

SHRI K. C. PANT : First of all I do not think one can say, across the board, that all kinds of steel are priced double in India as compared to the international price in the market. It is very difficult to say, what is the international price of steel? Today there is surplus capacity in many countries and they sell their steel very cheap. If that is taken as an index, then the price differential looks very big. So, one will have to look to the domestic price of steel in those countries also. So far as the reduction of cost goes, we are going to modernise the units. We are expanding Bokaro and Bhilai. We will modernise Rourkela and Durgapur because the technology has become out-dated in some cases. It must be up-graded. We are trying to rehabilitate IISCO. These are the long term measures. In the short term, of course, there has to be better work culture which is basic to the improvement of the SAIL plants.

On the question of comparison of the cost of power, I would say very broadly that it should be cheaper to get power from the grid where the production units are much larger. But in steel plants and other such plants you have to ensure that sudden shock of withdrawal of power is not felt by equipment. So, a certain minimum has to be kept. In addition to that minimum, we have to invest more money in captive power plant because grid is not able to supply, not because one wants to do so.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the capacity utilisation in some steel plants is going below day by day? May I know whether it is mainly due to non-availability of power in adequate quantity or are there some other reasons which are adding to lower utilisation of capacity? May I also know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is thinking to come out with a White Paper on the steel policy and its production in the country to meet the indigenous demand? If so, when it is likely to be made public and what would be the steel policy in the country? Will the hon. Minister kindly tell us?

SHRI K.C. PANT : There are certainly other reasons, reasons other than power

shortage which are responsible for lower capacity utilisation. For instance, in some cases raw material quality is not of that level for which the equipment was designed. The quality of coal has deteriorated. There is a question of maintenance which is poor in some cases. I have already mentioned that the technology has become obsolete in some cases and above all, there is the question of work culture. Now, in attempting to improve the work culture, certain decisions were taken by SAIL. I think the decisions were sound and they were right. But in the process of making adjustment to a tighter discipline, there have been difficulties and those difficulties also led to the loss of production. There are a number of reasons. I do not think that one can say at all that the power shortage is the only reason. It is not.

On the question of White Paper, whether you call it a White Paper or something else, we certainly have gone into the question of future projection of demand and supply, how to meet them and try to take into account various aspects of the steel industry. A separate question has been asked later; if it comes up, I will be prepared to give details.

Employment Opportunities in Famine Affected areas

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*65. **SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA ;
SHRI SUBHASH YADAV :**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government to create more employment opportunities in the famine-affected areas of the country as a famine relief measure;

(b) if so, the broad outlines thereof; and

(c) the funds allocated, if any, for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND COOPERATION IN THE MINIS-

TRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

While no areas in the country can be considered to be "famine affected", programmes for employment generation constitute a major component of the drought relief programme for which assistance is given by the Central Government to the States. About 45% of the total ceilings of expenditure have been spent for employment generation programmes in the drought affected areas. In addition the National Rural Employment Programme and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme are being executed throughout the country, including areas affected by drought, for providing employment opportunities. In view of this there is no separate proposal under consideration of the Government for creation of more employment opportunities, specifically for drought affected areas.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a scheme similar to this one is under operation in the Punpun and Dhanruva Blocks of my constituency. Under the NREP, there is a 'Food for Work' programme, under which wheat is distributed by the Government through its public servants. This wheat is bought from the F.C.I. godowns at the rate of Rs. 1 and 35 paise per kilo and it is sent for distribution among the poor people. These public servants sell that wheat at the rate of Rs 2 and 10 paise to the dealers and in stead of wheat, cash payment is made to the beneficiaries, at the rate of Rs. 1.35 per kilo. Such things are happening in this scheme.

I would like to ask the hon Minister whether the funds, which are meant to be utilised for relief purposes under the NREP and other Employment programmes reach the poor people or not? If these does not reach them, then whether the Government has received any complaints in this regard and in case such complaints have been received, then what action is taken on them?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Whenever complaints are received, they are inquired into and then action is taken on them. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He says that whenever any complaint is received, action is taken.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Whenever we receive the complaint, we inquire into it and we take action.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA : I have already sent the complaint in writing.

[English]

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : If the hon. Member has sent the complaint, I will get it inquired into and will take necessary action.

SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA : I have already sent a complaint.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : I will get it inquired into. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He has already accepted. If he has received the complaint, he will take action.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA : It hasn't reached, how can that be said? The complaint must have reached him. It is over a month when the complaint was sent, but no action has yet been taken in that regard. At least this is happening in every Block of Bihar and the same is happening everywhere else as well. Hence it is a serious issue on which the Government should take immediate action.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You take your seat, the Minister is going to reply to you.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : Sir, as my

colleague has already mentioned, so far no complaint has been received. But now that you have spoken, we will treat your speech as a complaint.

[Translation]

SHRI SUBHASH YADAV : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, several relief works are in operation in the drought-affected areas, but I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether a proposal to set up cottage industries and other small scale industrial units in the drought prove areas, where drought is a recurring feature, is under the consideration of the Government?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : It is for the State Government to set up small industries. We have not received any scheme in this regard. If any such scheme is received by us, we would refer it to the State Governments and advise them on it.

SHRIMATI VIDYAVATI CHATURVEDI : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, about 40 districts in Madhya Pradesh are affected by drought. In the last two years, those districts were also affected by hailstorm in one year and by excessive rains the next year. So the people of Madhya Pradesh, specially the farmers are facing tremendous difficulties. I agree that relief work has been undertaken in many areas, but relief works are required to be undertaken in many more areas as well to provide relief to people belonging to these areas. These days, people in thousands are migrating to Delhi and other places. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the Central Government would grant maximum aid to the Government of Madhya Pradesh so that relief measures could be undertaken there and the people belonging to those areas could get employment?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : When a memorandum from a State Government is received, it is first scrutinised; then a central team is sent to make an assessment and the report submitted by it is considered and aid is sanctioned subsequently, according to the requirements of the State Government.

SHRIMATI VIDYAVATI CHATURVEDI : The State Government has already submitted its demand and a central team has also visited these places and surveyed several districts. Hence, I want that the hon. Minister should look into the report and should kindly render full assistance.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : We shall certainly do it.

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR YADAV : As regards such schemes, I do not know what happens in other places, but about Bihar I know that whenever action is taken on the complaints received, then these schemes are also discontinued. In regard to Bihar, I would like to ask the hon. Minister what action is being taken in regard to corruption at the level of implementation of the scheme as a result of which the beneficiaries are not getting the benefits? You are aware of everything but you will give only a technical reply here. We want that the policies of the Government are implemented properly, so that the poor people are benefited. What steps are proposed to be taken in this regard?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : We are monitoring the implementation of the schemes. Our officials are sent there to see whether the schemes are running properly or not. But they cannot go everywhere. They can visit only specific areas on the basis of sample survey. If a specific complaint is received from a certain area, then officials are specifically sent there.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV : You must send them to the district of Nalanda.

[English]

SHRI YOGESHWAR PRASAD YOGESH : I want to know, whether the hon. Minister will let us know this information as to the details of affected parts of Bihar by drought.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Let me see. If I have got the information on Bihar, I will give it. (Interruptions)

We have not received any memorandum from the Government of Bihar.

SHRI SARAT DEB : As the hon. Minister has said, the work is being done through RLEGP and NREP. Does the Minister know that RLEGP and NREP work has become a general system of working in the State? Therefore, in respect of those areas which are earmarked as drought affected areas, what specific plan you have got to take care of those areas? Whatever money you are giving to the States in the name of drought relief, that has been channelised through RLEGP and NREP schemes. Therefore, I want to know whether the Central Government has issued any specific instructions to all the States regarding spending of that money in the drought affected area?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Wherever this money is provided for drought, DPAP Scheme, it should be spent in that area only. If it is for the desert prone area, then it should be spent there only. So, it is given for a particular area and they have to spend that money in that particular area only.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my constituency of Kutch, which is in Gujarat, has been affected by drought for the past three years. The people are facing a terrible situation there. I want to ask the hon. Minister whether Central Government has any proposal under its consideration for setting up small scale and large scale industries in these areas? Is there any proposal to provide encouragement to fishing in this area as 60 per cent of the land is surrounded by sea?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already said in reply to a supplementary that it is the responsibility of the States to set up small industries. If they want the details, they may contact the Ministry of Industry and get the requisite information.

[English]

Modernisation of Durgapur Steel Plant

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*56 **DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :**
SHRIMATI N.P. JHANSI
LAKSHMI :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the strategy of modernisation of the Durgapur Steel Plant has been finalised; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) SAIL will implement the project with Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (India) Limited (MECON) as their Prime consultant. The work has been divided into suitable turnkey packages for which limited tenders would be issued. The project is expected to be completed within a period of 5 years from the date of Government approvals.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I know about the details. But for the knowledge of the hon. Members, I will repeat my question again to the Minister :

What is the present technology of the Durgapur Steel Plant? What prompted the Government to modernise this Steel Plant particularly and after modernisation, what will be the installed capacity and what is, at present, now? What is the framework of the modernisation scheme?

SHRI K. C. PANT : Sir, the capacity installed at Durgapur Steel Plant is 1.6 million tonnes. But in actual fact, it has achieved a production of around 1 million tonnes at the best, and today it is having something like 0.9 million tonnes, at which it is producing. Therefore, modernisation aims at making it to yield 1.6 million tonnes. That is the aim of this modernisation scheme. (Interruptions)

PROF. N. G. RANGA : That means it is limping from the beginning.

SHRI K. C. PANT : It was all right till the 1 million tonne stage. The expansion from 1 to 1.6 was not as it should have been. I think today one has got to modernise it one wants to achieve 1.6