

not been possible to prevent exploitation of more than 75 per cent workers. Despite all these efforts, it has been possible to get accreditation forms of only one-fourth workers filled and to get benefits of various legal provisions extended to them. It is, therefore, necessary to make more efforts to get accreditation forms of more workers filled.

There is a provision to grant Rs. 5000 from the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund to workers for the construction of houses. Out of this amount, Rs. 1000 is given in the form of a grant-in-aid and the remaining Rs. 4000 in the form of a loan without interest. But in a big state like Madhya Pradesh, where there are 15 lakh Beedi Workers, it has been possible to construct only 200 houses during the last 10 years. It is a very serious matter. One of the reasons for this is that land is not easily available for the construction of houses. The second reason is that in the present time of high prices, it is not even possible to construct a single room with Rs. 5000. Therefore, keeping in view the above difficulties of Beedi Workers, on the one hand the Department of Labour may please enhance the amount of grant for house-building and on the other arrangements may be made with the State Government to provide land to Beedi Workers at cheap rates.

[English]

**(v) Need to set up a Railway Station at Epurupalam in Prakasha district, Andhra Pradesh**

SHRI C. SAMBU (Bapatla): Epurupalam is a major panchayati located in Prakasha district, Andhra Pradesh. The panchayati has 40,000 population. Most of the people of this town are depending on handloom business and agriculture. There is no railway station at Epurupalam. People are facing lot of problems in going to other places and are facing lot of inconveniences to send their handloom cloth and agricultural produce to different destinations. There is one railway station at Chirala which is too far from there. I have submitted a representation from the people of Epurupalam and panchayati to the

General Manager, Vijayawada and General Manager, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh to provide a railway station at Epurupalam. Survey was completed in favour of Epurupalam but the work has not yet started.

I request the Hon'ble Minister of Railways to open a mini-railway station and issue suitable instructions to the railway authorities to stop the passenger trains at Epurupalam.

**(vi) Need to take-over Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Ltd., Bhadra Vathi (Karnataka) by SAIL**

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER (Bangalore South): Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited, Bhadravati, Karnataka is one of the oldest and prestigious steel plants founded by engineer-statesman Dr. M. Visvesvaraya. This iron and steel works has been incurring huge losses for the past few years and the State Government is not in a position to extend financial help and modernise the steel plant. This steel plant can be run on profit and it is possible to modernise it if the Steel Authority of India takes it over and runs it. The Government of Karnataka has already requested the takeover of the Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited by the Steel Authority of India. It is requested that immediate decision should be taken to take it over by SAIL.

**(vii) Need to provide more edible oil (Palmolein) to Maharashtra**

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE (Bombay North Central): The prices of edible oil along with all other essential consumer goods have risen very high. They are already out of reach of the common man and something has to be done by Government to control them.

The State of Maharashtra is a deficit State so far as oil and oilseeds are concerned. The State has been receiving imported edible oil (Palmolein) from Government of India. In July 1987, in all 13,200 M.T. of Palmolein oil has been allotted to Maharashtra. The next few months from August to

[Shri Sharad Dighe]

October is not only a lean season so far as oil is concerned by it is a period of festivals. Maharashtra is, therefore, likely to experience difficulties during these months. Government of India should, therefore, increase the allocation of Palmolein oil during this period by 20,000 M. Ts. per month from August 1987 for Maharashtra State.

**(viii) Need to reconsider the jurisdiction of new Sambalpur Railway Division**

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh): The Railway Authority has decided that the proposed Sambalpur Division will comprise Jharasuguda-Balangir, Balangir-Titilagarh, Titilagarh-Rayagada and titilagarh-Raipur sections of South-Eastern Railway and Sambalpur-Talcher new line under construction. Besides all these, the section from Bandomunda to Himgir spread over Sambalpur and Sundergarh districts in Orissa on the Bombay-Howrah line should, in all fairness, come under the jurisdiction of the new Sambalpur Division. The exclusion of this section on the plea of feasibility is far from convincing. A spot visit by the top Railway Authority will bring home the genuineness of this popular demand. I would request the concerned Railway Authority to reconsider the matter from a practical and sympathetic view-point so as to include the Bandomunda-Himgir section of Bombay-Howrah line in the jurisdiction of the Sambalpur Railway Division.

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12.40 hrs.

MOTION RE APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REPORT OF SWEDISH NATIONAL AUDIT BUREAU ON THE BOFORS CONTRACT. *CONTD.*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we will take further consideration of the motion

moved by Shri K. C. Pant on the 29th July, 1987.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. C. PANT): Sir, I have already moved the motion standing in my name. Hon. Members are aware of the discussions which took place in this House, during the preceding Session, in regard to the allegations of payment of commission in the purchase of 155 mm guns from Bofors of Sweden. In view of the developments in the intervening period it appears useful to recount the sequence of events, particularly those in the recent past.

As the hon. Members will recall, the allegations of improper payments made by Bofors, based on the broadcast by the Swedish National Radio Company, were disclosed in our press on April 17, 1987. As all precautions had been taken to ensure against the involvement of middlemen in the negotiations with Bofors and assurances also obtained from the latter, Government denied these allegations the same day in the press. Simultaneously, we conveyed to Parliament the Government's resolve to secure the full facts in regard to the allegations. Even though April 17 to 20, 1987 were Easter Holidays in Sweden, even conceivable effort was made to contact the highest echelons in the Swedish Government during their holidays period. Based on the information gathered, I had made a statement in this hon. House on the first available opportunity, i.e. on Monday the 20th April, 1987. In the statement made in this House, as well as in the Rajya Sabha, we had explained the measures taken to prevent the involvement of middlemen in the Bofor's negotiations. In pursuance of these statements, Government has been making vigorous efforts to uncover the whole truth.

On April 20, 1987, Shri Oza, our Ambassador in Stockholm, met the representatives of Bofors and sought full clarifications about the allegations. He pursued similar enquiries with the Swedish Foreign Office, on April 21, 1987 and *inter alia*, requested them also to use their good offices with Bofors to persuade Bofors to convey to us the entire