

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: It is fitted with that device.

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA: F-27 aircrafts are not fitted with that device. He should check up with his officials and tell us. First he should check up and then say it.

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT AND TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION: (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): Sir, it is mentioned here that the Calcutta radar could not guide the aircraft. Now, we do find, Sir, that these aircrafts are fitted with radars. But we will...

MR. SPEAKER: No radar. He says, flight recording recorder, black-box. That is there to record the flight. Was it there?

SHRI A. P. SHARMA: It is fitted, Sir.

SHRI SPEAKER: That is it. Next question, Shri Pradhani.

Import of Coal

*83. **SHRI K. PRADHANI:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Government have decided to import coal from foreign countries; and

(b) if so, how much and what are the details regarding the requirements for country's public sector steel plants this year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) While no final decision has been taken the import of a portion of the requirement of coking Coal for steel plants during 1980-81 is under the consideration of Government.

(b) The total requirement of coking coal for the steel plants including TISCO during 1980-81 is:

| | In million tonnes |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| (i) SAIL Steel Plants | 14.136 |
| (ii) TISCO | 2.890 |
| Total | 17.026 |

SHRI K. PRADHANI: Mr. Speaker, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that during last year, from April to December, 1979, there was short supply of coal to the steel plants of the order of 10,000 tonnes a day. If so, what was the shortfall in the production of steel due to short supply of coal?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The shortfall in the production of steel is mainly because of two counts. One is, non-availability of coking coal. The second is power. But in regard to the shortfall in coking coal, we could augment our supply by importing some coking coal. Thereby the shortfall in the indigenous production was met to some extent. It is just not possible to identify and say on what counts, whether on account of coking coal, or on account of non-availability of power, what percentage of production went down and all that.

SHRI K. PRADHANI: May I know whether the coal proposed to be imported is of a better quality? what is the delivery price the coal proposed to be imported?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The whole object is to have coking coal of lower ash content. It is in the order of 8 to 10 per cent. As it is known to the hon. Members, the indigenous coking coal is having ash content to the extent of 21 to 26 per cent and what we are importing would have 8 to 10 per cent of ash content. This imported coking coal is blended with the indigenous coking coal so that the overall ash content is reduced.

So far as the price is concerned, this year we have not yet taken any decision to import coking coal; it is under consideration of the Government. It is, therefore, not possible for me to indicate at what price level it would be available. Naturally, the negotiation and other things will have to be made. So far as the price of the last year is concerned, I can give the information to the hon. Member. We imported coking coal from Canada at Rs. 688 per tonne and from Australia at Rs. 592 per tonne.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, the coal is a very important source of energy for our country. I would like the hon. Minister to state:

(a) Under what circumstances is he forced to import the coal particularly when the country is rich with the estimated reserves of hundred billion tonnes awaiting exploitation? We have this much coal in our country and it is based on research and exploration that we have now—

(b) If the imports are as a result of shortfall in production as made out, what are the steps that the Government proposes to take to increase production?

(c) Will the imports alone help the country tide over the present crisis with the present imbalance in the distribution network, particularly because of the difficulties in rail transport?

(d) If not, what effective steps are being taken by the Government to tone up the rail movement of coal to ensure timely supply to major consumers like steel mills, thermal power stations etc.?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I agree with the hon. Member that we have the reserves of coal to the extent of 15,000 million tonnes and naturally it would be our endeavour to improve our indigenous production. But perhaps the hon. Member is missing one point. The reserves of coking coal are not adequate. According to the experts, the reserves of coking coal which we have may not last for many years

with the expansion of the steel plants. According to some experts, it can last only for 30—40 years.

Secondly, the problem is of the ash content. It is not the problem of non-availability. Because of the power shortage, the production in the washeries also suffers and it is not possible for us to improve the domestic production and reduce the ash content by more and more washing. But I do agree with the hon. Member that import is a short-term measure only to tide over the present crisis, and ultimately, we must take various steps to improve our indigenous production and my colleague in the Ministry of Energy and Coal is looking after that matter.

PROF. N. G. RANGA: But we are taking too long a time.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is not too long a time. If the hon. Member is interested, I can give him some figures of production of indigenous coal also. In the year 1975-76, it was 12.895 million tonnes and in 1978-79, it was 13.625 million tonnes. Therefore, production is also going up. And this I am relating to the indigenous coal supply to the steel plants. There are certain constraints as the hon. Members are aware. As there is no power, there is no coal; as there is no coal, there is no power; as there is no movement of the coal by railways to the thermal power station or to the steel plants, the power generation and the steel production is going down. A Cabinet Committee is looking after that aspect. To some extent, the railway transportation system has improved.... (Interruptions). I do agree with the hon. Members that we must concentrate on improving our indigenous production and after all our requirement is 17 million tonnes this year and we are depending on 15 million tonnes indigenous production and the import is to be marginal.

SHRI R. K. MHALGI: What special efforts are being made to increase the

production of coking coal indigenously?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have already stated that we are trying to do this by exploring new mines, by expanding the capacities of wharves to reduce the ash content and by streamlining the transportation from the producing areas to the consuming areas etc.

श्रीमती कुब्जा साही: मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि कोयले के प्रोडक्शन में शार्टफाल हुआ है। मैं जानना चाहती हूँ कि जो शार्टफाल हुआ है उससे कितना घाटा हुआ है ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have already mentioned that our expected demand would be 17 million tonnes and according to the Coal authorities, they can provide us 15.8 million tonnes of indigenous coking coal. Therefore, the shortfall so far as the steel sector is concerned is 1.2 million tonnes.

Bank Average in West Bengal vis-a-vis in the country

+

*84. **SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:**

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while on an average there is one bank per 20,000 people in the country but in West Bengal there is one bank per 35,000 people;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that credit deposit ratio of the rural and semi-urban branches in West Bengal was 24% and 35% against the national average of about 35% and 47% respectively;

(d) if so, reaction of Government thereto; and

(e) steps taken by Government to remove the disparity?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) to (e). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

As at the end of December 1979, on an average, there was one bank branch for every 22,000 people in West Bengal. The corresponding all India average was one branch for every 17,000 people. However, exclusive of the branches at urban and metropolitan centres and the population of such centres, there was one rural/semi-urban branch for every 35,000 rural/semi-urban people in West Bengal and for every 22,000 people for the country as a whole.

Several factors such as the heavy backlog of neglect of rural and semi-urban areas by the banks in the pre-nationalisation days, limited capacity of the banks to undertake branch expansion programme in rural areas and limited availability of growth centres with adequate infra-structural facilities and good business potential had contributed to the poorer banking coverage of the rural areas in West Bengal.

The credit : deposit ratios of the rural and semi-urban branches in West Bengal were 34.7 per cent and 23.7 per cent respectively as at the end of June 1979. The corresponding all-India ratios were 54.4 per cent and 47.3 per cent respectively.

The Government have been concerned about the inadequate banking coverage of the rural and semi-urban areas in West Bengal both in terms of availability of banking facilities in and flow of credit to rural and semi-urban areas. To improve their population coverage, particularly in underbanked rural and semi-urban areas, the banks have been asked to devote their branch expansion programme during 1979-81 primarily to the opening of branches at unbanked rural and semi-rural centres in defi-