

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Friday, May 8, 1981/Vaisakha
18, 1903 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

अध्यक्ष महोदय : तशरीफ रखिये ।

एक माननीय सदस्य : आखिरी दिन है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सेशन का ।

श्री रामावतार झास्त्री (पटना) : सेशन का आखिरी दिन है ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : येस, सर ।

श्री जार्ज फर्नान्डीज (मूजफ्फरपुर) : कल भी बैठना पड़ेगा ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अच्छा, लगता ऐसा है कि शायद आप की भविष्यवाणी सत्य हो ।

श्री. मधु बंडवते (राजापुर) : नो-क्वॉ-डॉस मोशन पास हो जाए, तो सरकार का भी आखिरी दिन होगा ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : श्री सुधीर गिरि ।

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Gold Exploration

*1113. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn a five-year-plan for gold exploration in the country; and

(b) what will be the extent of improvement in so far as gold production in the next five years is concerned in comparison with the world production of gold?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE, STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The scheme has been finalised only in December, 1980 for implementation. It is premature at this stage to evaluate the results of the programme. The results in terms of increase in production will be known only after the exploration in all its aspects is completed and techno-economic studies have been carried out vis-a-vis promising prospects.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: In view of the answer given by the hon. Minister, I want to know from the hon. Minister (a) what is the present total stock position of gold in the country and the places where gold exploration activities will take place during the Sixth Plan. (b) what is the present position of gold production per annum in our country in comparison with the world production of gold; and (c) what are the reasons for not taking up so long the gold exploration exercise in view of the high price of gold prevailing both in the national and international market and the economic importance of gold in relation to the price hike of petroleum products?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: In answer to the first part of the question, the Finance Minister is the custodian of gold. My job is to produce gold and then hand it over to the

Finance Minister. So, he can indicate what is the present stock position. I am not venturing into his area.

The average production per year is 2,405 kg. As the hon. Member knows, our production is going down, mainly because of poor quality. Normally, the ore is treated as of good quality if the gold ratio of ore averages 9 to 10 grams per tonne of ore. But most of the Indian ores are having 3.5 to 4, 5, or 6 grams per tonne. Even in 1978-79 the total production was 2703 kgs. The two big producers are Hatti Gold Mines and Kolar Gold Mines. We get some gold as a by product from Hindustan Copper. All these three taken together last year produced 2405 kgs. We want to maintain that level of production for the next five years.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: I want to know from the hon. Minister the number of workers and technocrats employed at present in the gold exploration activities in the country and their wage structure. I would like to know this because these workers and technocrats are producing economically very important mineral.

(b) What steps does the Government propose to take to ameliorate the living conditions of these workers and technocrats during Five Year Plan period in so far as gold exploration is concerned?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: As the hon. Member is aware, work will be undertaken by the Geological Survey of India and the Mineral Exploration Corporation and for this we are not going to have any specified number of persons. As and when the work expands, we may have to employ the persons necessary to do the job. It will be premature to say what will be the number of persons to be employed. It would depend on the progress and development of the work.

SHRI N. E. HORO: Gold has been found in Singbhum in Bihar. What quantity of gold is the Minister expecting during the Five Year Plan? Does the scheme include Singbhum district?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Singbhum is an area which is to be covered by this scheme.

SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: What are the new areas which have been earmarked for the exploration of gold in recent years?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I have got an exhaustive list.

MR. SPEAKER: Please give him the list.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I can mention the States. Those are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa.

SHRI B. V. DESAI: There are two gold mines—Kolar Gold fields and Hatti Gold Mines. These are the two mines from which major quantity of gold comes out. Hatti Gold Mines happens to be in my constituency. It is a very good piece of news for the Finance Minister that very recently very heavy metal bearing reef has been found in Hatti Gold Mines. What steps is Government going to take to explore the possibility of exploiting that reef immediately?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I am not quite sure. Rather, I am not as optimistic as the hon. Member is. So far as Hatti Gold Mine is concerned, it is almost uneconomic because the quality of the ore is very poor. So far as Hatti Gold Mine is concerned, we have found certain new areas. But the outcome is yet to be found out. The present scheme will cover that.