

of the ICC at the present moment does not arise.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA : This happened the day before yesterday. They said that India should be expelled from the chairmanship of the ICC.

MR. SPEAKER : Next question

Reduction in Coal Production

*682. **SHRI JAGANNATH MISHRA** : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether coal production has been reduced by over three million tonnes during the past two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government contemplate to take to improve its production ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN) . (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reason for drop in production had been inadequate rail transport.

(c) All possible steps are being taken to increase wagon supply and some improvement is already noticed. With the improvement in the transport position, the existing idle capacity will be utilised. Moreover, with the commissioning of the Bokaro Steel Plant and a large number of coal based thermal power stations and fertiliser plants, the demand for coal will increase significantly in the near future. The Government have taken over the management of 24 coking coal mines, pending their nationalisation, with a view to maximising the production and ensuring planned exploitation of scarce coking coal reserves to meet the requirements of the steel and other metallurgical industries. The National Coal Development Corporation and Singareni Collieries Company are also taking steps to increase production from their mines to meet the increased demand in the near future.

श्री जगन्नाथ मिश्र : अध्यक्ष महोदय, 1969-70 में कोयले का उत्पादन 75.74 मिलियन टन था, 1970-71 में वह घट कर 72.68 मिलियन टन हुआ, पिछले साल यानी 1971-72 में वह घट कर 69 मिलियन टन हुआ। क्या कोयले के उत्पादन की ह्रासोन्मुखी स्थिति बहुत भयावह नहीं है ? इस को दूर करने के लिये सरकार तत्काल क्या कार्रवाही करना चाहती है ?

श्री शाहनवाज खाँ : जैसा कि अपने जवाब में मैंने अर्ज किया है कि यह समस्या प्रोडक्शन की नहीं है प्रोडक्शन को अगर हम चाहे तो आज भी बहुत ज्यादा बढ़ा सकते हैं। समस्या है कि जो माल कोलियरी से निकलता है उस को मन्त्रालय-मकसूद तक पहुँचाने की, कॅमे उसको पहुँचाया जाय, यह ट्रांसपोर्ट की बात है।

श्री जगन्नाथ मिश्र : कारण वह जो कहा जाय, लेकिन स्थिति का वर्णन मैंने अपने प्रश्न में किया है। मंत्री महोदय ने रेलवे ट्रांसपोर्ट को लेकर जो दिक्कत व्यक्त की है, कुछ अग तक वह बात भी सही हो सकती है...

अध्यक्ष महोदय . प्रश्न पूछिये, भाषण नहीं होना चाहिये।

श्री जगन्नाथ मिश्र : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं बिहार की स्थिति का वर्णन कर रहा हूँ, बिहार में कोयले की कमी को लेकर जो हाहाकार मचा हुआ है, उस की ओर मंत्री महोदय का ध्यान आकषिप्त करना चाहता हूँ। बिहार में कोयले का जो अकाल है, उस को दूर करने के लिये इनके पास क्या कोई प्लानिंग है ?

श्री शाहनवाज खाँ : जैसा कि मैंने अर्ज किया है, रेलवे की तरफ से बैंगन की कुछ कमी थी, लेकिन अब मुझे यह बताने हुए खुशी है कि रेलवे अब पूरी कोशिश कर रही है और बैंगन की पोजीशन काफी बेहतर हो रही है। अप्रैल, 1971 में वहाँ हम को 7645 बैंगन

मिन्त्री थी, अब इस महीने में 8343 बैगन्ज हम को भिन्न रही है इस तरह में लगभग 1 हजार ज्यादा बैगन्ज हम को रोकने दे रही है, इस में पोषीशन इम्प्रूव हो रही है और मैं उम्मीद करता हूँ कि रेलवे की कोशिशों की वजह से कोयले की समस्या जल्दी हल हो जायगी।

अध्यक्ष महोदय प्रश्न भी भाषण नहीं होना चाहिये और उत्तर भी भाषण नहीं होना चाहिये। बहुत मुस्तसिर होना चाहिये।

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA I understood the hon. Minister to say that coal production problem is not one of production, but of transport. In the case of the National Coal Development Corporation, I believe the actual production has fallen short of the target by over two million tonnes. Am I to take it that this was deliberate curtailment, in anticipation of the shortage of wagons of production which they could have done? Or is it that the shortfall is due to some other reasons and if so, what?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN Production in the NCDC in the year 1969-70 for coking coal was 3.66 million tonnes and in 1970-71 it was 3.62 million tonnes; it has not fallen substantially.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA That is not my question. The annual report of the NCDC says clearly that instead of 15 and odd million tonnes of targeted production, they produced only 13 and odd million tonnes. Is it deliberate curtailment due to shortage of wagons or is it due to some other reason?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN The NCDC has been feeling the shortage of rail transport just as any other sector, it is not a question of deliberate curtailment.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA What is the shortfall due to?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN In the production of coal, we know that coal has to be stacked at pitheads and if the pitheads get too high there is the danger of fire. There is thus the question of space for

keeping coal there. The shortage of wagons has affected coal production.

SHRI VASANT SATHE Do I understand that three years before when the coal production was more we had more wagons and, therefore, we had more production and now the wagon production has fallen down? Do I understand this?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN The hon. Member knows that as a result of the very serious law and order situation in the eastern sector of the country there were lots of thefts of overhead wires with the result that a very large number of railway wagons which should have been serviced could not run; they became sick. That was responsible for creating all these difficulties. Also one of the complementary factors was that the off take of coal by the steel plants came down because the same quantity of coal was not required by them for the operation of the steel plants under repairs.

SHRI VASANT SATHE Electricity people have been wanting more coal.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU They have made a mess of the whole thing.

श्री राजेन्द्र प्रसाद यादव : अध्यक्ष महोदय, अभी मन्त्री महोदय ने बताया कि यदि वे चाहें तो काल के प्रोडक्शन को बढ़ा सकते हैं पता नहीं कौन रास्ता है प्रोडक्शन बढ़ाने से। कारण जो भी हो, कोल की महंगाई है तथा उस को देखते हुए क्या सरकार इस दिशा में कदम उठा रही है ताकि उचित कीमत पर लोगों को कोल मिल सके?

श्री शाहनवाज खान जैसा मैंने कहा, कोल की कोई कमी नहीं है। अगर कमी है तो कोल को इन्तैमाल करने वाले जो लोग हैं उन तक पहुँचाने की है। इसके लिए जैसा मैंने अर्ज किया रेल ट्रान्सपोर्ट की दिक्कत है लेकिन रेलवेज पूरी कोशिश कर रही है कि जल्दी से जल्दी बैगन्ज को और बढ़ाये।

SHRI SAMAR GUHA It appears to us that the reason given by the Minister for

the present output of coal, namely, disturbances in the eastern region is a lame excuse. May I know whether in the major coal producing area of Raniganj-Asansol-Jharua there is a huge accumulation of coal and because of this the employers in the coalmines have introduced some go-slow system of production of coal? If so, may I know whether this has resulted in serious labour unrest, particularly in the Asansol area? Lastly, may I know whether the Ministry of Mines and the railways will form an inter-departmental committee to expedite the transport of coal and have a time-bound programme for the transport of coal?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN : The statement of the hon. Member that there is huge accumulation of coal at the pitheads proves that there is no shortage of coal. That confirms the statement that I have made. The Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Steel & Mines are in very close touch and they are trying to find out ways and means of solving this problem of carrying this coal.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Sir, I have posed certain questions which have not been answered. If he asks for notice, that is a different thing. Sir, I seek your protection.

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot give my protection to him every day.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I have asked specific questions according to the privilege given to members to ask questions during the question hour. If the Minister says that he requires notice I can understand that. Otherwise, he has to answer it.

MR. SPEAKER : What he said was that the very fact that there is large accumulation of coal at these sources proves that there is no shortage of coal. Everything is covered by that.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : What about transport?

MR. SPEAKER : He has already answered it.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Then I asked about the inter-departmental committee consisting of the representatives of railways

and the Steel & Mines Ministry.

MR. SPEAKER : He has replied to that.

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN : The Ministry of Steel & Mines and the Ministry of Railways are in very close touch with each other. We have held several meetings to find out how this problem can be solved. I have already said that as compared to March last year, in this March we have been given 1,000 more wagons.

MR. SPEAKER : He raises the question of INA on every conceivable occasion but he does not spare the General of the INA from questions!

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : मैं आपके माध्यम से जानना चाहता हूँ कि अभी मन्त्री जी ने मूल प्रश्न के भाग (क) के उत्तर में कहा है "जी हाँ" अर्थात् कोल की कमी हुई है, उसके उत्पादन में कमी आई है लेकिन दूसरे प्रश्न के उत्तर में अभी बताया है कि कोल की कमी नहीं है, कोल इकट्ठा हो गया है तो यह उनके परस्पर विरोधी वक्तव्य है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ क्या सरकार वो समाचार मिला है कि मध्य प्रदेश के अन्दर अभी अभी एक हफ्ते में काफी खानों बन्द हुई है जिसके कारण 25 हजार मजदूर बेकार है तो उन खानों के बन्द होने का क्या कारण है?

श्री शाहनवाज खाँ : इसका कारण यह है कि खानों से जो कोल निकाला गया वह बहुत जमा हो गया इसलिए और निकालना बन्द कर दिया। वह कोल जो जमा है वह हिल नहीं सका इसलिए और निकालने की आवश्यकता नहीं रही।

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE : I hope you would not want me to carry coal to New Castle.

MR. SPEAKER : Confine it to the Lok Sabha only.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE : May I know whether the Minister is aware that incredi-

ble blackmarket is rampant in coal business and unscrupulous mine-owners have been selling coal at fabulous prices without any difficulty of wagon shortage? Firstly, may I know how they have been able to get wagons? Secondly, the Minister has stated that the wagon position has improved and the decline in supply of coal has been attributed to the transport position. Now that the transport position is satisfactory, may I know whether you are satisfied with the present coal wagon movement, which is otherwise criticised as irrational? Secondly, have you estimated what is likely to be the production with the sustained supply of the quantity of wagons which you are getting now?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN : According to the present estimates, we feel that if the railways could maintain a steady supply of 8,600 wagons per day then there should be no shortage of coal in the country. In the beginning of this year the railways were supplying approximately 7,262 wagons per day. In March 1972 they have supplied 8,342 wagons. So, the situation has improved very considerably. There is still a shortfall of about 400 to 500 wagons. As to the question as to how the private traders are able to get wagons and sell coal at fantastically high prices, I cannot answer it because I do not allot wagons.

Neutralisation of South-East Asia

*684 **SHRI SHRIKISHAN MODI :** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and Thailand have favoured neutralisation of South-East Asia by making it free from big power politics ;

(b) whether the representatives of the two countries had met recently and had discussions for free Indian ocean ; and

(c) whether any agreements were reached in this regard and if so, the nature thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH) (a) : The Government of India hold the view that the South-East Asian region should be free from Great Power influences. The

Government of Thailand has been a party to the November 1971 Declaration by the ASEAN countries that they are determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of and respect for South-East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers.

(b) and (c) : During discussions between the representatives of the two Governments held towards the end of March, views were exchanged on this and other subjects of mutual interest. No formal agreement was attempted or desired by either side

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : क्या चीन ने मार्गेशम को बहुत अधिक मात्रा में ऋण दिया है और आपस में राजनैतिक सम्बन्ध भी कायम कर रहे हैं ? क्या इस से आप को कोई असर पड़ेगा, अगर पड़ेगा तो क्या पड़ेगा ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : I am not sure whether it arises out of the present question Chinese supply of equipment to other countries.

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : मेरे प्रश्न का जवाब ही नहीं मिला ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह तो इस से आता ही नहीं लेकिन अगर किसी तरह इस में लाइये तो फिर जवाब मिल जायेगा ।

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : हिन्द महासागर के सभी टापुओं को विगपावर्स से खनरा न हो हम के बारे में क्या आप कोई मीठी बातचीत करके कोई नतीजा निकालना चाहते हैं ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : This matter was discussed in the Lusaka conference of nonaligned countries and there was agreement that every effort should be made to prevent the establishment of basis by big naval powers in the Indian Ocean area, and the countries of the region, the littoral States, are in consultation with each other to ensure this.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN : In view of the importance of this subject, may