

[Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh]

Cotton and Jute Mills in the Gaya district of Bihar is being run by N.T.C. This Cotton and Jute Mill is almost on the brink of closure. The Mill has been running at loss for years together. 400 workers of this Mill have constantly been urging the management of the Mill to develop it and increase the production. They have constantly been urging the management to make available the raw material and replace the obsolete machinery. The workers who insist upon the aforesaid improvements are retrenched. The condition of the Mill is so bad that the workers have not been paid their salary for as many as four months, with the result that the children of the workers are suffering from malnutrition as well as lack of education.

Government should take appropriate action and have the Mill run properly.

[*English*]

(ix) Directions to Coffee Board to purchase Coffee from producers of Idukki and to provide godown facilities at Idukki

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Sir, I raise the following matter of public importance to draw the attention of the Minister of Commerce. In my constituency, Idukki, there are a large number of coffee growers who own small holdings. In fact, a major chunk of coffee produced in Kerala is from Idukki District. Coffee produced by growers is collected by the Coffee Board through their agents. The collection season is from January to March. This year the collecting agents are not able to purchase the coffee from growers on account of the fact that the coffee already purchased by these agents have not been lifted by the Coffee Board. Sufficient transportation arrangements are also not provided by Coffee Board for lifting coffee from pooled depots to main storage depots. This is a period of repayment of loans to the cooperatives and other banks and the farmers are in a predicament. They are not able to sell their yield. I want the hon. Minister to pay his immediate attention to this matter I request him to direct the Coffee Board to take urgent steps to lift coffee

immediately from the pooled depots, purchase the coffee produced by the growers and take necessary steps for providing additional godown facilities wherever necessary in the district of Idukki.

Also as coffee cultivation is not profitable in the present context of high costs of cultivation, I request that the minimum release price of coffee may be enhanced and the excise duty on coffee may be lifted.

13.04 hrs.

REPORT OF NATIONAL
TRANSPORT POLICY
COMMITTEE—Contd.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, hon. Minister, Shri Z.R. Ansari may continue his speech.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND
TRANSPORT (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a partly-heard
speech.

The other day while taking part in the debate on the Report of the National Transport Policy Committee, I just had time to meet a few questions which have been raised by hon. Member regarding the port sector. With regard to port sector there is only one point which I just want to clarify regarding minor ports. The management of minor and intermediate ports is the responsibility of the State Governments. The upkeep and improvement of the minor ports and their development is under the control of the State Governments. But the Working Group on Ports set up by the Planning Commission for the Seventh Five Year Plan has recommended a scheme to provide Central assistance to the States for the development of minor and intermediate ports. Now, those recommendations are incorporated in the Seventh Five Year Plan. The implementation of the recommendation, namely the quantum

of central assistance to be given from the Centre to the State Governments for the development of minor and intermediate ports under the scheme would involve Rs. 100 crores. Then, we will certainly take care of those minor and intermediate ports and give assistance to those ports.

As far as the inland water transport sector is concerned, this august House is very much aware that the Government of India, in pursuance of accepting the recommendations of the National Transport Policy Committee, has declared one water-way as national water-way and an Act to this effect has been passed by Parliament. And on commissioning of Farakka lock-gate, the notification will be issued. Now, 10 river systems and canal systems have been identified for taking up as national water-ways, one after the other. In the Seventh Five Year Plan, the Working Group has recommended 5 such systems to be taken up and declared as national water-ways.

Hon. Member, Shri S. Krishna Kumar has raised a question regarding West Coast Canal to be developed as national water-way. I may just inform the House and through you the hon. Member that the West Coast Canal system from Cochine to Quilon is one of those systems which have been identified by the Working Group to be included in the Seventh Five Year Plan. The development in the sector of inland water transport has been very fast during this Plan period. In the First Five Year Plan, there was no allocation for the inland water transport. In the Second Five Year Plan, there was an allocation of Rs. 143 lakhs. In the Third Five Year Plan, there was an allocation of Rs. 760 lakhs. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, there was an allocation of Rs. 900 lakhs and in the Fifth Plan, it was Rs. 2,492 lakhs. In the Sixth Plan period, the allocation was Rs. 4,500 lakhs.

The first National water-way which we have declared is Ganga-Hooghly-Bhagirati river system from Allahabad to Haldia. This portion has been declared as national water-way.

Now, if you divide it into three stretches, one stretch is between Haldia and Farakka. The scheme for providing infrastructure facilities has been sanctioned by the Government and it is under implementation. The scheme includes river conservation works and channel markings. The CIWTC has already started running river services on this stretch.

As regards the second stretch between Farakka and Patna, a scheme costing Rs. 390 lakhs covering this stretch has already been approved only recently and the work will begin very shortly.

Regarding the third stretch between Patna and Allahabad, it requires some further indepth studies and some more measures to be taken for the introduction of river service. For this stretch, a pilot project has been approved at a cost of Rs. 10 crores with the Dutch assistance. Rs. 4 crores is the component of Dutch assistance and Rs. 6 crores is our contribution. This scheme includes procurement of survey vessels, raising units, surveying instruments, barges and training.

Some hon. Member also raised the matter of inland water transport on the Narmada river. I may inform the hon. Member that the feasibility report for the development of that stretch between Hoshangabad and the sea for carrying bulk commodities like coal is under study. This scheme is also being assisted by the Dutch exports.

There was a question raised regarding the Inland Waterways Authority of India. Since we are going to take up inland water transport in a big way as an alternative to our other modes of transport which is for bulk transportation which is much cheaper, which is pollution free and which requires lesser power, the National Transport Policy Committee has recommended the establishment of Inland Waterways Authority of India. As far as we are concerned, we have accepted this recommendation. The Committee has also recommended it in principle and a draft legislation for setting up the

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Authority has been prepared. It is under finalisation in consultation with the Ministry of Law.

I just want to add that for the Inland Water Transport Corporation, a scheme has already been sanctioned for acquisition of 50 vessels. This scheme was intended to augment the one-way carrying capacity of the Corporation from 2.04 lakhs tonnes to 5.80 lakh tonnes.

With the growing awareness of enormous advantages of IWT, particularly for the movement of bulk cargo, the demand for the movement of cargo by IWTC has increased considerably. In order to meet the demand of the Seventh Five Year Plan, the capacity of Central Inland Water Transport Corporation is planned to be increased to 12 lakh tonnes by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan. The Rajbagan Dock Yard under this Corporation is being modernised in order to meet the growing demand of the construction of vessels as well as repairs of the inland vessels.

As far as road transport is concerned, in the metropolitan cities with a population of 5 lakhs and above, it is the bus system which caters to the needs of the commuters. In Delhi and in many other metropolitan cities, there is no alternative to this road transport and no other system supplements the road transport.

As far as the growth of DTC is concerned, in 1980-81, the DTC had a fleet of 3,091 buses and in 1984-85, we have 5,040 buses. The number of passengers carried during 1980-81 was 25.5 lakhs and during 1984-85 it was 40.86 lakhs. I just want to make a point that the activities of the DTC are increasing. The number of routes in 1980-81 was 456. Now we have 660 routes. If you see the route KM performed, it was 8,570 in 1980-81 while in 1984-85 it was 13,220. So, the area of activity and the quantum of service of the DTC to the commuters of Delhi has very much increased but I do agree that there is a demand that more needs to be done because the present bus system cannot fully meet the demands of

our commuters. A proposal for ETB system as recommended by National Transport Policy Committee from Sahdara to Janakpuri is under consideration and feasibility study for M-Bahn system in Delhi is being prepared. It is a new system which will ease the problem of Delhi's commuters. Feasibility studies of this system for Srinagar and Trivandrum have already been done.

The NTPC has very strongly recommended the replacement of the present Act by a coherent legislation for promoting adequate and efficient road transport. As the House knows, the present Motor Vehicles Act is quite old and there is lot of patch work. The recommendation of the National Transport Policy Committee has been accepted by the Government and action has been initiated. The Ministry of Shipping and Transport has constituted a Working Group to go into the question of provisions of the present Act, as also to bring the provisions in turn with modern needs.

The question regarding misuse of All India tourist bus permits has been raised. This question was also raised in the Transport Development Committee in which all the Ministers from the States are members. This question was discussed in that Committee also and a decision was taken that present system of All India tourist bus permits required some changes. They recommended that a revised scheme should be prepared. The revised system provides for the grant of permit to the operator where he can choose a minimum number of five States, including the home State for operation and can add any number of States as and when he desires. We are just trying to improve that system instead of saying good-bye to that system. The Transport Development Committee has also taken a view that, until the revised system comes into operation, the number of national tourist permits should not be increased. This is all regarding transport sector.

The recommendation for creating a single transport authority for metropolitan cities has been accepted by the Government of India with the modification that

the sub-urban rail service run on sections common to trunk rail service would remain a part of the railway concerned. The implementation of this recommendation has been assigned to the Ministry of Works and Housing. Recently a Working Group has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Works and Housing including among others the Secretary of State Government of West Bengal to study in detail the various aspects and problems relating to metropolitan transport. As you know, road transport is essentially a State subject and whatever is the outcome of the Working Group, certainly may cover recommendations to the State Governments for follow-up action. The recommendation regarding the introduction of the CTD and the National Transport Policy has been accepted and as I have already said in Delhi in one corridor we are just going to study to get that system included.

The only sector which remains and in which my hon. friend, Mr Vyas is very much interested—this is also a sector in which all of us are interested—is the road sector. Before I deal with the road sector, a question was raised regarding the improvement of the bullock-cart and the recommendation of the National Transport Policy Committee also regarding some development of the bullock cart. Research and studies have already been carried out by the Road Research Institute and the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and a number of efficient designs have now been developed and these are now on field trials.

I just want to apprise the hon. Member. The major question in which the hon. Members are very much interested is the condition of the National Highways and increase in the kilometrage of the National Highways. The position as it exists today is that we have about 32,000 km of National Highways and just for removing the deficiencies which are there in our national Highways, we would require an amount of Rs. 4500 crores. Again it is the same question of nine maunds of oil being available and Radha dancing only when it is available. So this is the problem,

we are just facing. There are demands and I do agree there are genuine demands from the hon. Members and from some State Governments for declaring certain State Highways as National Highways and the Working Group has already made some recommendations regarding that. The working group has recommended 7500 km to be taken up in the Seventh Five year Plan as national highways.

Sir, recently in Lucknow there was a meeting of the top engineers and they have prepared a perspective plan upto the end of this century. According to that perspective plan the increase of the national highways should be upto 66,000 km. This is the position.

Sir, presently our position is that we do not know as to what extent the recommendations of the working group of the Seventh Five Year Plan will be accepted by the Planning Commission. We will not know the clear picture before the finalisation of the Seventh Five Year Plan but certainly there are two conflicting claims. One is to increase the length of the national highway system and the other is to improve and to remove the deficiencies of the present national highway system. The present position is that our stress is more for removing the deficiencies in the present national highway system.

Sir, a question has been raised regarding allocation of funds for repairs and maintenance of national highways.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara) : We have demanded a new National Highway. Please tell us something about it.

[English]

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : My friend does not realise my difficulty. My difficulty is that if I concede, because of friendship, his demand then I shall be in troubled waters. The position is that all these roads which have been recommended by the hon. Members as well as

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the State governments are before the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission will take a view on the recommendations of the working group and unless the final position of the Seventh Five Year Plan is known I cannot say anything about it.

I think that there appears to be some misconception in the minds of some hon. Members that there are no criteria laid down for providing for the maintenance of the national highway.

Sir, when we allocate the funds for the maintenance of the national highway, the questions which have to be considered, are, the rainfall in that area, the terrain of that area where the national highway exists, whether it is hilly area or desert area, what sort of soil it is, the intensity of the track, the condition of the road, etc. We have to go into the question as to what is the actual condition of the road. All these factors are being taken into account while allocating funds for maintenance and development of any national highway anywhere.

Although it does not fall strictly under the Ministry of Shipping and Transport, I may add that Government of India attaches considerable importance to the provision of accessibility to the villages under the Minimum Needs Programme. Plan targets have been prescribed for achievement by 1990. All villages with population of about 1500 should be connected by an all-weather road and 50 per cent of the villages with the population of 1000 to 1500 should be connected by all-weather roads. The funds earmarked cannot be diverted to other programmes. So, this decision has been taken. Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of this programme. (Interruptions). I do not think that I can give a better reply.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : How many villages with 1500 population have been provided with these roads.....

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI : Leave that aside.

[English]

There was a question raised by hon. Member, Shri Indrajit Gupta and also probably by Prof. Madhu Dandavate regarding the second Hooghly Bridge, I cannot give a better reply than what the hon. Member Shri Das Muni has given.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore) : Make him a Minister.

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI : This is not in my hands. Otherwise I would have appointed you.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : How can you appoint him ? You can't do it.

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI : This project, second Hooghly bridge, is not a national project, but it is a State project. For that State project, Central Government is giving assistance. It is to be executed by the State Public Works Department.

*"Pakde jate hain farishton ke kahe
par na hum"*

[Translations]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : But at least find out whether they have spent that money or not because we are not satisfied.....(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI : I am not in the habit of giving any sort of reply to running commentary. The position is this, that we have given assistance to the State Government for that bridge. It is a loan assistance given within the parameters which have been laid down.

I do not say that I have covered all the points. But I have covered the major points which were raised by the hon. Members, Sir, with these words, I am thankful to the hon. Members for a very

purposeful discussion and again I should say that I am advocating the cause of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport for more allocation of funds for this sector by the Planning Commission. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : The hon. Minister should tell us whether he would implement our suggestions or not ?

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI : Why shall we not do so when you are pleading our cause ?

13.41 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE : DIS-
APPROVAL OF BHOPAL GAS LEAK
DISASTER (PROCESSING OF
CLAIMS) ORDINANCE
AND
BHOPAL GAS LEAK DISASTER
(PROCESSING OF CLAIMS)
BILL

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, the House will take up items No. 10 and 11 of the List of Business together for which three hours have been allotted. Now, Mr. C. Janga Reddy to move his Statutory Resolution.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY (Hanamkonda) : I beg to move :

“This House disapproves of the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Ordinance, 1985 (Ordinance No. 1 of 1985) promulgated by the President on the 20th February, 1985.”

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill, as passed by Rajya Sabha, seeks to authorise the Central Government to fight cases in courts on behalf of the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

There are two or three clauses about which it has not been made clear why they have been included in the Bill.

In the Statement of Objects and Reasons it has been stated that—

[English]

“Government has been anxious to ensure that the interests of the victims of the disaster are fully protected and that the claims for compensation or damages for loss of life or personal injuries or in respect of other matters arising out of or connected with the disaster are processed speedily, effectively, equitably and to the best advantage of the claimants.”

[Translation]

Government want to file claims in the law court on behalf of the people who have been affected by the gas, have suffered personal injuries or have been lying sick, and to ensure expeditious payment of compensation to the victims.

I would like to submit that there are other multinationals also like this Company. We know what kind of people these Union Carbide owners are. They have their factories all over the world. In India also they have factories at different places. Only yesterday I came to know that in Delhi also similar things are happening in Sriram Fertilizers.

For the last two or three days Telugu papers have been publishing reports that there are similar factories near Hyderabad also and the people of the area are in the grip of fear on this account. The people all over India who are residing near factories of the type of Union Carbide, Bhopal, are quite apprehensive. From the Telugu papers it appears that another Bhopal-type incident is going to occur in Hyderabad.

Bharat Tobacco Company, Sriram Fertilizers, Delhi, Laxmi Star Factory, Golden Tobacco Company, Hyderabad, etc., are the factories in India which are