

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Sir, I want to associate myself with it and say a few words because he has raised some points before the House. When Madani was arrested in connection with some cases, and you see there is a religious sentiment....

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: That is a report.

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: If there is a report like that, it is totally false, fabricated, concocted and no reliance can be placed on that particular paper.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: I only want that the Tamil Nadu Government or the Government of India should make it clear. That is my point.

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: As a Member from Pondicherry, I am bound to say that.... *(Interruptions)*.... arrested on the information furnished by him since there was evidence for a conspiracy.*(Interruptions)*....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): Are you associating yourself with it or not?*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Sir, it is a sensitive issue, let him associate with it.*(Interruptions)*....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): It is not a question whether it is a sensitive issue or not. I can allow him, if he associates with it.

SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU:I, want to intimate to my learned friend also.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): Now, Shri Jibon Roy—not present. Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav—not present. Shri Ram Chandra Khuntia.

Non-Payment of Statutory dues and Wages to CPSU Workers

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA (Orissa): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the Government, through this august House, to the situation arising out of non-payment of provident fund, ESI and other statutory dues to the workers of Central Public Sector, State Public Sector and various private industries. Sir, many public sector units and private sector units are not depositing the statutory dues. Some of these Central Public Sector and State Public Sector units, where IAS officers and IPS officers are holding the posts of CMDs and MDs and directors are also not depositing provident fund, ESI and other statutory dues which also include wages, salaries and DA. Many of the workers working in Central and State Public Sector units are not getting their wages, salaries and other dues. The workers of sick public sector units, like IDPL, NTC, etc., are not getting their salaries. Some of these industries have been referred to BIFR. The problem is, when a unit is referred to BIFR, the enforcing authorities are also not able to file prosecution against them because in Central and State Public Sector units the Government is the employer. There is also a rule which states that when an industry has been referred to BIFR, the prosecution authority also cannot file prosecution. As a result of which, these workers are suffering. Sir, as you know, provident fund and ESI are social security schemes. This is a contributory fund in which the employer and the employee contribute. This is a very serious matter because these employees who have collected contributions from their employees are not depositing it with concerned organisations. These employers have not deposited their contribution and they have also not deposited employees' contribution which they have collected from the workers for years together.

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. Kalaigarnar 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