

Alternative jobs for persons working under Farakka Barrage Project

†313. SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN: Will the Minister of IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of those who are still working under the Farakka Barrage Project as Muster Roll workers and employees;

(b) whether his Ministry propose to provide those Muster Roll workers and employees with alternative jobs in the Farakka Super Thermal Power project;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IF THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) The Farakka Barrage Project has on its roll, at present, 3131 employees (both regular and Workcharged) and 732 Muster Roll workers.

(b) to (d) Ministry of Energy has been requested to provide alternate jobs for the Muster Roll workers and other workcharged employees of the Farakka Barrage Project in Farakka Super Thermal Power Station.

SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN: The muster roll staff of the Farakka Barrage Project have been discharging their duties for a long period, six to seven years or more. This length of period itself proves that the work which they have to perform is not at all of a casual nature: it is rather of a permanent nature. It means that though the work is of a permanent nature, the workers are not, and they are thus being deprived of all the facilities which a regular worker can enjoy as a matter of right. In view of this, I would like to know whether any survey is proposed to be made to ascertain how many vacancies are of permanent nature, and whether his Ministry is in a position to treat these muster roll workers, discharging

duties against certain vacancies as the regular staff.

SHRI RAM NISWAS MIRDHA: Sir, the Farakka Barrage has been in operation for a long time and is going to be completed in 1985. In the process of construction, large number of Muster Roll Employees were appointed and we are making all efforts, firstly to absorb them in our own Establishments, and then, if that is not possible, in various other Government establishments under the rules. Just to give one example, in 1980, out of the Muster Roll Staff running to about 1,600 with service of two years or more, 850 persons who were on the Muster Roll had been taken to fill up such posts. That means we have already taken up 850 of such persons on the work-charge Staff which gives them better facilities and better emoluments. We are in constant touch with the Ministry of Energy, with the Central Industrial Security Force, other projects in the neighbouring States to see that when the work comes to a close, these persons are absorbed in these projects on a priority basis.

SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN: Sir, on 24th July, 1974 in reply to Unstarred Question No. 355, the then Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power, Shri Sidheswar Prasad, said:

“The extent and manner of absorption of the surplus Staff of Farakka Barrage in the Thermal Power Project will be considered at the appropriate time, when the construction work is taken up.”

He gave this assurance at a time when the construction work of the Thermal Power Project was not even started. After that eight to nine years have passed. The construction work is gradually going to be completed, but that appropriate time has not yet come and the question of absorption of the surplus Staff of Farakka Barrage Project has not

been considered that is, the Government is now retreating from its assurance.

On 15th December, 1981, the Minister of State for Energy, Shri Vikram Mahajan, said again in reply to Unstarred Question No. 3822:

"The National Thermal Power Corporation has agreed to consider these employees for their employment at their Farakka Super Thermal Power Project subject to their suitability for the vacancies that arise and their names being received through employment exchange."

Sir, now the Minister says that the Ministry of Energy has been requested to provide alternative jobs. Sir this is a clear departure from the decision. However, now it so happens that the recruitments on Casual basis are being made, without any knowledge of the local Employment Exchanges, from outside. The local Employment Exchange is not asked to send names of the surplus staff registered with them.

In support of such recruitments from outside, the Thermal Power project authorities argue that according to the rules for recruitment on casual basis...

MR. SPEAKER: Do you think it is a question Mr. Abedin? It is an oration or a question?

SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN: I am putting my question, Sir.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: Sir, this is called dialectical materialism.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the way to put a question.

SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN: Sir, I would, therefore, like to know whether the Hon. Minister intends to take up the matter with the Ministry of

Energy more effectively so that the recruitment on casual basis from outside totally ignoring the local employment exchange is stopped and also whether the assurance of the Irrigation Ministry, as I have stated earlier, will be implemented within a time limit?

MR. SPEAKER: This question is not to be answered.

SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN: Why, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: This is not in the type of a question. Can I allow a long oration for a question? Should I allow? If you like I can allow it, but this is not the way to put a question.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Sir, it is a long question, but to balance it you should allow a short answer.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, he is entitled to know whether the Hon. Minister agrees with his speech or not?

MR. SPEAKER: That is right. You can say whether you agree with his speech or not.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Well, Sir, I wholly agree with his speech and his suggestion. Not only agree, Sir, we have acted on what the Hon. Member has stated that we should approach the Ministry of Energy. We have already approached the Ministry of Energy at the Secretary's level and at the Ministers level. I have to make a big speech if I have to give details of all efforts that we are making in the neighbouring States—in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In all the projects that are going on there, we have requested them to take these steps.