

expressed its desire to import animals from our country? If so, what are the names of the countries and the animals which they have expressed desire to get from us?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** For preservation of our wild life, we are not encouraging this type of exports. Sometimes requests come. For instance, we received one request from Baghdad. They were going to shoot a film and for that, they requested us to send 12 elephants on hire basis. We sent 12 elephants and we got them back. Sometimes it so happens that we want some rare specimen for our zoo and reciprocally we send elephants or some other animals. By and large, we discourage this type of exports.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Next question.

**श्री मूलचन्द डागा :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं एक छोटा सा सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आप देश के बाहर जो गायें भेजते हैं वह उनको तो नहीं भेजते जो दूध नहीं देती हैं?

**अध्यक्ष महोदय :** अब तो खत्म कर दिया भाई ।

Next question.

#### Setting up of Nickel and Cobalt Extraction Plant in Orissa

\*900. **DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state when do Government intend to set up the nickel and cobalt extraction plant in Orissa considering the fact that the project was sanctioned in 1974?

**THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):** A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### Statement

Sanction was issued in April, 1974, for setting up of a Nickel and Cobalt Extraction Plant, using the ore deposits of the Sukinda area of Orissa. This

sanction was based on a preliminary feasibility report envisaged use of indigenous technology. While according approval to the Hindustan Copper Limited for the project, the company was advised to submit firmer cost estimates after completing further investigations as recommended in the feasibility report. The process parameters recommended by the consultancy firm were tried out on a Pilot Plant, but they failed. The project sanction of 1974, based on indigenous technology, therefore, could not be given effect to.

In 1977 offers were invited for preparation of a fresh feasibility report for setting up of a Nickel Extraction Plant, based on imported technology. The offers received could not be pursued by the Government due to constraint of funds. However, in the context of the Five Year Plan 1980-85 this is being re-examined.

**DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI:** I have gone through the statement. In 1974 sanction was granted for the construction of a Nickel and Cobalt Extraction Plant amounting to Rs. 39.5 crores. What was the constraint on commissioning this plant in Sukinda? What was the actual report of the pilot plant test conducted by the National Metallurgical laboratory at Jamshedpur? We are importing Rs. 20 crores worth of nickel and we have got no indigenous production. Sukinda has nickel ore deposits to the extent of 63 million tonnes. There is a massive reserve of lateritic ore. Based on that lateritic ore, may I know whether the Government of India has explored the possibility of adopting the best established know-how available in the world for lateritic ore like Sheritt Gordon process of Canada and International Nickels of USA? If so, may I know the reasons for the delay in the construction of this project?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** So far as delay is concerned, initially we permitted the Hindustan Copper Ltd. to have this project on the availability of indigenous technology, but subsequently, when the indigenous technology was put in the pilot plant it did

not materialise; it failed and the technology did not respond. That is one of the reasons why it was delayed. In regard to importing technology, there too we are finding some constraints on the resources side. I have mentioned this in the latter part of the statement laid by me on the Table. But after reviewing the various offers we are exploring the possibility of having technology, particularly from the concern which the hon. member mentioned. We are having some talks with them. If we have that technology and if it would be possible to get some resources from the Finance Ministry, it is possible to take it up.

**DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI:** When the pilot plant failed in 1977 why did not the previous Government explore the possibility of setting up this nickel project, because we are importing nickel and the projected demand for 1985 will be more than 10,000 tonnes? Why has this Government slept for three years after knowing that the pilot plant has failed miserably?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** Two things are required. First, we require technology. Second, we require money to implement that technology. But in both the areas there were constraints.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA:** The Sukinda Plant was conceived in early 70s. May I know from the hon. Minister the amount spent for testing this pilot project? Will he fix any responsibility on those persons who have designed this indigenous technology in the initial stages; because to my information, they were not sure whether this technology would be successful? By what time, a decision will be taken to establish this plant because for many years justice has been denied to the people of Orissa by not establishing this plant?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** The final cost of the pilot plant was Rs. 42.97 lakhs. It was approved by the Government on 30-10-1976. In regard to fixing the responsibility for the failure of the pilot project, many a time, it happens that in the laboratory

we think that certain technology may be applicable, but when we want to put it in the commercial sector, it does not respond. Therefore, it is not always possible to fix the responsibility. So far as technological innovation is concerned, a constant effort is being made. If the hon. Member has got a specific complaint that certain people have sabotaged it, he can let me know and I am prepared to take action.

#### **Financial Assistance to West Bengal in regard to Sick Tea Estates**

**\*902. SHRI PIUS TIRKEY:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any financial assistance has been given to West Bengal State Government in regard to sick tea estates; if so, the number of such sick tea estates;

(b) how many tea estates are locked after by the Central Government at present; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to solve the problems of sick tea plantations in the State?

**THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):** (a) No, Sir.

(b) Six tea estates are presently being looked after by Central Government, out of which the management of 5 has been taken over under the Tea Act, 1953.

(c) In order to empower the Central Government to identify sick tea estates and take remedial measures in regard to them, the Tea Act, 1953 has been suitably amended. The provisions of Sections 16B to 16E of the Act enumerate the circumstances under which Government can cause investigation, issue directives, assume management and control or take over a tea undertaking/unit even without investigation in specific circumstances. Appropriate action is being taken under these provisions in respect of gardens which come under the purview of the Tea