

failure or, sometimes, the chain pulling. In all the three respects we are trying to tighten our machinery. We have told all the officers concerned that wherever staff is responsible for the loss of punctuality, very stern and strict action is to be taken and the necessary punishment to be awarded. Wherever the equipment failure is there, the Maintenance Department must see to it that more rigorous inspections are conducted. As far as the chain pulling is concerned, it is not uniform throughout the country. Somewhere near Ghaziabad, in some places in north Bihar and also near Kanpur, the chain pulling is on the increase. Therefore, we have requested a number of social organisations to help us rather than seeking the help of the police. In reply to what we are going to do to improve discipline, I would like to say that one concrete measure to improve discipline of the railway employees is to give them a sense of justice and a sense of participation in the railway administration. That is the best way by which we will be able to maintain discipline.

Scheme to recover Salt from Sea Water

*29 SHRI D. D. DESAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plans to recover more salt from sea water and put up various chemical factories along the sea coast using this salt as the raw material; and

(b) if so, the salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Additional areas have been approved for salt manufacture on the West Coast to parties who have plans to increase their capacities for the manufacture of Caustic Soda and Soda Ash.

Three companies viz., Tata Chemicals Ltd., Saurashtra Chemicals and Ballarpur Industries Ltd., have been allowed additional areas of 16,343, 1,849 & 1,000 acres respectively for salt manufacture. These companies will use the additional salt production for expanding their capacities for the manufacture of Caustic Soda and Soda Ash.

SHRI D. D. DESAI: Our country is uniquely placed in the matter of manufacture of salt because the concentration of salt in the sea water is higher here than anywhere else in the world. Besides, we have excellent sun heat available and that provides us a greater benefit. But the Minister has not made clear as to why the production of salt is going down.

It is an employment intensive industry and the un-employment is one of our important factors. The output of salt is dropping and the causes of drop of output were not mentioned by the Minister. I would request the hon. Minister to tell me whether it is a fact that the cost of purchase of overseas buyers relates firstly to loading rate of salt into the steamer and the bulk movement of salt on the high seas to anywhere where the salt is required. For example, many of the salt based chemicals factories are located on sea shores. Secondly, I would like to know whether the facilities that exist at the salt work are adequate and whether there are any efforts or any system adopted by the salt work so that they can function more efficiently and provide salt within the country at lower prices?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The production of salt is regulated by the Central Excise and Salt Tax Act 1954 administered by the Department of Industry. I would request my hon. friend to direct the question to the Ministry concerned.

SHRI D. D. DESAI: I think he has given a reply which is not satisfactory. Salt was one of the movements that

we started for independence. When we are talking of Gandhian philosophy, it must be one of our primary considerations in several aspects. The Minister was talking about soda ash and caustic soda. He has not given details of several other chemicals which could be manufactured with the help of salt. I would like to know whether he is interested in developing the high technology or is he just going to concentrate on heavy chemicals? I would also like to know whether the loading facilities which exist at the ports would be improved because he is responsible for salt production?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The question is very limited. The question relates to the allotment of additional area. I have answered that question. If the hon. Member wants to have more information, he can give another notice for another question.

SHRI S. KUNDU: I think the hon. Minister is aware of the imbalance of salt production over the east coast and the west coast. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that some backward States like Orissa which is having a long coast line (more than 300 miles) still imports common salt from outside? Has the Minister kept any policy in his mind where we can meet this imbalance and see that the backward States (along the north east coastline) can also manufacture it and other by products from sea water?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: While I must welcome the production of salt from anywhere and everywhere I am limited to industrial uses of salt and the rest is looked after by my hon. colleague the Minister of Industry. He alone can help you in the manufacture of salt or the processes connected with it.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN: I am sure the hon. Minister must be aware of the fact that there was a flourishing trade in the export of salt from several

parts of the country, particularly in the South Tamil Nadu and Kerala. A huge quantity of salt used to be manufactured indigenously. It is a highly labour intensive industry. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has any plan to revive it utilising modern science and technology in the field. I think in the wake of modern science and technology, several chemicals can be manufactured utilising salt. Indian salt is of such high quality that chemicals such as sodium compound, iodine, bromines and other materials can be manufactured. I would like to know from minister whether he will explore the possibility of utilising the unutilized labour and make the production of salt cheap so that we might revive our export trade and manufacture various chemicals.

MR. SPEAKER: You give him time to answer your questions because the question hour is going to be over.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: So far as the question of export of various things based on salt is concerned, that certainly is being done; salt is being exported and the other things are also likely to be exported. So far as the large spectrum of chemicals based on salt is concerned, it will require a full question hour to be answered. All I can say is that the Ministry is quite aware of and alive to, the need for utilising salt as the basic chemical for conversion into many chemicals.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: In view of the fact that the salt content in the sea water that abounds in Sunderbans area is one of the highest in the country, will the Minister kindly tell us whether he would be willing to conduct a survey for recovery of salt from this water in Sunderbans area for industrial and other uses?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: I have taken the information that my hon. friend has passed on about the nature

of the salt in the water in Sunderbans area; I am thankful to him for that.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: My question was specific. I have said that the salt content in that water is one of the highest in the country and I have asked whether he will conduct a survey immediately so as to recover salt from that water for industrial and other uses. Let him say 'yes' or 'no'.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Right now we are not doing it on our own in any part of the country. All I can say is that we shall certainly keep in mind the Sunderbans area; whenever a new proposition is thought of, Sunderbans will be considered.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Shortfall in availability of High Speed Diesel and Kerosene

*25. **SHRI SUKHDEO PRASAD VERMA:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the shortfall in the indigenous production and availability of high speed diesel and kerosene; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to make up the shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) Though there has been no overall problem of availability of High Speed Diesel (HSD) and Kerosene in the country some shortages of very brief durations were experienced in certain areas of North-West India during the second half of May, 1977 because of a sudden spurt in demand and problems of transportation caused

by strikes in Koyali (Gujarat) Refinery and Bombay Port which have since been resolved.

(b) Crude throughputs in the Refineries have been increased for the month of June to the extent possible and some additional imports of HSD and Kerosene have been arranged from the Gulf area. Efforts are also being made to import more of these commodities from the Soviet Union under the Indo-USSR Trade Plan during June, 1977. It is expected that as a result of these steps, there will be no shortages of these products.

Trains on Pathankot-Joginder Nagar Railway Line

*27. **SHRI DURGA CHAND:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether on Pathankot-Joginder Nagar railway line 4 trains used to run in the recent past;

(b) whether at present only two trains, one Express and the other Passenger, are running on this line causing great hardships to the passengers;

(c) whether Government have received any representation for the restoration of 4 passenger trains on this line; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At present 2 pairs of trains, one passenger train and one fast passenger train, are running on this line.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Introduction of a third pair of trains on this section is under examination and action as found justified and feasible would be taken.