

[श्री सुनेन्द्र सिंह ठाकुर]

को भी काफी परेशानी होती है। इसलिये मेरी सरकार से गुजारिश है कि सरकार इस असमानता को दूर करे। मुझे ऐसा भी बताया गया कि एक कंपनी के पास तो गैस उपलब्ध है लेकिन दूसरी दो कंपनियों के डीलर्स को उनका बल्क प्राप्त नहीं होता है। ऐसी हालत में उनको उधार देने की व्यवस्था, आपस में वे एक दूसरे को उधार दे सकें, ऐसी व्यवस्था की जानी चाहिये। यह मेरी सरकार से मांग है।

Indefinite Strike by the Workers of Indian Rare-Earths Ltd. At Chatrapur (Orissa)

SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA (Orissa): Sir, I want to draw your attention to a situation in which the workers of a public sector undertaking are being harassed in the State of Orissa. This relates to the Indian Rare Earth unit located at Chatrapur in Orissa.

The workers have been on an indefinite strike since 31st July, 1990, and they have brought the work in the complex to stand still, with all the workers joining the strike. The IRE Employees Union, affiliated to the Indian National Trade Union Congress, had been demanding acceptance of their demands by the authorities. But the authorities were not able to settle the matter in time. The workers also sat in dharna in support of their 56-point charter of demands. The management tried to bring outsiders to replace the workers, as a result of which there was a clash when the workers protested. The police made a lathi charge on the striking workers and arrested about 500 workers some days back. This has created tension in the locality. The local police is openly siding with the management of the Indian Rare Earth and harassing the striking workers by taking coercive steps against them.

Sir, the Indian Rare Earth unit has been set up at Chatrapur at a cost of Rs. 135. crores and it had gone into production in October, 1986.

In the charter of demands, the workers have made certain allegations regarding mismanagement and corruption on the part of officials, leading to a loss of crores of rupees due to manipulation of

accounts. The unit has sustained heavy losses and has not made any profit so far. The relationship between the workers and the managements was very much strained and has further worsened.

Sir, I had raised the matter regarding these allegations against the Indian Rare Earth authorities in this House, basing my submission on paper reports regarding loss of Rs. 36 crores in IRE two years back. But the Government has not taken any steps so far.

The charter of demands includes, among other things, setting up a commission of inquiry, reinstating of the President, Shri R.K. Panda, and the General Secretary, Shri A.K. Chaudhury, of the union who have been suspended, payment of customary bonus to the workers at the rate of 20% for the last two years, synthetic rutile shipment to Canada packed in bags instead of as loose consignment, and other demands like grant of special grade, house-rent, overtime and regularisation of casual workers etc.

The Indian Rare Earth unit is directly under the control of Atomic Energy Department which is under the Prime Minister. So I would urge upon the Prime Minister to consider the demands of the workers of this unit located in Orissa and pass necessary instructions to the Department for acceptance of the genuine demands of the workers. The Government should also take steps to constitute a commission of inquiry to find out the causes of losses in the unit and fix up the responsibility. Thank you, Sir.

Need to Bring 'Similipal Forest' of Orissa Under 'Biosphere Reserves'

SHRI SARADA MOHANTY (Orissa): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to make this Special Mention.

Sir, in our country forests have undergone large-scale degradation, and in order to arrest the continuing deforestation concerted efforts have been

made. Simultaneously to take up afforestation on a massive scale, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has issued a circular and guidelines for the enforcement of the forests (Conservation) Act, 1980. But to the misfortune of the people of Orissa, the picturesque Similipal forest, the abode of Nature's beauties in the Mayurbhanj district, is not being protected from deforestation.

The Similipal forest terrain of Orissa is in the rare mixed tropical forest heritage of India. It is also in the Tropic of Cancer and, hence, within sub-tropical climate. It is also known as the "Project Tiger" area. It is the home of khairi, the well-known tigress, and her family members. It will not be out of place to mention that foreign tourists are frequently visiting Similipal which is the abode of Nature's beauties. The geographical position of the Similipal forest is controlling the climatic conditions of this region and also of the State of Orissa. If this forest area of Similipal is not protected, I am afraid, very soon it may lead to conditions of the Sahara and Thar deserts.

Sir, since 1982 the Government of Orissa and the people have been trying to see that the Similipal forest finds its rightful

place in the list of biosphere reserves but, surprisingly, it has not yet been listed as such although forests of inferior variety have been enlisted as biosphere reserves. The present Department of Environment and Forests have been approached, but it appears to me that our Government is still in deep slumber.

Therefore, I request the Minister for Environment and Forests through you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, that this matter may be taken up on top priority basis and necessary steps be taken to enlist the Similipal forest in the list of biosphere reserves.

Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR):
The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 A.M. on the 16th.

The House then adjourned at thirteen minutes past five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 16th August 1990.