

गया था कि इन्जीनियरी तथा मेडिकल छात्रों को थोड़ा एककरेजेंट मिले। माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा है कि कितना बढ़ाया गया है, इसके बारे में मैंने उत्तर में बताया है कि 1-1-1978 से 60 रुपये बढ़ाया गया है।

श्री राम बिलास पासवान : ठीक से बतलाइये - क्या बढ़ाया था ?

श्री योगेन्द्र मकवाना : पहले से ज्यादा किया है। अब इस समय जो है उसको और ज्यादा बढ़ाने के लिये हम एकजामिन कर रहे हैं ?

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. NAMGYAL: I would like to have one clarification. To what extent is the hon. Minister considering to increase the present rate of scholarship in comparison with the cost of living in India?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has already replied.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: We consider it, keeping in mind, and along with the merit scholarship.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: While replying to the question about Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe scholarships, the hon. Minister has used two expressions; examination and consideration. Those of us who are acquainted with Government vocabulary are very panicky about these expressions. I would like to know when, from the stage of examination and consideration, it will pass on to the stage of active consideration—that means the file will be found—and when actual implementation will take place.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I think the lady Member is under confusion. I said it is under examination; and I also further elaborated it by saying that we have to consult the Planning Commission and the Finance

Ministry at different stages. (Interruptions). It is under active consideration.

Representation Regarding Refractory and Ceramic Units of Burn Standard Co. Ltd.

*892. SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL; SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry have received any representations from the Members of Parliament and MLAs regarding the Refractory and Ceramic Units of Burn Standard Company Ltd., Raniganj, West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether he has taken any action on the representations;

(d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A representation suggesting substantial investment to modernise the plant and machinery in the 5 units of the Raniganj Group of Burn Standard Company Limited (BSCL) has been received based only on the demand for Silica Refractories for the coke ovens.

(c) to (e) On consideration of the demand for refractories, the existing production capacity and the return on fresh investments at alternative sites indicates that in view of the past performance and potential of the Raniganj Group of BSCL, fresh investment in these units would not appear to be justified at this stage.

SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has deliberately bypassed the main problem. However, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that Burn Standard Company Ltd. was taken over by the Central Government as early as 7 years ago

as they were rendered sick by the private management; if so, whether any action has been taken by the Government to revive, revitalise and develop the Refractory and Ceramic Units of Burn Standard Company Ltd. during these years? Is it not a fact that Refractory and Ceramic Units of Burn Standard Company Ltd. have been functioning with age old equipments and machinery and gasping for want of funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (DR. CHARANJIT CHANANA): The reply to the first part of the question of the hon. Member is yes. The reply to the second part of the question is also yes. The reply to the third part of the question is also yes, but then the hon. Member should know that we have been making efforts to revitalise the particular unit. In spite of that, the commitment made, the agreement made by the authors of the letter under reference in the question, the response has been not only zero but negative.

SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: He has given a very brief reply.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your question was also brief.

SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: His answer to (c), (d) & (e) is as follows: "On consideration of the demand for refractories, the existing production capacity and the return on fresh investments at alternative sites indicate that in view of the past performance and potential of the Raniganj Group of BSCL, fresh investment in these units would not appear to be justified at this stage." When this unit was sick, this unit was nationalised. After nationalisation, we are saying that as this is a sick unit, we will not invest more money. What is the difference between nationalisation and before nationalisation? Is it not a fact that due to the discrimination against these West Bengal Units, the future of 2500 workers and 50 officials has become uncertain? Is it not also a fact that workers of the R&C units

have been demanding the improvement of these units but not any benefits for them? Since before nationalisation the R&C units have been functioning with the Engineering Units which use a quite different type of furnace. But TISCO has got a high power furnace which is also suitable to R&C units. In view of this, may I know whether Government would consider the joint functioning of R&C units with the IISCO.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: As far as the question of discrimination against the area is concerned, I would like him to note down in the communication gap that Burn Standard Company Ltd. itself have invested Rs. 4.40 crores in West Bengal in Howrah and Burnpur Works of BSCL situated in West Bengal. Also the Company has a proposal for substantial investment of Rs. 7.80 crores in the coming five year plan—again for Burnpur Works in the coming five years of the same Company (2) the hon. member must appreciate one thing that investments are always correlated to the economic viability of the unit and the productivity and the commitment of labour is very important thing. In view of these investments—in fact, the hon. member should appreciate this—I would just like him to note down the investment figures as also the productivity data. In 1979-80—before that the investments were under consideration only, and as the hon. Member says the sick mill has to be cared and when it has to be cured a proper diagnosis has to be done—according to the production plans an amount of 0.77 lakhs was invested. But, for 1980-81 the performance-wise projection was Rs. 10.92 lakhs for revitalising the whole unit, out of which about Rs. 5 lakhs have been invested. The remaining is in fact under the plan. The final question is about productivity. It is worthwhile comparing the productivity figures of Raniganj with one of its other units which is the Salem unit. I am giving the comparative productivity figures per worker. In 1977-78 for Salem it

was 96.15 and for Rani Ganj it was 3,144. For 1978-79 for Salem it was 12,464 and Rani Ganj went down to 2,505. In 1979-80 for Salem it was 16,578 and for Rani Ganj it was 2,482.

The last question is a very relevant question. The hon. Member asked about IISCO. We have in fact been in negotiation with them and we are still under negotiation with them for a management takeover or a management coordination of this particular unit. But in spite of that—we have also in fact to leave it open to the West Bengal Government to come into the management of that unit—but we have not received any request from that state also.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Myself and Mr. Haradhun Ray, MLA, had met the Minister and we made constructive proposals/schemes for re-vitalising, etc. The production figures which the Minister quoted were those of the period after nationalisation. But at that time no investment was there. So these comparative production figures are not relevant. I want to say that the Minister has not applied his mind properly and seriously to save this nationalised concern.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You seriously put the question.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Yes, it is a very serious question, if you allow me. Before takeover this was an engineering unit of Howrah and there were refractories in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu of the same concern. It was amalgamated and it was brought under the Industry Ministry. Before that this refractory at Rani Ganj produced silica for the IISCO.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Put the question.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: We gave him figures that at present we require 24,000 tonnes of silica per year, but the production capacity is only 18,000 tonnes per year. So, there is a shortfall of 6,000 tonnes per year. So, if the Government can invest only Rs. 3 crores to

modernise and re-vitalise, then it will be viable, and if it is brought under the Industry Ministry. *(Interruptions)* I am putting the question. Mr. Bhole, when you put a question, you also. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please put the question straight. What do you want?

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: I suggested that it may be brought under the Bharat Ceramics, a public undertaking which is under the Steel Ministry. I would ask the hon. Minister whether he will discuss with the Steel Ministry and transfer these refractories to Steel Ministry under Bharat Ceramics which is a public undertaking, so that it will produce sufficient silica for IISCO and then only it will be a viable unit. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have understood the question. Please reply.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: I have to draw the hon. Member's attention to what I said a few minutes ago, i.e. we have been negotiating with the Indian Iron & Steel Company under the Ministry of Steel on this very thing. I would only like the hon. Member to correct the figures given by Mr. B. Roy, which he was quoting about silica. He has mentioned that the installed capacity of silica is 18,000 per annum. That is not correct. He must correct it and put it at 88,000 per annum.

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA: In view of the fact that a large number of industrial units have fallen sick and the Government, because of its social commitment and obligation, has to take over these units, would the Government find out a way so that the industrial units do not fall sick and plough back of capital as well as renovation of machinery are being done regularly?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: As far as curing of sick units is concerned, we are in fact doing what the hon. Member has said. It is known as the

early warning system. We have already resorted to that early warning system, unfortunately the capsule is not that strong and overnight the result is not there. It is the chronic sickness of the mills which takes them nearer to mortality. Secondly, he has talked about our social obligation. That we are not going to change. We do attach importance to our social obligation, which alone forces us to take over these units.

Uranium deposits

*893. SHRI A. K. ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is rich in Thorium ores compared to Uranium and other minerals which could be used as the raw materials for nuclear energy;

(b) if so, the facts in detail according to the latest estimate of Thorium within the country;

(c) whether there has been any break through in the use of Thorium in place of Uranium in producing nuclear energy anywhere in the World and also within the country;

(d) whether Government have any detailed scheme to promote special research in this matter in the Sixth Five Year Plan as a solution of energy problem within the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ELECTRONICS AND ENVIRONMENT (SHRI C. P. N. SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) It is estimated that the reserves of Monazite sands in the country will yield over 350,000 tonnes of Thorium in terms of Thorium Oxide.

(c) Thorium cannot replace Uranium as such, but has to be converted, in a reactor or other devices, to a fissile material. Attempts are being made for economic conversion of Thorium in reactors. When the Fast Breeder Test

Reactor (FBTR) at Kalpakkam goes into operation, the techno-economic feasibility of using Thorium can be established.

(d) and (e) As part of the research programme for utilisation of thorium, an experimental Fast Breeder Test Reactor is being set up at the Reactor Research Centre, Kalpakkam. Provision has been made in the design of FBTR to irradiate Thorium so as to generate valuable information on the fabrication, irradiation and reprocessing of Thorium-based element.

SHRI A. K. ROY: Sir, with your permission, I would like to enlarge the scope of this question, because it deals with the future of atomic power in this country. You know that there are two basic materials for generating atomic energy—thorium and uranium. The availability of uranium deposits is very poor in this country and of very poor quality. Assessed availability which is assured is only 36,000 tonnes and economically exploitable quantity is only 15,000 tonnes. In the world also there are hardly 5 million tonnes of Uranium minerals available. So, attention is diverted towards Thorium. We are having ten times more of thorium—350,000 tonnes—for which three stages were advised by the working group of the Energy Policy Committee. The first stage is thermal reactors such as those operating in Tarapur and Ranapratap Sagar in Rajasthan, using enriched natural uranium, with heavy-water or light water as moderators. The second stage is to use plutonium in the fast breeder reactor. The third stage is the thorium reactor. In 1972 Dr. Sethna expected that by 1980 we will enter the second stage and our fast breeder reactor in Kalpakkam will come up with the collaboration of France. Now also it has not come. In view of that, when are we expecting to reach the second stage of atomic power generation? Secondly, is he aware that there are some fast breeding reactors operating in the world and that the Soviet Union has got expertise? Has he probed into