crisis is developing only because they are taking the advice from the administrators or the IAS people, those who have no ABC knowledge about power. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister shares this feeling of theirs.

SHRI K. C. PANT: First and foremost, I would like to assure my hon. friend that there is no question of discriminating against the eastern region in the formulation of the Fifth Plan power targets. But we had averaged out the availability of power in the different regions and come to the conclusion that they were about equal. Then, we went into our projections. But if we really go into the figures, we shall find that they are not about equal. Averaging out, of course, is a different matter. I find that the availability and anticipation of power, as per the February bulletin is as follows: Northern zone: 51.72 GWH; Western zone: 60.40 GWH; Southern zone: 58.12 GWH; Eastern Zone: 33.53 GWH. Projecting from this, the figures that the hon. Member has quoted do not show any discrimination against the eas-

tern zone but rather it show a narrowing down of the gap in power availability. If I have understood him correctly, that was the way he was trying to put the figures before us.

In the case of the north-eastern region, I agree with Shri Goswami that this is very low, being 1.52 only, but the requirement there is also of this order namely 1.52 and the shortage there at present is really very marginal and a very much more comfortable position obtains there as compared to West Bengal.

So far as the planning of our needs is concerned, I have mentioned in my main statement that the Fourth Plan target for additional generating capacity in West Bengal was 251 MW while the actual achievement was only 131 MW. It is this basic fact which has really led to the shortage.

The only solution now is that we should get more power generated from the existing units and we should get over the Santaldih problems. The West Bengal Government have to get more power from their units. This in short is the answer to the problem.

Wherever new unit are coming up, we are doing everything to expedite the process of commissioning of these new units. That is the only other immediate solution to the problem.

The hon. Member referred to the unemployed people. Of course, it is a large problem all over the country. But I am told that in West Bengal the engineers are on cease-work and work-to-rule. This was what the Chief Minister told me yesterday. I would only appeal to the engineers that considering the situation in West Bengal just now and considering the difficulties there, they may consider whether they would not like to contribute their mite in getting over this problem, and whatever difficulties they may have they can discuss with the West Bengal Government,

but at this moment all of us must help in getting over these difficulties.

13.24 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

NOTIFICATION UNDER CUSTOMS ACT, 1962

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI-MATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): On behalf of Shri K. R. Ganesh, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Notification No. G.S.R. 178(E) (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 16th April, 1974, under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962, together with an explanatory memorandum. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—6806/74].

NOTIFICATION UNDER ALL INDIA SERVICES ACT, 1951 & DMC AMDT. RULES

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI F. H. MOHSIN): On behalf of Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following Notifications under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the All India Services Act, 1951:—
 - (i) The Indian Forest Service (Probationers' Final Examination) (Amendment) Regulations, 1974, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 342 in Gazette of India dated the 6th April, 1974.
 - (ii) The Indian Forest Service (Pay) Amendment Rules, 1974 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 344 in