

Gandhamardhan Bauxite Mine Project

*149. SHRI ASHOK NATH
VERMA:†

DR. BAPU KALDATE :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether a Committee headed by Dr. R. D. Nagchaudhuri was appointed by Government to investigate and report on suspension of the Bharat Aluminium Co. Ltd., project of bauxite mines in the Gandhamardhan Hill ranges in Orissa;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has since submitted its report; and

(c) if so, what are the details of the recommendations of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

A high level committee of experts headed by Dr. B. D. Nagchaudhuri was appointed by the Government of India on 5th September, 1986, to study in depth the impact of the proposed development of Gandhamardhan Bauxite Deposits in Orissa on ecology and environment including *inter-alia* the water falls, streams, medicinal herbs, temples and the tribal population. The Committee submitted its report on 29th January, 1987. The Committee 'after careful consideration of all the issues involved' has recommended that the "Bauxite mines in Gandhamardhan hills be opened with as little delay as possible." The Committee has further recommended that in order to mitigate adverse environmental impacts certain measures listed below are to be scrupulously implemented :

(i) That public relations of BALCO should be strengthened, specially, those aimed at developing the human resources of the local people and making common cause with them by helping

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ashok Verma.

them in meeting their needs and aspirations, should be carried out by sensitive officers with sociological and environmental training who should be located at Paikamal.

(ii) That the mining activity be carried out strictly according to the reformulated Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

(iii) That a Monitoring Committee be specially constituted to ensure strict compliance of the reformulated EMP.

(iv) The EMP should be reviewed at least once a year and modified whenever necessary, by a high level committee whose recommendations shall be mandatory.

(v) Immediate steps should be taken to stabilise the road section already carved, in order to prevent possible slips, boulder slides and siltation.

(vi) That no further widening of the road section straddling the Happy Point be undertaken and new-re-alignment wherever necessary be made by following the natural contours.

(vii) In view of the tested easy ripability of bauxite, not more than a single charge cluster, suitably sequenced and not exceeding 300 kgs. at a time, should be exploded.

(viii) The need for re-locating the crusher plant may be examined, such that it is not on a hill-top or a hill slope location so that the dust and vibration are kept within manageable limits.

(ix) A continuous ecological monitoring of the swath of devegetation of transporting bauxite by rope-way should be carried out.

(x) In view of the aging foundation and structure of the ancient temples of Nrisinghanath and Harisbankar, immediate steps should be taken to strengthen them appropriately.

The findings of the Nagchaudhuri Committee are still under consideration of the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over.