

May I also know from the hon. Minister whether he has got the figures, that is, if this ban is imposed, how many employees or persons connected with these companies will be affected because in Peerless, a well-known concern, which employs or engages about 2 lakhs of people, a very serious human problem would be created and unemployment would be further increased, whether any attention has been paid by the Government to this aspect, and, if so, what is the Government's line of thinking?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: As regards the first question, the validity has been challenged on several grounds. Some have challenged the *vires* of the law and others have questioned the applicability of the law to their particular case. There are a number of other points which they have raised.

As regards the number of people employed, I would require notice. I have no information at present. But I wish to inform the House that there was such an amount of cheating going on in the name of prize chit funds that the entire House demanded that some such regulation is required.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You please regulate instead of imposing a total ban.

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Actually, the prize chit fund is a lottery and, therefore, it was decided that it would not be proper to allow this kind of a lottery to go on.

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA: In view of the fact that such companies which are operating all over the country are defrauding the people, will the Government consider the desirability of bringing in a legislation completely banning them?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Again, I am in a difficulty, whether he refers to conventional ones or the prize chit funds. About conventional chit funds, I said that I

will be bringing in the necessary legislation.

Stock position of Coal and Iron Ore in each Steel Plant

*245. **SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDAR:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) the latest stock position of coal and iron ore in each steel plant throughout the country, whether in the public or private sector separately; and

(b) what steps Government are going to take for improving the position?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE, AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The latest available stock position of coking coal and iron ore in the integrated steel plants is given below:—

	(in '000 tonnes)		
	Coking Coal	Iron Ore	
		(as on 25.3.80)	Lumps
		(as on 15.3.1980)	
Bhilai Steel Plant	49.4	235	154
Durgapur Steel Plant	16.9	44	23
Rourkela Steel Plant	14.2	55	58
Bokaro Steel Plant	39.3	25	81
IISCO	8.8	61	.

As regards TISCO the position is as under:

	(in '000 tonnes)	
	Coking Coal	Iron Ore
	(as on 25.3.1980)	(as on 18.3.1980)
	24.2	65

(b) The stock position in respect of iron ore has been generally considered satisfactory and no special steps are considered necessary in this regard. As for coking coal, several steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken, to improve the position. Some of these are indicated below:—

(i) close and consent liaison is being maintained with the coal producers (CIL, BCCL, etc.) and the Ministry of Energy (including the power generating bodies such as DVC and State Electricity Boards), so as to ensure optimum production of coking coal;

(ii) regular liaison on daily basis is being maintained with the coal supply agencies and the Railways by a Co-ordination Cell (on which SAIL is also represented) so as to ensure adequate and timely availability of wagons and prompt movement of loaded rakes;

(iii) close monitoring of the position regarding supply of coal and power and rail movement is being done every week by the Cabinet Committee on Industrial Infrastructure;

(iv) power supply to the coal mines is being augmented by giving them a higher priority on an *ad-hoc* basis so as to improve the production of coal in Bihar-West Bengal belt which is the main source of coking coal production in the country; and

(v) timely action was taken to import 1.2 million tonnes of high grade low ash coking coal so as to augment the indigenous supplies and also to improve the quality of coke feed in the blast furnaces. The strategy for further import of coking coal during 1980-81 so as to maintain the continuity of such supplies is also under consideration of the Government.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: The Minister, in his statement, has raised five points, regarding improvement of the supply of raw

materials to the integrated steel plants. You know, Sir, that IISCO has its captive coal mines and Bhilai also has its captive iron-ore mines. (Interruption). I would like to know from the Minister whether, for the improvement of the Durgapur Steel Plant, Government is considering captive coal mines and iron-ore mines for the Durgapur Steel Plant.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the allocation of coking coal is concerned, firstly we have identified the agencies for the three types of coking coal—lime, medium and blendable. Each area and organisation is identified and attached to the various still mills. So far as the steel mills which have their own captive mines are concerned, they utilise those captive mines. Otherwise, these organisations provide coking coal—whichever is needed—of these varieties. The Durgapur Steel Plant also comes within that category.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: The Minister has, in his statement, mentioned that the stock position of raw materials may be considered 'satisfactory'. But the figures which he has given for the Durgapur Steel Plant, I think, are not 'satisfactory'. For the improvement of the functioning of the Durgapur Steel Plant A.S.P. and TISCO, does Government have any proposal for the modernisation and expansion of these Steel Plants.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the word 'satisfaction' is concerned, it is absolutely relative. In fact, I used this word 'satisfaction' while I made a comparison of the position which prevailed earlier and which prevails today. But so far as the safety limit is concerned, we are far from 'satisfaction' because the safety limit requires 3.5 lakh tons and 'satisfaction' requires 5 lakh tons, while on 26th March we had only 1.5 lakh tons. Therefore, it has relatively improved because it went down to 1.5 lakh tons and, from there, it has improved to 1.69 lakh tons.

In regard to the expansion and modernisation of the Durgapur Steel Plant, I had already mentioned on the Floor of this House that a British steel company has been asked to prepare a techno-feasibility report. They are going to submit the report within a couple of months. After that, the modernisation programme will be taken in hand.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I would like to know from the Minister whether it is true that even when adequate coal is available from the mines and there is proper movement of coal to the steel plants, because the washeries are not functioning properly as a result of that, the effective availability of coal for the steel plants is less and, if so, to remedy the defect what steps are being taken?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is one of the reasons why we are not in a position to utilise the coal stocks which are available with us. Not merely the question of quantum but even in respect of the quality of coking coal which we are utilising in our steel plants, it depends considerably on the fuller utilisation of the washeries. In meeting their requirements, one of the major constraints is that of power, which we are not in a position to improve. That is why a decision has been taken to give priority, in power supply, to the coal sector so that they can meet the requirements of the thermal power stations and they can also improve the functioning of the washeries.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Have you given up hopes of improving the washeries?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Yeah.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: He says he has given up hopes.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: No, no; why should I give up hopes?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: But absent-mindedly, you said 'yes'.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: May I know from the Minister what is the amount, as regards the capacity of this parti-

cular steel plant, and the availability of iron-ore and coking coal etc.? What is the comparative ratio and, according to that ratio, what is the shortage?

Secondly, as regards coking coal, is there any acute shortage due to the washeries' problems? Are you going in for import of coal though there is abundant coal in our country and, if so, what is the amount of foreign exchange that you are going to waste on this?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the ratio which the hon. Member wanted to know is concerned; I can give the figures. So far as coking coal is concerned, in 1979-80, the agreed programme was 16,423 lakh tonnes; the availability was 12,900 lakh tonnes; and, percentage-wise, the shortfall was 21.5 per cent. In regard to availability of coking coal and import, the hon. Member is well aware that a decision was taken to import 1.2 million tonnes of coking coal. Already ten lakh tonnes have reached, and two lakh tonnes are expected to reach by the end of this month. But in regard to further import of coking coal, this matter is under consideration; there are two views on it; one view is that we should improve the indigenous coking coal production quantity-wise and quality-wise and utilise it and that we should not import. Government has not yet taken any firm decision on that.

श्री राजेन्द्र प्रसाद यादव : अध्यक्ष महोदय देश में अच्छे किस्म के कोकिंग कोल और इस्पात की इतनी कमी हो रही है कि सरकार को इन दोनों चीजों को बाहर से मंगाना पड़ रहा है ; और मंत्री महोदय ने अपने स्टेटमेंट में बताया कि कोकिंग कोल पिट हेड पर काफी जमा है और स्टील प्लान्ट्स पर आयरन और काफी जमा है। तो बिहार में हजारी बाग में जहाँ आधा दर्जन कम से कम अच्छे कोकिंग कोल की माइन्स हैं जिनको अभी भी प्राइवेट लोग चला रहे हैं सरकार को न उस बारे में कोई जानकारी देते हैं और न सरकार ही कुछ

कर पा रही है। तो इस दिशा में भी वह कुछ करने का प्रयास करेंगे ?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as private mining is concerned, it is a problem no doubt. This particular aspect, I do not know where it is happening, but Government is trying to stop illegal private mining. In regard to accumulation of stocks at the pitheads, in respect of both iron ore and coking coal, it is true; transport bottleneck is one of the reasons why we could not make these materials available to the steel plants I have already mentioned this. Again and again we are coming to the question of power and transport bottleneck.

Shortage of Raw Cashewnuts

*246. **SHRI P. K. KODIYAN:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether shortage of raw cashewnuts has almost crippled the Cashew Industry;

(b) the reasons for the shortage;

(c) whether any special efforts are being made to meet the shortage by stepping to import of raw cashewnuts; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Indian Cashew Industry has been traditionally depending upon imports of raw cashew nuts to meet part of its requirement for processing. Of late, the exportable surplus with East African countries *viz.*, Tanzania Mozambique, and Kenya who have been our traditional suppliers has gone down considerably due to increase in their own processing capacity and also a sizable decline in their production. Moreover, while earlier India

used to be the only buyer for the entire raw cashew nuts available abroad, now there is severe competition from countries like China, Brazil and Hongkong for the purchase of raw cashew nuts available. As a result import of raw cashew nuts by Cashew Corporation of India, through which import are canalised, has gone down considerably, thereby affecting the total availability of raw cashew nuts for processing. On account of the shortage of raw cashewnuts for processing, the cashew processing industry has been adversely affected.

The Cashew Corporation of India has been trying to develop non-traditional sources for supply of raw cashew nuts like Madagascar, Senegal, Nigeria and Guinea. In order to promote the imports, during July 1979, actual users were also permitted to import raw cashew nuts from non-traditional sources mostly on the West African Coast. For 1980, the Cashew Corporation has been able to execute a contract with Kenya for the purchase of their entire exportable surplus of raw cashew nuts.

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in the statement that the import of raw cashewnut from the traditional sources has been declining in the past few years. May I know from the hon. Minister whether, in view of the importance of the cashew industry as the country's second largest foreign exchange earner and also in view of the crisis that has afflicted the industry at present affecting more than one and a half lakh employees, Government would take up the question of import of raw cashewnut from the traditional as well as non-traditional sources, at the highest level, Government-to-Government level, instead of entrusting this merely to the Cashew Corporation of India which has not been successful in getting...

MR. SPEAKER: What is your pointed question?

SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: My question is whether, instead of entrusting