

Sir, this matter was discussed in the 10th Meeting of the Special Tri-partite Committee constituted by the Government of India. It was also discussed in the 11th Meeting of the Special Tri-partite Committee held in May, 1998. This matter was discussed in that meeting in which the Minister, Labour Secretary, trade-union leaders and employers were present. It was found that as on December, 1996, Rs. 926 crores were to be paid to statutory organisations, like Provident Fund Organisation and ESI about 65 Central public sector units which have been referred to BIFR. They have to deposit this amount against the so-called social security fund of the workers. Everybody expressed concern about it. Sir, to solve this problem, there are two ways. One is, the CPSUs should generate their own internal resources and deposit this money or else as the workers of these units are in no way responsible for these losses, the Government should make some budgetary provision for depositing the employer's contribution and employees' contribution against these social security schemes. But in spite of a decision in the special tripartite committee meeting of the Indian Labour Conference, nothing has been done. In many Central PSUs where this matter has been referred to the BIFR, they are not getting their wages and salaries. They are not getting even that money which has been deducted from their salaries towards PF and ESI. As this matter is a serious one. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to it and request that this matter should be taken very seriously. All the employers whether they are in the public sector or in the private sector, if they are not depositing the workers' money in their accounts, stringent action may be taken against them and prosecution proceedings should be filed against them. If required, the Government should bring forward such a legislation which enables the concerned authorities to file cases against those employers who are not depositing PF and

ESI contribution of workers' money in their respective accounts. Thank you.

Conversion of Metre Gauge Railway line into Broad Gauge from Tiruchi to Rameswaram

SHRI M.A. KADAR (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I rise to make a Special Mention with regard to a project to be implemented in this year itself. Before mentioning that, I would like to thank my revered leader, Dr. Kalaignar who has sent me to this august House to be here with the other hon. Members in this House. Sir, I come from a holy and sacred town of Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. It is a very holy and sacred place and people from all over India come to Rameswaram to have a *darshan*. Sir, if they go by train they have to get down at Tiruchi or Madurai to get into a metre gauge train. In this way, it becomes very laborious for people to reach this holy town. So, people have been demanding that this metre gauge line should be converted into a broad gauge one. The Government of Tamil Nadu has also made a recommendation with regard to this conversion. I understand that an assurance was given by the Government in the last financial year itself. But, nothing was mentioned in the last year's Budget in spite of the fact that it was announced that this would be done within a month. Sir, it was announced that conversion of this line from Chennai to Tiruchi would be over within a month. If this line is extended to Rameswaram, the pilgrims of North India will be benefited to a great extent. In addition to that, if this broad gauge from Kanyakumari to Madurai is extended to Rameswaram, this holy place will be listed in the railway map of India. In this connection I am thankful to the hon. Minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana for stating that the holy town of Rameswaram will be listed in the map of holy places and will be developed by the Department of Tourism as a tourist centre. Keeping in view all this, I request that this line may be converted into a broad gauge line. I request the Government of India to give this matter a

top priority. With these words, I conclude.

DR. KARAN SINGH (Jammu and Kashmir): Sir, I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I also associate myself with the demand raised by the hon. Member.

Devastation in Darjeeling Hills following consistent rains on 6.7.98 and need for immediate Central Assistance

SHRI DAWA LAMA (West Bengal): Sir, I want to draw the attention of this House and the Government that following consistent heavy rains in hilly regions of Darjeeling, heavy landslides damaged several places, which need immediate action on a war-footing to save further losses of lives of thousands of people and properties worth crores of rupees. I personally visited some of the areas on 11th and 21st of this month. The condition is beyond anybody's imagination. I give my experience *in seriatim*. The Paglazhora, both upper and lower, are situated on a huge sinking one for years. Efforts were made earlier to keep it open to traffic by spending crores of rupees. Huge landslides followed by sinking of hills took away the entire road benches, culverts, railway tracks, etc. According to the reports of the State PWD, about 100 culverts are completely destroyed. The road can be restored for light vehicles provided assistance from the Border Roads Organisation and the geological Survey of India is taken. But, since the National Highway 55 is the artery of Darjeeling hills, action must be taken to divert the road from Siliguri to Kurseong via Rohini Tea Estate. A survey was conducted on this route by the State Public Works Department as early as in 1982. But, the idea was set aside for paucity of funds. Now, to have the main road, N.H. 55, open for trucks which bring all essential commodities to Darjeeling, the same must have to be taken up. The job should be entrusted to

the Border Road Organisation and the G.S.I. This is very important from military point of view, since, all army vehicles to Jalapahar and Lebong ply through N.H. 55.

The next point I would like to say is about Dudhia under Kurseong Block. This village is situated beside the Balason River. Sir, 15 houses have already been washed out along with cultivable land. The villagers are waiting for rehabilitation. The bigger part of the village, where about 5000 people reside, is on the verge of submersion by water of the Balason. To save the village, a protection dam is to be constructed along the banks of the Balason.

The next point I would like to mention is about Bijanbari Block. This possibly is the most affected block due to this year's natural calamity. Sir, years before, Darjeeling had witnessed the biggest landslide of Asia at Ambotia under Kurseong block. I am afraid, if immediate action is not taken, in, at least, the following places, there will be several Ambotias. The Dilbidhusa village under middle division of Chongtong Tea Estate and having about 1,500 families, is sinking down. Huge landslides and crack zones have already caused erosion in the off hill side. To save the village from total extinction, massive protection walls are to be constructed on off-hill side.

Gangatia village, having about 1,200 families is also in a grave danger. Several jhoras are surrounding the village. Due to heavy erosion of land, the entire village is sinking down to 1,200 metres below. Immediate action has to be taken to arrest the erosion by constructing protection wall along jhoras and vulnerable points. Otherwise, the entire village will be a history.

Sir, the Goke village had faced a serious landslide in 1997. Owing to further damage this year, the entire village, having more than 2,000 people, is going down to the Rangit River. Immediate action has to be taken to