

SHRI PURNANARAYAN SINHA: In view of the fact that whole of the North East is a backward area, is there any programme of the Government in the public sector to start any drug unit in that area?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The public sector presently has no such intentions. But if there are small scale entrepreneurs or even other entrepreneurs, we will welcome them.

Talcher Fertilizer Plant

*230. **SHRI GANANATH PRADHAN:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress so far made for commissioning the Talcher Fertilizer Plant at Talcher, Orissa;

(b) the total expenditure incurred by Government so far on the project; and

(c) the various factors contributing to the delay in commencing commercial production in the unit?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The first gasifier in the Talcher fertilizer project was stabilised on 18th October, 1978 and the second on 22nd November, 1978. Test runs are in progress in the other sections of the plant. The plant is expected to be commissioned in February/March, 1979 and to go into commercial production in July, 1979.

(b) The total expenditure incurred on the project upto 31-10-1978 is Rs. 151.77 crores.

(c) The Project comprises a large number of sections which have to be commissioned and stabilised in sequence. The delay in the commissioning of the project has been due mainly

to the difficulty in commissioning and stabilising the gasifiers and other sections due to trippings caused by failure of equipment, power failures, etc. The two gasifiers have now been stabilised and action is on hand to commission other sections.

SHRI GANANATH PRADHAN: The managerial inefficiency is responsible for the delay in commissioning the plant and reaching commercial production stage. It is understood that the present General Manager, Mr. Biswas, is not interested to remain there. He generally remains out of the headquarters for most of the time and this causes unnecessary delay in the commissioning of the plant. I want to know when will this plant be commissioned for production?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The plant will be commissioned in March/April, 1979. There are a number of causes for its delay like delay in the finalisation of civil designs for nearly 12 months, which was done by the P&D of the FCI; delays in the civil construction activities of the contractor; delays in the supply of equipment imported and local mainly latter especially by the Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels to the extent of 24 to 30 months. Commissioning of the project has also been delayed on account of the necessity for effecting some modifications due to the extremely intricate knowhow in the matter of coal gasification of which even those who were the consultants, M/s Koppers of Germany, did not have all the knowledge and they went on time and again doing it because in the world, except South Africa, no other country has full knowledge about it.

SHRI GANGA PRADHAN: It is understood that faulty equipment have been purchased from different sections and that is why, the plant is facing recurring failure stage by stage. Is the Minister prepared to inquire into the matter of installation of faulty equipment and delay in commissioning the project, about which the people have complained to his Ministry?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Now that the work is almost at its end and the actual production is likely to start by the end of February/March, 1979, it will not be correct to assume that the plant has faulty equipment. We have completed the main power receiving station, water treatment plant, steam generation plant, gasifiers and most of the complicated things are all over. But as I told you, this is the first of its type which is being done out of South Africa. There arise a number of problems which we have, time and again to overcome.

SHRI F. P. GAEKWAD: The Minister was pleased to state that this particular knowhow was only available with South Africa. If this is so, why was it not considered before giving approval to this project?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: M/s. Koppers of Germany were the consultants of South Africa also and the then Government of India in the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals could find Koppers to do the job for us also. Since at that point of time, the availability of petroleum products especially naphtha was very low and the Bombay High gas was not yet identified, we were going in for production of fertiliser on coal based sort of thing. We had to jump into the fray and do the things rather than waiting with hands clasped.

Blitz Report on Railways

*231. **SHRI VASANT SATHE:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the report appearing in 'Blitz' News Weekly from Bombay dated the 4th November, 1978 under the caption "Diesel Lobby kills out Railways to Multas";

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government to the various observations of serious nature made therein; and

(c) the details regarding the facts of the matter?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MAHARU DANDAVATE): (a), to (c). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The report appearing in 'Blitz' News-Weekly dated the 4th November, 1978 referred to in the Question has distorted and presented an incorrect interpretation of the facts. The correct position relating to the issues raised therein is as under:

To examine the adequacy of existing locomotive designs, to optimally meet the increasing/changing traction requirements of the future, and to formulate Railways' future Motive Power Plan, a 12-man multi-disciplinary Committee has been constituted. The report of this Committee is still awaited. A decision on the issues involved will be taken on receipt of the Committee's report.

Regarding electrification, it is the policy of the Indian Railways to gradually electrify trunk and other routes when the traffic density on these routes becomes sufficiently high to render electrification and economically superior alternative to dieselisation. The pace of electrification is further subject to the overriding constraint of availability of necessary funds for the substantial capital investment on electrification schemes. The Planning Commission has to make the necessary allocation of funds.

In view of the changing price relatives of critical inputs of the electrification and dieselisation alternatives, a Committee had been constituted, associating the Planning Commission, to provide a framework for appraising the economic viability of electrification schemes and to form a basis for drawing up the future electrification plan of the Indian Railways. The Committee has submitted its report which is under examination and further action towards electrification will