

I request that the above steps may be taken immediately to improve the facilities being provided by Simla Station of the All India Radio.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI VASANT SATHE): I will give full sympathetic considerations to all these suggestions. Detailed reply will be sent to him.

(Interruptions.)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपने तो दोनों को राजी कर लिया ।

That also will receive very sympathetic consideration.

(iii) **STRIKE BY EMPLOYEES OF GENERAL INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA.**

SHRI K. A. RAJAN (Trichur): Under Rule 377, I am making a statement.

Through you I would like to draw the attention of the Finance Minister and Government of India to the fact that the 24,000 Class III and Class IV employees of General Insurance Corporation of India had observed several token strikes in the month of October/November, 1980 and are now going on an indefinite strike as a protest against the total deadlock in the negotiations and the refusal of the General Insurance Corporation management and the Government to protect their existing rights and privileges, and particularly the Dearness Allowance neutralization. As a matter of fact the General Insurance Corporation management was called by the Labour Ministry for the conciliatory proceedings which the Corporation through Finance Ministry boycotted on 22nd September, 1980 and published unilaterally the Service conditions of the employees by an Extra Gazette Notification of the Government of India on 30th September, 1980, by which the wages of the employees are reduced to the maximum extent. Similarly the General Insurance Corporation management had reduced the quantum of Bonus of the employees from 20 per cent to 15 per cent unilaterally and arbitrarily. I, therefore,

draw the attention of Government in respect of the above development in the General Insurance Corporation. I further say that the Prime Minister herself should intervene in the matter and amicably settle the dispute arisen between the General Insurance Corporation management and the employees.

(iv) **MASTER PLAN FOR CAPE CAMORIN**

SHRI N. DENNIS (Nagercoil): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Cape Camorin, the southernmost part of our nation has to be developed into an important place of tourist attraction. Thousands of national and international tourists, pilgrims and others are visiting this place daily with the keen interest of seeing the southernmost part of India, the place where the three seas meet, to witness the full view of sunrise and sunset, to see the Vivekananda Memorial rock, the Gandhi memorial building 'Gandhi Mandapam' and other beautiful sceneries of tourist attraction and also for offering worship before the famous 'Bhagavathy Amman' temple. For the promotion of national integration too, this southernmost part of our nation has to be developed. But tourists are handicapped with several obstacles. There is no express train service, no aerodrome, no adequate hotel facilities and there are even no adequate water facilities. So, the Government may be pleased to take immediate steps to remove these difficulties and develop Cape Camorin into a place of International tourist attraction through the implementation of a master plan.

(v) **FAIR PRICE FOR BETEL LEAF PLANTERS IN WEST BENGAL**

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA (Tamluk): Mr. Speaker, Sir, thousands of betel leaf planters in West Bengal, particularly in the sub-division of Tamluk in Midnapore District are experiencing a tremendous hardship due to the fact that they are not getting a fair price for their products.

Betel leaves are grown on over 7,00,000 acres in West Bengal. The leaves are mainly grown in Midnapore, Howrah, Nadia, Hooghly, South 24

[Shri Satyagopal Misra]

Parganas and parts of North Bengal and over 1,50,000 families are engaged in it. The planters live on this and their only means of livelihood of the total production of these leaves in West Bengal, 73 per cent is sold outside the State. The total income from these amounts to Rs. 67 crores per year, of which income from export to West Asian countries is Rs. 23 crores. A good market for these leaves also exist in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

But the poor farmers who grow these leaves live in a wretched condition. They do not get a good price for their products mainly due to the facts that:

- (a) the railway booking system is very cumbersome and irregular,
- (b) restrictions imposed by the Central Government on the export of betel leaves to Pakistan,
- (c) the unhealthy influence exerted on the trade by a group of people known as 'forias' (Middlemen); and
- (d) the most important of all the lack of State patronage.

The Government of West Bengal has been apprised of the situation and they have promptly taken up some measures. They have given betel leaves the recognition as 'agricultural crop'. The State Government has decided to open three regulated markets for betel leaves at Boguan in Howrah and Tam-luk and Raktya/Ramnagar in Midnapore at an estimated cost of Rs. 75 lakhs. The State Government is also extending capital grant to betel leaf farmers.

After congratulating the Government of West Bengal for all these measures adopted after duly considering the poor plight of the betel leaf plants in the State, I request the Central Government to come forward with all the resources at its disposal to save these families from total extinction. I further request the centre to lift the restrictions imposed upon the export

of betel leaves to Pakistan and try to find out the possibilities for its export to the neighbouring Bangladesh. Betel leaves should be recognised by the Centre as 'agricultural crop'. Moreover, the railway booking system, particularly at Mecheda, Panskura and Howrah Stations should be made regular and easier, so that the planters can avail of this transport. The Central Government may consider the proposal of extending financial help to the farmers and also finding out new markets inside the country for betel leaves and improving the existing ones.

All these measures, if adopted and carried out with all sincerity, would do a yeomen's service for lakhs of poor farmers who toil hard for their livelihood but who in turn are facing dire consequences.

(vi) STEPS TO EXTINGUISH FIRE IN
JALAVAN COLIERIES IN BIHAR.

श्री रीत लाल शर्मा (कोडरमा) :
अध्यक्ष जी, बिहार के 225 वर्ग किलोमीटर जलावन कोयला क्षेत्र में से 20 वर्ग किलोमीटर भयंकर आग की चपेट में फंसा हुआ है। झरिया के हिन्दी साप्ताहिक "चुनौती" के अनुसार अभी तक लगभग 3 करोड़ 40 लाख टन कोयला जल कर नष्ट हो चुका है। 4 करोड़ 60 लाख टन जलावन कोयला अभी आग की चपेट में फंसा हुआ है। विशेषज्ञों ने बताया है कि यदि फंसे हुए कोयले को बचा लिया जाय तो इसमें 2 करोड़ 90 लाख टन इस्पात अथवा 142 अरब इकाई बिजली का उत्पादन किया जा सकता है।

माइनिंग रिसर्च स्टेशन एवं ईस्टर्न कोल-फील्ड लिमिटेड के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में विशेषज्ञों एवं 150 प्रतिनिधियों (प्रतिष्ठानों) की एक गोष्ठी आयोजित भी की जा चुकी है। आग पर नियंत्रणार्थ कई सुझाव एवं चर्चा हुई है। किन्तु उपाय कारगर अभी तक सिद्ध नहीं हुए हैं। कोयला जला जा रहा है। अनाप अनाप खर्चे अधिकारी बर्ग