

to an overall committee. I would like to ask a pointed question: Have the committees A, B and C for the Karnali Project met and if not, what are the reasons for the delay? Mr. Ram Saini, Foreign Secretary, had suggested on his trip to Nepal about four months ago that a joint river waters review committee should be set up which could look 60 years ahead on the exploitation of waters of Nepal and India. What is Nepal's response to this suggestion? Is this committee going to be set up?

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: From our side, we have taken a lot of initiative on this, but unfortunately Nepal has not shown so much interest. I am talking of Karnali. Unless Nepal comes forward and the negotiations are settled, investigation work cannot start. After all, we are talking of two sovereign States. Nepal also is a sovereign State and Nepal has to agree.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Harinatha Misra.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: My question whether committees A, B, and C have met has not been answered.

MR. SPEAKER: He will answer it along with this.

SHRI HARINATHA MISRA: In view of the fact that major rivers like Kosi, Kamla, Gandak and others have their catchment areas in Nepalese territory....

MR. SPEAKER: This question is relating to Himalayan rivers.

SHRI HARINATHA MISRA: I am not repeating the question. These catchment areas have great potential for development of hydroelectric power. Do the Government attach the necessary importance to the development of these resources? Is negotiation being carried on at ministerial level?

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: I have already answered this question.

I have said that we are carrying on discussions with Nepal regarding these projects.

SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO: According to the United Nations survey the Brahmaputra takes a sharp U turn in the territory of China. If we make a tunnel of 200 metres, we can get 15,000 megawatts of firm power. And for your information there is such a project within the border of Brazil and Paraguay on the river Parana which generates nearly 14,000 megawatts of power. In view of the better relations with China, is the Government of India thinking of starting negotiations at least for a preliminary survey?

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: We will look into this suggestion.

DR. KARAN SINGH: This is a question regarding the Himalayan rivers and two of the most important Himalayan rivers, of course, are the Indus from which we derive our very name and the Chenab. Will the hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us as to what is happening with regard to the Sthagna Hydro-electric Project on the Indus near Leh which has been under consideration for many years, and the Salal and Dulhasti projects on the Chenab because the Chenab has millions of watts of power going waste into Pakistan, and the Indus also has not been tapped at all?

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: Salal project is under execution. About Dulhasti we have decided to entrust the execution of the project to NHPC.

Coal-Based Fertilizer Plant in West Bengal

***331. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the West Bengal State Government has a proposal to set up a coal-based fertilizer plant in the coal belt of the State; and

(b) If so, the details of the project and Union Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) No such proposal has been received from the Government of West Bengal.

(b) Des not arise.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: In view of the fact that the price of fertiliser is likely to go up and it will cost more and more, will the Central Government take initiative in finding out the possibility of coal based fertiliser plants in different parts of the country including that of West Bengal?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I may say for the information of the hon. Member and also the House that the two coal based fertiliser plants have already been set up. One is at Talchar and another one is at Ramagundam. But, unfortunately, due to power shortage, these could not be commissioned. Since we have been able to find sufficient gas, we are now giving preference to gas based plants. We are thinking of setting up 10 fertiliser plants based on gas of Bombay High. Out of that, four are going to be set up in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Do I understand from the reply that the idea of coal based fertiliser plants is not honoured any more?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I said that two coal based fertiliser plants have already been set up. We are thinking of setting up another coal based fertiliser plant at Korba. After gaining experience, we will think whether it is advisable to go in for coal based plants.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Are you going to set up one such plant in West Bengal?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Let the proposal come.

SHRI M. SATYANARAYAN RAO: The Minister has just now said that because of power shortage, the Ramagundam fertiliser plant has not been commissioned. Has the Minister asked the Andhra Pradesh Government as to when it is going to be commissioned?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I said that there is no power supply. That is why, we have not been able to commission that plant although mechanically it is complete and ready for commissioning at any moment. In this connection I had correspondence with the State Chief Minister and requested him to provide power in order to commission that plant but they have not been able to give any power because there is power shortage in Andhra Pradesh. I feel that by December, 1980, it would be possible for us to commission that plant.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: After commissioning the Talcher and Ramagundam coal-based fertiliser plants, may I know whether the Government will take up another coal-based fertiliser plant in West Bengal near the Raniganj coalfield where coal is available in abundance?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I have already replied to that question. I have said that the Government's policy is to give first preference to gas-based fertiliser plants because they are cheaper by 25 to 30 per cent. When we exhaust the gas, we will go into the question of having plants based on coal.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: As you know, Andhra Pradesh is better placed in the matter of electricity supply, and in the rainy season a lot of hydroelectric power is available. May I know whether the Central Government is going to ask the State Government to start supply of electricity at least from August?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far as the commissioning of the plant at Ramagundam is concerned, much depends upon the State Government.

As soon as they are able to supply power, we will be in a position to commission that plant.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: Election work was completed up to 90 per cent in 1975. So, may I know why there was so much delay in commissioning upto 1980.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I do not have the details, but my information is that so far as Talcher is concerned, it has been mechanically completed and it is ready for commissioning. There might have been some delay in the past in erecting the equipment.

Auction of Fertilizer Plant under Sindri Unit of Fertilizer Corporation of India

*332. **SHRI A. K. ROY:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of a proposal to auction the old coal based fertilizer plant under Sindri Unit of the FCI if so, facts in details;

(b) whether many of the units and equipments to be auctioned are in good running condition if so, names of such units or equipments;

(c) whether the value fixed is less than the market value as the bidders organised themselves into a syndicate causing huge loss to the company;

(d) whether it is a fact that the auction has been arranged without the approval of Government; and

(e) do Government propose to make a probe into the matter?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) to (e). In view of the uneconomic and unsafe operation of the old plants at Sindri which went into production in 1951, it was decided that these should be closed with the commissioning of the Sindri Modernisation and Sindri Rationalisation projects. After retaining such of the equipments as were required by Sindri and other

sister plants and after consulting other public sector companies, FCI invited tenders through advertisements in All India News Papers for the sale of the balance of equipments and spares. Based on the offers received, FCI issued acceptance letter to the highest bidder. A probe in the matter is not considered necessary.

SHRI A. K. ROY: Before putting a supplementary, I want to raise a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: In the Question Hour there is no point of order.

SHRI A. K. ROY: It is the custom, convention and rule in the House that whenever a question is asked in parts, answers are also given in parts. I have put some definite questions from (a) to (e), but the Minister has given one single answer to all of them.

MR. SPEAKER: If it is a point of order, it is out of order.

SHRI A. K. ROY: The Sindri Fertiliser Plant is not only the first public sector fertiliser plant, but the first public sector unit in the country. It was commissioned in 1951. It is a coal-based plant situated in the coal area. It is a very serious thing that the Government of India is auctioning a public sector enterprise to the private sector. It is a very serious thing. I am coming from that factory. I know it cost Rs. 200 crores; at that time, first Rs. 35 crores and then Rs. 15 crores, which at the present value would come to Rs. 200 crores. They are going to auction the total factory, coal-based factory, the biggest factory in the country employing 8000 people. First, the highest bid was Rs. 7.7 crores and it has come down to Rs. 4 crores. No explanation has been given. Why is it that a factory, which costs Rs. 200 crores, is being auctioned for this amount? (*Interruptions*). It is the concern of all of us. Everybody knows about the Sindri Fertiliser factory. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: Let us be reasonable. Let us not get agitated over it.