

to supply electricity for establishing mini steel plants in Ballia (Eastern UP). What is the position? Will the Ministry take up the matter with the UP Government?

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: Yes, it is unfortunately a fact that due to acute shortage of power in UP, many of the mini steel plants which have already been installed are not able to start production. We are actively engaged in trying to find out a solution to the problem of supply of more power, and as soon as the UP Government is in a position to supply more power, we will see that they are started.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: As a complementary to the question asked by Shri Hari Kishore Singh, may I know whether in those areas where there is an abundance of power, where there is raw material, particularly in the west coast—not because I come from there—as I said, where there is abundance of cheap hydro-electric power, the cheapest in Asia, 3 P per unit, a package scheme would be made available or a liberal licensing of these mini steel plants will take place? Will such areas be surveyed, identified and located and made known where a large number of mini steel plants could come into operation?

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: I am thankful to the hon member for having made that positive suggestion. Government are already taking a very liberal view of setting up mini steel plants whose economic and other viability are assured. It is not only a question of power but also availability of scrap. The scrap available is not uniform, although in the western part it is somewhat better in certain pockets. So if there is any particular region where mini steel plants could economically and from other points of view be purposefully set up, surely Government will consider it.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: You are allowing export of iron scrap.

SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA: No.

Compulsory Collection of Union Membership Fee in Assam Tea Gardens

*838. **SHRI NOORUL HUDA:** Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a system of collecting union membership fee compulsorily by the management of Assam Tea Gardens; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to stop this practice?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA): (a) and (b). Information is being collected from the State Government and it will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI NOORUL HUDA: I only hope Government do not take an unduly long time in collecting the information and laying it on the Table. Nevertheless, the information which we have received is that for the last 15 or 20 years the INTUC—affiliated Cha Samik Union has been getting the thumb impression of the employees concerned and submitting it to the respective tea garden managements for deduction of Union fees from their regular wages. This practice has been going on for a long time. Would the Minister admit or deny that this kind of compulsory, almost forcible, deduction of Union membership fees is a very bad, unfair and pernicious practice and militates against every form of democratic trade union rules and regulations?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA: We are not in a position to confirm the allegation made by the hon. member. If he submits such information to us, we will get it checked up by the State Government.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: This question was tabled 21 days ago. It is strange the Government could

not collect the information. Assam is not outside our country.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: They do not want to.

SHRI NOORUL HUDA: There was a Parliamentary Joint Committee on plantation labour which visited Assam in the month of November. Is it a fact that during their discussions with the Labour Commissioner of Assam these facts came to light and the Labour Commissioner admitted that this kind of unfair trade union practices were going in several areas in Assam, in about 100-150 tea gardens of Assam?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA: It has not been brought to our notice. If the hon. Member gives us separate notice, I shall try to collect information.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Is this the way to answer questions? 21 days notice is given. Even for the second supplementary they give a reply which means nothing at all. Is it why we labour so much? He must give information at least why details could not be collected within 21 days. Is it because INTUC, it is their own party union and you want to shield it? (Interruptions).

MR SPEAKER. The point of the hon. Members is that inspite of 21 days' notice, information is not forthcoming. I have taken note of it and I shall ask the Minister to expedite it.

SHRI BIREN DUTT: May I know whether any agreement has been entered into by INTUC unions with the management for not paying the bonus, against the law?

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA: Unless information is passed on to us, we do not know anything about it.

SHRI B K DASCHOWDHURY: Having regard to the fact that this is an allegation against the INTUC unions in the Assam tea gardens and

also that in almost all the Assam tea gardens INTUC labour union is working, and also having regard to the fact that this sort of allegation does not compel the Government to collect information, may I know whether any such complaint was ever sent to the hon. Minister or the Government of India? If so the details thereof; if not, let them say so.

SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA: We have not received any such complaint so far... (Interruptions).

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GO-SWAMI: Sir, in view of the fact that in a Union, the question as to how the payment is to be made, is a matter between the members of the Union and the persons who run the Union, has the Government any authority to interfere in the matter?

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: Sir, about the question of prevailing practice, we have requested the State Government to let us know. After the information is known about the prevailing practice, if any, then, we will look into it, how far it is in conformity with the practice.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

Deposits of Non-Ferrous Metals near Darjeeling

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12 **SHRI BIRENDER SINGH RAO MALIK.**
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether such deposits of non-ferrous metals have been located by Geologists in Himalayan Shelf near Darjeeling recently;

(b) if so the details of the deposits found; and

(c) the time by which work on this is likely to be started?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.