

SHRI SWARAN SINGH: I would not say that there has been any preparatory work on either side. A stage had arrived when we thought that if we could enunciate our position and if there was a good response, then that could become the basis for further steps to be taken by both countries to improve relations.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Priya Ranjan Das Munsii—absent.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Both Questions No. 443 and No. 453 may be taken up together. The other hon. Member is also here.

MR. SPEAKER: All right. We take up Questions No. 443 and No. 453 together.

Shri Arjun Sethi.

Threatened closure of Kolar Gold Mines due to Depletion of Deposits

*443. **SHRI ARJUN SETHI:**
DR. KARNI SINGH:

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

(a) whether the Kolar Gold Mines are facing the prospect of a slow death owing to fast depletion of its deposits and consequent high cost of working; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) and (b) The Kolar Gold Mines having been worked for many decades are faced with the problem of depletion of the reserves and resultant high cost of working. There is, however, no proposal to close the mines as such. However, as and when working in any section becomes prohibitively uneconomic or unfit for operation due to mining conditions on grounds of safety, the closure of such section alone might become inevitable.

News Regarding 'K.G.F. Mines take-over 1956'

*453. **SHRI M. KATHAMUTHU:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the news story appeared in the *Hindi* dated the 21st November, 1972 under the caption "Some puzzling questions about K.G.F. Mines take-over 1956" has been brought to the notice of Government; and

(b) if so, Government's reactions thereto?

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

(b) Since many of the aspects mentioned in the news story relate to events that took place quite sometime ago, no specific action is called for at this juncture. As far as the present condition of the gold mines (Bharat Gold Mines Private Limited) is concerned, Government is fully aware of the problems and is taking suitable corrective action.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Since the hon. Minister has stated that Kolar Goldmines are facing the problems, I want to draw his attention to a press report which is published in the daily, *Statesman*, where the Chairman and Managing Director of Kolar Goldmines Private Limited has stated as follows:

Apart from the technical challenges posed by the deep mining in Kolar, they were faced with the tremendous sociological problem of providing employment to the 13,500 staff and its family depending solely on the mines now.

I want to know from the hon. Minister whether this problem has been taken into consideration, and if so, the steps taken by Government.

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN: As hon. Members probably know, these mines have been working for more

than the last 90 years, and they are one of the deepest mines in the world, approximately 10,000 feet deep; that is the lowest level at which the mining is being done. As in any mine in the world, when the reserves get exhausted, we have to abandon those workings and look for some others. In some areas and sections, we are getting very near the depletion of reserves. But that does not mean the closure of the complete mine. We are already investigating different areas in the locality and we are taking steps to develop the capacity in the adjoining areas, so that no unemployment is caused when any section is abandoned. But I would like to reiterate that there is no intention on the part of the Government to abandon these mines completely.

SHRI M. KATHAMUTHU: In reply to my question, the hon. Minister had said that some events had taken place, but no specific action was called for. I would like to know what happens to the problems created by those events, and how the hon. Minister says that specific action is not warranted.

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN: As I have said, the question of taking over these mines, whether it was justified, whether the amounts paid were adequate or whether they were excessive or they were less than what we should have paid, are all things of the past, and no useful purpose will be served by going into those stories which are of the past.

SHRI M. KATHAMUTHU: In the latter part of his answer, the hon. Minister has said that Government are aware of the present problem. But I want to know the problems before the Government and the corrective action taken by Government.

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN: The problems are mainly technical in nature. When we mine at great depths, there are problems of rock-bursts, and there is the question of safety of working in the mines. The

other problem is that of the steady deterioration in the grade of ore that is mined. It has deteriorated from 8 grams per tonne to round about 4-1/2 grams per tonne now. These are the problems, and as regards the corrective action, I have already stated that we are investigating new areas so that we can start mining there.

DR. G. S. MELKOTE: Is it not a fact that before the Mysore State got integrated with the Indian Union after Independence, the British company had exploited all the richer mines and left the poorer mines only to be tapped, and if so, would it not be economical to close down the mines altogether instead of running it at such a great loss?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN: It is true that we are subsidising these mines very heavily. But as I have already stated, we are investigating the adjoining areas which are showing good promise, and we hope that as and when these mines become uneconomical for working, these new areas will be developed.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: Is it a fact that the Central Government were aware of the depletion of the deposits in these mines when they were taken over by the Centre, and if so, why the Central Government took them over?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN: Even now, these mines contain substantial reserves of ore, but whether those can be worked economically or not is another thing. But it is not that the Central Government knew that there was nothing left there. Even now, these mines contain substantial quantities. But certain technological problems regarding the safety of working have arisen in view of the rockbursts that have taken place. These are preventing us from approaching certain ore bodies which are really rich in grade.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: Arising out of the answer given by the hon. Minister that they are investigating the possibilities of locating new,

mines, may I know the nearest point from the Kolar Gold Mines where they have located them?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN: The hon. Member is, I suppose, familiar with the area. There were some closed mines. One is the Nine Reef Mine and the other is the Roadblock Mine, which were worked for some time and then abandoned. We have now started operations to dewater the pits so that we can start those mines again.

Then, about 12 km. south of Mysore Mines, the Geological Survey of India have located a very promising area, and also at Bisanantham which is in Andhra Pradesh but on the border of the Kolar Gold Fields, we propose to start the new workings.

Exploitation of Mineral Deposits in Rayalaseema Region

*444. **SHRI K. KODANDA RAMI REDDY:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the important minerals found in Rayalaseema area of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) the names of places and the minerals with their estimated reserves; and

(c) whether any systematic investigation are going on to exploit the mineral wealth of that region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b): Asbestos, barytes, steatite, copper-lead, diamond, iron ore, gold, clays and limestone are the important minerals found in the Rayalseem area. Names of places and the minerals with their estimated reserves are as follows:—

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| Asbestos | Chinnakutala—Brahmanasalle belt, Cuddapah district. | 14,400 tonnes. |
| Barytes | Mangampeta, Cuddapah district. | 2.5 million tonnes. |
| Limestone | Cuddapah basin in Cuddapah Kurnool districts. | Preliminary estimate of about 12,000 million tonnes. |
| Gold | Ramagiri, Anantapur district. | 2,527 tonnes of ore with 6.9 gm/tonne gold. |
| Iron Ore | Veldurti-Ramallakota, Kurnool district. | 4.5 million tonnes. |
| | Raydrug Taluk, Anantapur distt. | 1 million tonnes. |
| Steatite | Mutsukota, Tabjala, Julakalawa & Ravuladiki, Anantapur district and Godelamadugu, Yarlpadu and Muddanuru, Kurnool district. | about 0.9 million tonnes upto 100 m. depth. |
| Clays | Hestewaram in Cuddapah distt. | 5.5 million tonnes. |
| | Ambopuram in Kurnool distt. | “ |
| Copper-lead | Zanagamarauppalle, Cuddapah district. | Being assessed. |
| | Jonna-giri, Kurnool district. | do. |
| | Gani-Kalva, Kurnool district. | do. |
| Diamond | Wargakarur, Anantapur distt. | do. |