

Township for the Farakka Super Thermal Power Project at Farakka is sought to be located in Malda district. Farakka is in Murshidabad district and it is on the one bank of the Ganga and Malda is on the other bank. If the township for Farakka is built in Malda it will present great difficulty to the workers and officers of Farakka Thermal Project. For a power plant where operational problems are to be attended constantly this would also create operational problems. Hon'ble Minister for Energy should inform the House whether such a proposal is being entertained and if so, whether he would reject this so that the township and the Super Thermal Project at Farakka remain at the same place particularly when there is no dearth of place in Farakka.

(v) SUPPLY OF RICE TO KERALA

SHRI V. S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palghat): Under Rule 377, I am making a statement.

The distribution of rice in Kerala has been paralysed. The situation is such that distribution of rice through ration shops will come to a complete standstill till at least January. It is quite regrettable that the move to deny the supply of rice to the people of Kerala is afoot at a time when we are exporting rice to foreign countries.

Kerala requires 1,35,000 tonnes of rice per month. But in the month of November, the Food Corporation of India did not have even one week's stock in its godowns. It is understood that the FCI did not take any step whatsoever to stock rice in time.

As per rule, applications for wagons for bringing rice should be submitted one month in advance. It has been found on enquiry that the FCI did not apply for wagons at the right time. By the time the application is submitted and wagons made available and then rice reaches the retail ends from the wholesalers, it will be at

least January. In January the price of rice will be up by 15 paise per Kg.

Disruption in the distribution of rice in Kerala will force the State Government to make direct purchases from neighbouring states. This will cause high losses to the State. The card holders will have to pay more price for the rice.

Therefore, I request the Government to take immediate steps to send rice to Kerala and then avoid disruption in the distribution of rice through ration shops.

(vi) BONUS TO L.I.C. EMPLOYEES

SHRI SUNIL MAITRA (Calcutta North East): Under Rule 377, I am making a statement.

The LIC (Modification of Settlement) Act, 1976 was successfully challenged first in the Calcutta High Court and subsequently in the Supreme Court by the All India Insurance Employees' Association and the Supreme Court struck it down as violative of the Constitution of India.

Bowing to the seven-judge-bench judgement of the Supreme Court, the Janata Government asked the LIC to release payment of Bonus illegally withheld. But all the same in 1978 the LIC served notice under Section 19(2) of the I.D. Act expressing its intention to terminate the settlement. Again by applying 9A of the I.D. Act the LIC changed the service condition relating to Bonus and deprived the employees of their right to it. Not content with it, the Government of India acting under Section 49 of the LIC Act issued a Gazette Notification amending Regulation 58 of the LIC Staff Regulations pertaining to Bonus and sought to deprive the employees of their right to Bonus. Perhaps as a measure of abundant caution, the Govt. of India again acting under Section 11(2) of the LIC Act issued a Gazette notification which in effect deprived the LIC employees of their right to Bonus.