

newspaper. So, any action that would be taken should be on an all-India level. Parliament will be behind the government. Government should put their foot down firmly and say that this will not be allowed at this time of national crisis.

SHRIMATI NANDINI SATPATHY : I have made it very clear in my statement that this policy will be applicable not only to the Calcutta newspapers but to all newspapers in the country. There is no question of doing something only in Calcutta. It will apply to all those newspapers which have raised their prices.

SHRI SEZHIYAN (Kumbakonam) : Just now the hon. Minister has said that first a request will be made to the newspapers, to be followed by legislative measures if necessary. In the case of newspapers which raised their prices beyond 2 paise, I would like to know whether the excess so collected will be taken over by the Government because that is an anti-social and anti-national action on the part of the papers? Has the Government any proposal under consideration from this point of view? Secondly, will Government consider giving exemption to monthlies and fortnightlies and newspapers which have a circulation of below 20,000?

SHRIMATI NANDINI SATPATHY : The suggestions made by the hon. Member will definitely be taken into consideration while talking some measures in the matter.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : I want to ask the hon. Minister if she is aware of the fact that in the eastern region, that is, Calcutta, the price of newspaper is one of the highest in the country. Are you aware of the fact that the readership figure per thousand is the second lowest? What are you going to do with regard to that? Is it also a fact that in the Audit Bureau of Circulation most of the newspapers have been showing highly inflated circulation figures? They are handling newsprint very efficiently for their own gains. The excise duty was to be calculated at that rate. That is what has really put them into difficulty.

SHRIMATI NANDINI SATPATHY : It is not possible for me to say whether that is a hot or not. Naturally, when these things are

coming into the open, many things which probably hon. Members think right will definitely come in front of the public.

SHRI SHYAM SUNDER MOHAPATRA (Balasore) : The hon. Minister has stated that the hawkers have demanded commission on the increase in the price. While coming to Delhi I saw in the train one daily paper published by the C. P. I. (M) I saw a statement issued by the General Secretary of the *Paschim Banga Sambadpatra Bikreta Samiti* where he has categorically stated. "It is a blatant lie that we are demanding commission. Our agitation is only on the increase because these newspaper owners have increased the price which our people in the country cannot pay. So, those who are saying that we are demanding commission are saying a blatant lie."

She should kindly enquire into it. Otherwise, it will be a reflection on the Samiti.

SHRIMATI NANDINI SATPATHY : I am sorry to say that my hon. friend is wrongly informed. It is a fact that they have actually asked for commission over the increase in price and the excise duty. As I have already said in my statement, the Government intervened into it and steps were taken. I have got a letter from the General Secretary, *Paschim Banga Sambadpatra Bikreta Samiti* where they have said that, if they do not increase the Price beyond the excise duty, they will not demand commission which they are demanding now. With whom he has talked I do not know.

MR. SPEAKER : She has to go to the Rajya Sabha to make a statement there. We now take up the next item.

17.53 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION RE : POWER CRISIS IN WEST BENGAL

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an acute shortage of power in West Bengal at a time when it is retarding the industrial growth in that part of the country. It is at a time when it needs to be accelerated for defence production, increase in G. N. P. and creation of employment opportunities.

[Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu]

In rural electrification sector, we are one of the lowest in the country. The contribution of West Bengal to the nation's economy has been substantial for all times. We produce 1/3 of country's coal requirements; 21 per cent of the total gross output from West Bengal ex-factory value and 15 per cent of the country's factories are in West Bengal.

We have a monopoly in production of jute and textiles essential for industry and agriculture. There is 50 per cent of total engineering capacity in West Bengal. A large number of pharmaceutical and chemical plants are there. In earning foreign exchange, we give the largest contribution.

As regards steel, it has 1/3 of the country's total production. There are about 9000 joint stock companies with a paid-up capital of Rs. 346 crores in West Bengal. Calcutta port handles 40 per cent of the country's foreign trade. The power supply situation worsens although the consumption, more or less, remains static.

I am quoting from the *Hindustan Standard* of 13. 11. 71 which says :

"For three successive years since 1968-69 consumption of power in Calcutta and its suburbs has been practically static. This is borne out by the figures of maximum demand on the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation system and the units of electricity sold by the company in each of the three years. The maximum demand stood at 519 million mw. in 1968-69..."

It rose to 1 million, etc.

"More significant, however, is the steady fall in the consumption of power by the State's major industries.

Industrial units (including high, medium and low voltage) sold in 1968-69 totalled 1,789.7 million. The units sold in the next two years stood at 1,772.7 and 1,749.7 million respectively, recording a progressive decline.

Following a decline of 35 million units in sales in 1968-69 to the jute industry, there was a further decline of 22 million units next year to the industry, the Calcutta Electric

Supply Corporation's largest industrial consumer. Sales to the engineering industry declined by 20 million units both in 1968-69 and 1969-70.

The overall decline in sales for industrial purposes in 1969-70 came to 17 million units.

In 1970-71, sales to jute and cotton mills fell by 22 million units, to paper mills by four million units and to other industries by nine million units. Sales to engineering, steel and chemical industries, however, increased to the extent of a total of 12 million units."

So our requirements have remained more or less static. Our per capita consumption is about 118. This is the 8th position in the whole country. That also, of course, gives some sort of a wrong picture because 95% of the total consumption of West Bengal is in Greater Calcutta, Durgapur and the Asansol industrial belt. It is the Centre's planning that has ruined us. They try to get away by throwing the blame on the poor worker. They talk of the worker and say that he has failed and he did this and that.

About South and Lower West Bengal, the total production capacity is 1060 MW. There would have been a shortfall of 180 MW if normal minimum industrial growth was there and if 10% power is reserved for emergency, there would be a still greater shortfall.

As a result of this, the industrial growth in West Bengal has stagnated and some industries have closed down. The mills, many of them, have become sick and a lot of them are working below their capacity, all due to shortage of raw materials, very frequent load-shedding and credit squeeze. Due to frequent power-shedding, the manufactured goods are being damaged as also the plants. In the jute industry alone, due to power-shedding, in one month only during the period January-June 1971, it has suffered a loss of production to the tune of Rs. 5 crores. The whole State loses Rs. 50 lakhs by power-shedding for one hour alone. To cope with this the Government has gone to the extent of imposing restrictions from 8.11.71 on the use of power by high-voltage industrial consumers. That will undoubtedly damage the industrial growth in the district and rural areas. If the districts and the rural areas get industrialised and the Haldia Complex comes into existence and the

normal growth rate is somehow maintained, in five years, by 1976-77, the need for power will go up by 550 MW. For rural electrification we need another 100 MW. How to meet these needs?

We will have a firm supply of a little over 100 MW from the end of 1972 from the Santaldih station. There is a plan for two other generators of 120 MW each but they will not be ready before 1979-80. Meanwhile the shortfall is over 410 MW by 1976-77. Sir, the situation is very serious. There is an immediate need for production of additional power, at least 500 MW for South Bengal alone. You can get 120 MW from Bandel. If you instal two new ones at the Coal Belt, you can get 400 MW of additional power. By installation of two turbines of 50 MW each around Calcutta, you will get 100 MW.

18.00 hrs.

Sir, in Calcutta, the business is entirely in the hands of the British monopoly, not the generation so much, but the distribution and the trading and this Government dare not touch them.

Dr. K. L. Rao will remember that in the year 1968,—on 27th of August,—a Debate was held here where all the balance-sheets and everything was given and it was found that certain things were unjustified.

Sir, the foreign capitalists are trading on our public sector which is losing in the generation of it, but they are making enormous profit through trading and through distribution. Because, to meet the total consumption of about 519 M. W. in and around Calcutta, this Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation, which trades on your public sector, barely produces half of the requirements. I wish to quote Dr. K. L. Rao because I know he is a very knowledgeable person. He said :

“Generation is the real job, not distribution.”

So, generation is the real job and not distribution. Will he kindly tell us this? Why is it that you have to make your country dependent upon a British monopoly for this distribution work?

Sir, they buy D. V. C. power and they sell that at 300 per cent premium. They

have a very powerful lobby. The former Finance Minister—Mr. Sachin Choudhury—is a Director. A former Principal Adviser of the Bengal Government was a Director, that is, Mr. B. B. Ghosh—he has recently died; may his soul rest in peace. He was one of the Directors and he was Chairman of the Industrial Reconstruction Development Board. That is the position, and because they were a very powerful lobby they continued to remain untouched.

In 10 years, they have given no less than 90 per cent dividend to their shareholders—in Britain mostly.

Sir, in India they are functioning mostly with Indian money. They have got vast loans from the State Bank of India and from the other financial institutions. They have big amounts on rupee debentures and consumer deposits. Their profits at many a time had been in excess of ‘reasonable return’ according to the Indian Electricity Act.

With your permission, Sir, I would like to read out the figures about the profits earned by them during the past few years. These are the figures :

Year	Profits
1963-64	Rs. 2,13,15,000
1964-65	Rs. 2,22,00,000
1965-66	Rs. 2,53,00,000
1966-67	Rs. 1,19,00,716
1967-68	Rs. 2,07,00,000
1968-69	Rs. 1,57,00,000
1969-70	Rs. 1,41,00,000

They have been making enormous profits and taking the money out of this country in the shape of foreign exchange. This profit was made by them in excess of the principle of ‘reasonable return’ as stipulated in the Indian Electricity Act. I want to ask Dr. K. L. Rao very respectfully about this. Is he going to give any directive to the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation that the money should be returned to the consumers in the form of rebate? If so, how soon are they going to do that?

Then, there is a question of security, Sir, in that near-war situation in that border of the country, particularly in the eastern

[Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu]

zone very near to the border. How can you allow a British monopoly to have access over the most vital sector of the economy, namely, power generation and distribution? Your ammunition factories, rifle factories, gun and shell factories, Fort William Machine Yard and various other institutions, buy power from the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation.

Sir, it is a matter of regret that in all the President's rule that West Bengal has sampled in the recent years, this Electric Supply Corporation has got a lot out of the Government. There are about 5 lakhs of consumers and they have raised the price in 1964 when there was a Congress rule, and also in 1966 when there was a Congress rule and in 1970 when there was a President's rule.

Now again they are trying to increase the rates for lights and fans from 11 to 16 paise and for heaters from 9 to 14 paise, that is over 50 per cent increase.

The State Government is unusually kind to them. Dr. K. L. Rao,—I am sorry to say to you—I am smelling corruption; I would request you to get this matter thoroughly enquired into by competent authorities. They have allowed illegal withdrawal of Rs. 35 lakhs from the Reserve Fund, which is not at all permissible. Now the Government had made it clear that they want to take it over in 1980. But this company is following the same path as the Calcutta Tramways Company. They are not doing any repair or replacement.

I now come to the question of load-shedding. Load-shedding in Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation is causing us big losses. This is, I may say, a clear case of breach of contract and Government has to act on this. Under what authority is the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation doing load-shedding? We would like to know that, Sir. They force even the small consumers to pay their bills within two or three days, or otherwise they have either to pay enormously more or have their line disconnected. If Dr. K. L. Rao would be so kind as to read an article which came out in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* dated the 31st. October, 1971, I am quite sure he will see some new things there.

About North Bengal, the Jaldhaka is a bungling. It has ruined the prosperity of North Bengal, as we can say. There was an inquiry, but the report of the inquiry was never made public. We want to know from the hon. Minister what action has been taken on the inquiry report.

Jaldhaka cannot produce more than about 7 MW. The electric power in the whole of North Bengal can be raised to 14 or 15 MW by the installation of further plants. That is also doubtful, because during the monsoon, one does not know what will happen due to the selection of a bad site and the saline water that comes in the plant there, there may be trouble.

The existing minimum demand there is of the order of 25 MW.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY (Cooch-Bihar): More than that.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: This excludes the requirement of the tea gardens, which alone are 25 MW. 95 per cent of the tea gardens have their own generation sets run by diesel or some other prime mover. For the present, there is a shortfall of 18 MW. The existing industries are closing down or are working below capacity. There is no thus no question of expansion. If normal activities are conducted and if they want that industries should grow in that part of the country by 1974-75, then the requirement will go up to 50 MW, and by 1980-81, it will go up to 110 or 120 MW, if not more than that. If 50 per cent of the tea gardens are given electric supply, the minimum requirement will be a further quantity of 50 to 60 MW.

The industrial potential of North Bengal is absolutely untapped. If we want to set up industries there, then we would require 50 MW at least. Rural electrification will require not less than 10 MW. So, I would request the hon. Minister to make some arrangements. As a temporary arrangement, he can borrow from Assam and Bihar for the time being; he can borrow 3 MW from Assam, because by 1973 Assam will be in a position to supply that much power, and Bihar would be able to supply about 3 MW by 1972. None can think of setting up an industry in North Bengal at present because of the shortage of power there.

I would suggest that a thermal power station may be set up there which is capable of producing at least 300 MW. It takes at least five years to have this done. But I would submit that let the hon. Minister select the right place nearer the market.

In Calcutta, on the 21st September, 1971, the hon. Minister had given indications that two super thermal power stations would be set up. We would like to know how far he has progressed in this matter so far. For the immediate present, a generating set with at least 50 MW capacity should be installed in and around Calcutta.

Finally, before I sit down, I would like to ask the hon. Minister about what has happened to the setting up of an atomic power plant in the eastern region, because our coal is getting exhausted....

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member can go on for the whole night at this rate.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Thank you, Sir. I shall take that time tomorrow when I speak. Now, I shall conclude my speech.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : My hon. friend Shri Jyotirmoy Basu has referred to many of the points, and, therefore, I shall not go into the details of them. But I would like to stress that power is one of the basic infrastructures of development. During the last few years, almost all Members inside the House and the people in the country were agog with the happenings in West Bengal. They were all eagerly wanting to know how soon the conditions in West Bengal would improve.

I agree that the Central Government have taken a number of measures. We all appreciate their efforts. But for the fruition of all these steps, the main thing required is Power. As I have already stated, this is one of the basic infrastructures of development, and without this, the development and progress of West Bengal cannot take place.

The figures quoted by my hon. friend Shri Jyotirmoy Basu only show that there is no sign of development for the coming nine to ten years, that is, up to 1980-81, unless certain emergency measures are taken there on a war footing to commission some electrical plants

for the generation of power. Because that is the only way in which development can take place.

Even today, in Calcutta, the industries are losing heavily in all respects. I understand that these are not getting their power supply according to their demand even at a moderate rate. If Haldia also comes up within 5 or 6 years, I do not know what will happen by that time. If industrial development keeps pace also, as being tried by the government, I do not know what will happen.

At the same time, we have a number of projects for the backward districts. There are backward districts in the entire country and we want that they should be developed.

Coming to west Bengal, all the districts in North Bengal are most backward. As has been rightly stated by Shri Bosu, the present supply is hardly 6-7 MW whereas the actual requirement at present is much more than the figure Shri Bosu mentioned, namely 25MW; it may be round about 35MW. About 95% of the tea-gardens are having their diesel engines for power generation.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : With the present demand.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : Very good. Take the demand of the tea gardens, an industry which is earning foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 160 crores. These 365 tea gardens located in North Bengal, Jalpaiguri, and some small tea gardens in Cooch-Bihar which earn this foreign exchange will, when they need to modernise the industry, need power. If this demand is taken into account, we will need to have another 50-60 MW, not to mention other industrial developments.

We have been told about the Jaldaka project in North Bengal. In the local dialect or language, it has been referred to in a rather sarcastic manner as 'Jale-Dohka.' It is not a sign of development in North Bengal; rather it is a death blow to North Bengal. I think it is under deep water. In Bengal, they say this project is *jala dube gaye che*. It is absolutely under water. This is about Jaldaka. Even with Jaldaka, when fully Commissioned it may come to about 14-15 MW whereas the present requirement is in the region of 35 MW. Then how will Jaldaka solve the problems of North Bengal?

[Shri B. K. Daschodury]

It has been said that from Assam and Bihar we will get some power. They say it will be 3 and 3 equal to 6 MW. Even then we have only 14 plus 6 equal to 20. There is still a shortage of 15MW. We have also to make allowance for the fact that in normal times in the matter of electric generation there should be a standby or reserve power for any emergency of 10-15%. Some machinery may go out of order. If we calculate on that basis, even today we need to have about 50 MW. With further industrial development, we need much more.

In the matter of rural electrification, according to the Fourth Plan, in Cooch-Bihar district alone, 97 villages will be electrified. But there may be hardly one or two MW for this purpose. There are many other villages in North Bengal programmed for electrification under the Fourth Plan, but where is the source of power? Nobody cares about that.

So both for rural electrification and industrial development, we need more power. We may have local projects. We may have a paper mill, a fertiliser complex, a cement factory, a tobacco factory and so on. But there will be no sign of this development unless we have more and more power.

I would therefore suggest to the hon. Minister to consider the grim fate of this area which is most backward, and its power requirements. At one time, he proposed that he would give us a 'Super Thermal Power' station located in North Bengal bordering Bihar which will also meet the needs of Bihar. We have seen in press reports that this is 'Super Thermal Power' station is proposed to be located in some part of Bihar. Even if we agree to that, even if we take as what has appeared in the press as it is, in time of any emergency in Bihar or if it is located in Assam, in Assam, the power available will first go to meet that emergency requirement and there will be nothing available for North Bengal. So the hon. Minister's guarantee that we will get surplus power from this source may not come true in its practical need. I also plead that northern portion of Bihar is equally backward. For that the Government of India should initiate a certain separate power project so that the supply to North Bengal remains unaffected. Only in this way can the power requirements of each region be satisfied.

So it was demanded that there should be a separate thermal power station to generate 240-250 MW which might be commissioned into service in the course of the next five to seven or eight years. Specially for north Bengal area, the site suggested was Dalkola, the area which is a little raised land and is connected with rail-road and other communications. With the opening of the Farakka barrage, it has become easier to bring this coal to this Dalkola area. This is a good suggestion. I do not know what is in the mind of the hon. Minister.

In view of all these things, I would request the hon. Minister to clarify two points. Whether he is going to sanction properly the Dalkola thermal project with a capacity of 250 mw. That is No 1. No. 2 is, whether the hon. Minister will start a fresh enquiry, if necessary, with the CWPC experts along with experts in other parts of the world, to go into the details, whether the Jaldhaka project—about which much has been said, and which is practically the death-knell for the development of North Bengal—would come up as proposed and whether it could satisfy the people of North Bengal for power generation or, ultimately, this scheme has to be salvaged? This should be properly looked into. Otherwise, in the name of Jaldhaka, the people of North Bengal have been given a different picture.

Thirdly, as a matter of immediate measure, I request the hon. Minister to consider at least to have a sort of two or three Gas Turbine engines established in North Bengal so that immediately, the people of North Bengal may have 50 to 60 mw of power which may be commissioned or put into service in the course of nine to 12 months. These are my humble suggestions.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO): I am very thankful to Mr. Jyotirmoy Bosu for bringing up this subject so that some misunderstanding on the subject may be cleared.

First of all, I would like to say that West Bengal was the State from which we started the electrification of this country. The first hydro-electric station was established in West Bengal in 1897, and the first thermal station was established again in West Bengal in 1901, and thereafter, it maintained the supremacy as being the State which had the highest

amount of electricity of all the States till 1960. It is after that it began to fall down, and, as the hon. Mr. Bosu has mentioned, the State is now the fifth largest from the point of view of power in the country per capita.

What exactly happened was this. It is true that from 1964, there has been no addition of power in West Bengal. That is a most regrettable feature that has happened. Apart from the DVC, which added some power, and except for the very small amount of power from Jaldhaka scheme, there was no power addition from 1964 up to date. The reason was this. In 1964, the Planning Commission sanctioned one unit of 150 mw at Durgapur, and four units of 120 mw each at Santhaldih. They were sanctioned, but the succeeding Governments of West Bengal gave second priority; they dropped Durgapur, and they dropped half of Santhaldih and have taken up power generation only half-heartedly. Why I am saying this is because there is a history behind it. There is no use abusing us; that is why I am glad that he has brought this problem, and I want to clarify the misunderstanding. Since 1964, every other State has added power. For example, in Delhi, we have added nearly 240 mw of power in the same period. But apart from DVC, which added some power, West Bengal proper has not yet had any power, with the result that no doubt there is considerable difficulty in West Bengal about power.

Then, realising this, we immediately rushed in to do whatever was possible. Two units at Santhaldih are in an advanced stage of construction. We expect one unit next year and another one the next year: 240 mw of power; that is already there in the Plan. I think we will get that. In addition to that, we have taken action on another two units of 120 mw, and we expect those power units to come in after three or four years. That will make another 240 mw.

We are now trying to put up one unit of 200 MW at Bandel. That report has just been received and I can assure you that it will be sanctioned immediately it is scrutinised. With 200 MW at Bandel and two units of 120 MW each at Santhaldih the total comes to 440MW. It is as good as sanctioned. The question is one of implementing it as quickly as possible.

In addition to this I have also asked for preparation of a project at Kolaghat for

400 MW and immediately that comes in that will also be sanctioned. I only hope that they will find the money as unfortunately power generation is a state subject. That is a snag of course. With 400 MW at Kolaghat the total comes to 840 MW.

In addition to that we have prepared a decade plan after careful study and we expect that we may need at least 1200 MW in the next decade and so another 400 MW has to be added. We want to make available in Calcutta by 1980 at least 4 million KW as against the 1.5 MKW that we have today.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Where is the money going to come from?

DR. K. L. RAO: That is the main point. It is very unfortunate. I am not saying that this Government did not do that or that Government did not do that. I do not even know exactly what Governments were there but the fact is that from 1964 to 1971 there has been no power added at all in West Bengal by the West Bengal Government. That is responsible for today's trouble.

Theoretically today our power must be sufficient to meet the demands. But unfortunately there are some reasons why power is not being produced as it should be produced. One of the main reasons is the coal that is used there. They are having two-stage washeries. We have always insisted that there should be three-stage washeries and that we should use the middle ones. By using inferior coal of an abrasive nature the machines are derated; machines which should produce 150 MW can only produce 100 MW. I have taken up this question with the Ministry of Steel and I have requested them often that they should install three-stage washeries. He has promised to do so. Otherwise we shall be losing costly machinery and power also is not going to be produced according to the needs.

The second reason is this. I do not want to stress that too much. In recent times there has been some labour trouble also. I do not say that is the only reason. But it has been there especially at Bandel station where there has been a sit-down strike or some other strike.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The cost of living is rising.

DR. K. L. RAO : That is alright. I am not laying much emphasis on that ; I am slurring it over.

The third reason is due to rain and cyclone. The very heavy monsoon rain-fall is also responsible, it moistened the coal so much that it is giving much trouble. Cyclones interfere with transmission lines. Already the transmissions lines are not adequate. And this is another trouble that we are having.

With all that in November there was some improvement and I hoped that we were alright. But unfortunately yesterday there was a loss of about 80 MW power because in Durgapur one of the machines had gone out of order. We are working on a tight rope and I agree that there must be elasticity in the system, especially when we do not have sufficient transmission lines. I could have put in some power from the DVC yesterday but the transmission system is capable of conveying only 100 MW from the DVC and 160 MW from the Durgapur Project. We have sanctioned two projects from Santhaldih to Calcutta and Durgapur to Kasba in Calcutta and these transmission lines are expected to come into existence some time in 1973

I think we must expedite these transmission lines by offering some bonus or something, because if they are ready, then the power shedding can be much reduced. Added to this, when the power from Santhaldih and the DVC expansion comes, there is no way of bringing it to Calcutta and Howrah. Therefore, I have given instructions that we should put in 400 KV transmission line from Santhaldih to Howrah because a short 400 KV line capable of conveying six times the power as a 220 KV line. With the improvement in the transmission lines and the greater generation that we are now planning, it should be possible for us to be quite well off from 1975-76, but in the interim period I am afraid it is a very difficult and delicate position. In the next one or two years this kind of trouble will be there.

On a close analysis I find that there is a certain amount of increase in demand in Calcutta also, which is natural. In fact I am surprised that there are no further connections. In a big city like Calcutta the increase must be of the order of 10 to 12

per cent annually. The 560 MWs of power that the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation is now supplying must have been by this time 700 or 800 because every year they must go on increasing, but we find it is practically steady. Only this year in the last six months there is a tendency for further increase. This is also a cause of this shedding.

North Bengal is one of the neglected areas like North Bihar. All these North regions seem to be neglected. Nobody wants to go beyond the Ganga. It was never said that the Jaldaga project was going to solve the problem. If anybody said so, it is wrong. It is a tiny hydro-electric project. We have got such projects in many States. There is one Chumani project which has been completed just now in Jammu and Kashmir. It produces 9 MWs. It involved a huge amount of work for five or six years, the same amount of work and trouble which would be involved in a bigger project. So, recently I have given instructions that no thermal power station should be less than 200 MWs and no hydro-electric power station should be less than 50 MWs. As Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu said, in the monsoon months it is very difficult to clear the debris in Jaldhaka river etc. So, it was merely intended as a stop-gap arrangement. We are now putting a transmission line from Alipore Duars to Bongaigaon which will be ready by 1973

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY : That is only for 3 MWs

DR. K. L. RAO : 10 MWs. The Purnea-Siliguri line which will give 40 MWs will also be ready in 1973. Everything in the future.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : What about the present ?

DR. K. L. RAO : At the moment there is a line from Purnea to North Bengal which has just been completed. It conveys only 5 MWs.

There is another point of misunderstanding which I would request hon. Members from Bengal to note. Therefore, I thought, with very good intentions, that we should improve the power position in both North Bengal and North Bihar and I asked for a report. North Bengal has given a report for a power station at Khajuriaghat, North

Bihar has given a report for a power station at Purnea. If you want to get these projects sanctioned, I will do it tomorrow. But what I thought was, if you combine these two and get it financed by the Centre, because both the portions are very backward, it will be to the advantage of both. I tried to explain it to Mr. Daschowdhury and other hon. Members. But hon. Members have started imputing motives. It is not correct. I thought, both are backward areas; why have two separate power stations? Why not combine them? No proposal has gone to Planning Commission as yet. I thought, why not send a special request to the Planning Commission in this regard because the per capita consumption in these areas is very small—it is about 10 as against the all-India figure of 90. It is as good as there being no electricity there. I thought, let both be combined and let the power be shared equally. We are thinking of two or three units of 120 and that power can be shared. But meanwhile, already hon. members have started imputing motives. I only appeal to them that they should not impute motives straightway. If it is a question of sanctioning the projects at Dalkola and Khajuriaghat tomorrow it can be done. But, I thought, it is better if these two are combined. I request hon. members to support me in this.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : If we get the money from the central funds, let the project be located anywhere and let us have the power.

DR. K. L. RAO : He is correct. But my friend on this side does not allow me. That is the trouble. (*Interruption*). These two areas are very backward from the point of view of power and you cannot have rural electrification or anything else. When we are trying to do our best, hon. members should not impute motives. The whole advantage now is that Farakka Barrage has got a BG line and coal can be pushed to the north. So, that is encouraging us. I am sure we will take it up early. You can rest assure that both North Bengal and North Bihar will be given the utmost consideration.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : We will support you.

DR. K. L. RAO : Then about the gas turbines, the suggestion has been made by the chambers of commerce also. But it is extremely costly. While power produced by the other method will cost 7 or 8 paise, this will be 30 or 40 paise. Nowadays oil and gas—both—are not available in that area. Even for Barauni Refinery, it was sanctioned on the basis of oil, but Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals have given us notice that we cannot supply oil. So, we are converting it into coal. Then, this not going to come immediately. It will take two or three years. Therefore, I thought we will put all our efforts into this combined project. With the assistance and support of the hon. members, I think we shall push ahead with greater speed and try to get power there.

The other question is about the Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation. The hon. Member has given some statistics. I shall have some enquiry made about the increase in rates. Somehow the hon. Member gets information much earlier than the government. This is under the consideration of the State Government. The Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation gets about 50 per cent of the power DVC and WBSEB. These organisations have raised the rates. Therefore CSES wants to increase the rates. That point will be examined. I can assure the hon. Member that will be very carefully examined.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : What about an atomic plant ?

DR. K. L. RAO : That would not be allowed in Eastern India because it is a coal areas.

18.38 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, November 25, 1971|Agrahayana 4, 1893 (Saka).