

(iii) Statement giving reasons for the delay in laying the papers mentioned at (i) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 2292/97]

RE: LEAKAGE OF POISONOUS GAS FROM STERLITE INDUSTRY IN TUTICORIN IN TAMILNADU

*SHRI N. RAJENDRAN (TAMILNADU): Madam, Deputy Chairperson, with a sense of paralysing calamity, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government through this august House, a serious matter regarding Sterlite Industry at Tuticorin in Tamilnadu. Because of leakage of poisonous gas from the Sterlite Industry last month, over 120 people have been affected. Not only people working in the industries but also those living in the surrounding areas have been affected. People of Tuticorin, the capital of my district, are living in the grip of fear for they think that something like Bhopal gas tragedy might take place in Sterlite Industries too. But I am sorry to say that even one month after such serious incident, neither the state nor the Central Government have taken any action.

Madam, I welcome setting up of industries for they provide employment opportunities and help in the economic development of the areas. But if any industry poses danger to the lives of people living around, I shall even sacrifice my life to stop the entry of such industries.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, I seek your indulgence. yesterday this question of Sanjay Ghosh was raised.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him finish....(Interruption)...
I am not allowing you.

SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI: The Prime Minister should be requested to make a statement.

* English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

SHRI N. RAJENDRAN: Madam, this Sterlite Industry was being set up at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra sometime in 1994. But when the Government and the people of Maharashtra Opposed it, the Industry was shifted to Tuticorin in Tamilnadu.

Madam, the management of the Sterlite Industry has claimed to have spent Rs. 1000 crores for setting up the industry out of which Rs. 300 crores is said to have been spent on pollution control equipments. It is difficult to believe this because, the machineries used in the Industry were manufactured some thirty years ago. Even the Environmental Council of the United Nations has also disapproved such machineries.

This Sterlite Industry uses the Tamirabarani river water for its needs. But the irony is that the people of my district face acute shortage of water for both drinking and irrigation. They also depend on Tamirabarani river water for their existence. This apart, the effluents of the factory which are discharged into the sea affect the fishes and thereby the livelihood of the fishermen of Tuticorin and adjoining coastal area is threatened.

In view of the gravity of the situation, I appeal to the centre to send a high level expert Committee to Tuticorin to make a thorough study of the industry and submit a detailed report on the safety measures of the industries. If the report indicates even one per cent danger to the people around the factory, the centre should direct the state Government to withdraw permission to Sterlite Industry and ask it to wind up immediately. With these words I conclude.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This was his maiden speech on a very important subject. Shri Rajan Chellappa. Not present.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (Goa): Madam Deputy Chairman, what I want to say is that he has raised a relevant point. Madam, there was also a pollutant industry in our State, Nylon-66. Some politician got them a licence for a bribe

of Rs. 24 lakhs and later on shunted that plant out of Goa. Now, that plant has been taken to Tamil Nadu. So, I do not know why the Government of Tamil Nadu is so much lax. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Whichever regime it is, the people are the same. Regimes do change, but people don't change.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Madam, on the same ground the hon. Member has raised it in his maiden speech. We have shunted out Nylon-66 pollutant industry from Goa. It has been taken to Tamil Nadu. When the State Governments have no consideration for the environment, the Central Government should intervene and should not permit such plants in our country. Moreover, it is also a discarded technology.

THE DEPTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Amar Singh.

SHRI S. PETER ALPHONSE (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I want to say a few words.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. That is enough.

SHRI S. PETER ALPHONSE: From Tamil Nadu's point of view.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It should be from the country's point of view. I have 20 Special Mentions and some Zero Hour submissions. Let us go ahead with them one by one. Mr. Alphonse, thank you very much.

RE: SITUATION ARISING OUT OF ACUTE SHORTAGE OF CEMENT IN KERALA

SHRI AMAR SINGH (Uttar Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Surface Transport through this august House, to the pathetic condition of Cement Consumers in the State of Kerala where cement prices are the highest in the country. It would be in the fitness of things to mention that there is only one

cement producer in Kerala whose present production is only 2.79 lakh tonnes as against the requirement of 40 lakh tonnes per annum and the said production capacity of the unit cannot be increased because of the non-availability of lime stone reserves in that state. Obviously, the consumers in that state are left with no other alternative but to bank upon the Cement Manufacturers in the State of Tamil Nadu for their remaining requirement of 90%, who have actually monopolised the market in Kerala on account of Direct rail links with that state and selling cement bags @ Rs. 185/- as against All India average rate of Rs. 140/- per bag. The helpless consumers in Kerala cannot afford to import cement from other states on account of higher transportation charges.

Keeping in view the hardship experienced by the consumers on account of higher rates of cement, the Cochin Port trust decided to provide unloading facilities at the port so as to enable the other Cement Manufacturers to send Cements by sea and invited tenders for allotment of land for the setting up of unloading and packing terminal on 18th Nov. 1994. I would be failing in my duty if I do not congratulate the Port Authority for taking a nice decision which is not only beneficial for the port in terms of revenue earnings but it would also provide much relief to the Cement Consumers in Kerala, who had until now been suffering at the hands of handful of Cement Manufacturers who had cornered the entire cement business and selling the same at exorbitant rates.

I understand that a number of cement manufacturers submitted their tenders in this regard and the Cochin Port Trust recommended the proposal on the 31st Sept. 1995 for approval of the Ministry of Surface Transport which was considered by the Land Allotment Committee, chaired by the Secretary, Surface Transport on 6th March, 1996. The committee took the view that it was authorised to give approval for leasing of land i.e. 2.77