

There is a huge population of the order of 50 lakhs residing below the Idukki project spread around five districts of Kerala. A cascading failure of Mullaperiyar Dam will result in a catastrophe, which will be beyond human imagination. In addition to this, more than 30,000 people living in this area between Mullaperiyar and Idukki dams will be also be washed away.

In short, 114 year-old Mullaperiyar Dam is a high risk structure, which needs urgent replacement. A new dam designed and constructed as per modern standards is the only permanent solution to the eternal threat looming large over the people of Kerala.

The Government of Kerala has reiterated and assured continued supply of water to Tamil Nadu. So, I urge upon the hon. Prime Minister to intervene in this issue and act as an arbitrator between the two States. Thank you.

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, we disassociated with this Special Mention.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN): There is only a provision for association in the Rules. There is no provision for disassociation.

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Sir, when the controversial issues are raised, we have a right to oppose them, because they are very sensitive issues. And, at the same time, the Government of Kerala is always denying the rightful share of water to Tamil Nadu.

Demand for taking over of H.C.L. by the railways

SHRI R.C. SINGH (West Bengal): HCL was a premier PSU in the manufacture of cables that earned profits till 1993-94. But, unfortunately, since 1995, it has been incurring losses. It has more than 3,000 workers in three units. Nation's rapid growth in communications and IT area has brought sea changes in the telecom scenario. Earlier, there was an agreement that the BSNL would give orders to the HCL to the extent of 30 per cent, with 50 per cent advance. But, after 2003, the BSNL refused to place orders in spite of repeated pleas and requests from various trade unions and others. As a result, losses mounted up. Later on, there were many reports prepared by the IIT, Kharagpur, the TCS, and the BRPSE for its revival. But nothing concrete has been done. The Government is trying to close this precious unit. The cost of its revival would be only to the extent of Rs. 250 crores, while its closure would cost Rs. 1,800 crores. Now, there are two options before the Government – to revive it or close it. It would not be prudent to close this company.

The Railway Minister, in her Budget Speech, said that she was, going to start a project to introduce internet in trains. For this purpose, thousands and thousands of optic cables have to be laid. So, I request the hon. Prime Minister to ask the Railways to take over the HCL, as has been done in the case of Burn & Standard, so that twin objectives could be achieved one, the HCL would be revived; second, the Railways would not have to buy cables from outside at a higher cost.

Demand for steady tax regime to attract foreign investors in the country

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu): Recently a large quantity of oil and gas has been discovered and is produced from both, offshore and onshore, areas on the East Coast. However, certain fiscal