

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, I seek your protection. Did he reply to the first part of my question? I referred to the statement of the Chairman of the United Bank that all farmers and sharecroppers who have failed to pay in 1979 will not be paid any more. This is discrimination against the farmers. Will the same criterion apply to the industrialists also?

SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN: Whatever rules are there with regard to default in respect of each agricultural credit, industrial credit and small-scale credit, will be applied. I cannot say at this moment immediately what is the standard applied in respect of agricultural credit. The whole amount may be payable in some cases. If it is long-term credit, instalments are payable. If it is short-term credit, the whole amount is payable. Therefore, it is not possible to say.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now I will pass on to Question No. 203...

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: Sir, I have raised my hand. Let me ask just one straight question...

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I allow you, there are other Members also. And then Members get up and say I have taken twenty minutes on one question.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: Sir I have been raising my hand and trying to get a chance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe, but I have to take note of the time factor. The newspapers are commenting, the House Members are commenting, that we cannot go beyond a certain number. I can take the House into confidence and if they want that I should take up only the first question the whole day, I shall sit here.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: I appreciate it, Sir, but for the fault of others, have I to lose my chance?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am afraid, already too much time has been taken on this question. And then the problem is when questions are called, Members are not present; they go away and come back after a while by which time I have passed on to two or three questions. Then they raise their hands for their questions and start making claim. Then I am told this, that and the other, which, I am sorry, I cannot tolerate.

Now next question, No. 203.

Transportation of Iron Ore from Kudremukh to the Salem Steel Plant

***203. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY†:**
SHRI K. CHATHUNNI
MASTER:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for transporting iron ore from Kudremukh to the Salem Steel Plant; if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): There is no such proposal under Government's consideration at present.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Kudremukh iron ore project is a project for which a contract was entered into with Iran. And the terms of agreement are that all the iron ore produced in Kudremukh must be shifted to Iran. I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether it is a fact that now the Government of Iran has failed to meet its obligation in accepting the iron ore as contracted between India and Iran, and in that case, what the alternative is that the Government thought of to utilise that iron ore from Kudremukh.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri V. Gopalsamy.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The present indication from Iran is that they would be in a position to take about 4.5 million tonnes after one or one and a half years. In regard to the other point, the honourable Member is already aware that we have decided to establish a pelletisation plant at Mangalore based on the Kudremukh iron ore and if we can convert this concentrate into pellets, it would be easier for us to market that pellet.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: On the eve of 1971 elections the honourable Mrs. Indira Gandhi assured us that they would give the Salem steel plant as a gift to Tamil Nadu. Unfortunately that Salem steel plant has become a fabrication plant, that is, steel rolling plant, much to the disappointment of the people of Tamil Nadu. Now the honourable Minister says there is a proposal to have pelletisation of Kudremukh ore in Mangalore. Mangalore is some 300 kilometres away from Kudremukh and Salem is 450 kilometres away from Kudremukh. Considering this aspect will the Minister consider shifting of the Kudremukh iron ore to Salem to have a steel making shop at Salem instead of having at Mangalore? The honourable Minister has done much to solve the B and C crisis and the Tamil Nadu people are so happy. Now we expect from the honourable Minister such a help for Salem steel plant also. Will he consider this aspect?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I could have considered the matter if I had been able to use the Kudremukh iron ore concentrate in any way in Salem but this is not possible because that is a stainless steel plant. And the honourable Member is well aware from where we are getting the raw materials and what we are going to do with the Kudremukh iron ore concentrate. As I have already mentioned, for iron ore concentrate there is hardly any market except in the plants where they have the direct reduction seal. That is why what we are trying to do now

is whatever Iran will take as per their contract, that will be given to Iran, and the rest we are trying to convert into pellets so that we could have some better market for it. At Salem I cannot utilise this particular concentrate.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, firstly, the Kudremukh project was started or it had its origin as an aid project by the Government of Iran. Now Iranian Government ran into difficulties and that Government changed. Would the honourable Minister tell us, of the total quantum of aid which was promised to Kudremukh, how much was actually provided, what is the short-fall in aid, why is the aid not continued now, what is the quantum of aid which has not been provided, and what are the differences because of which the aid from the Government of Iran has been stopped and what would the Government of India do to recover that aid or revive it?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I can give all the figures to the hon. Member. But I only request him—as I have requested on earlier occasions—and inform him that this is a very sensitive issue. The present Government of Iran has a particular view in regard to the contract which was entered into by the earlier regime. I can give all the figures as to how much they have given and what was the contract, etc. As it is in the process of negotiations and we are trying to cooperate in many other areas and we have very good friendly relations. I make this request because there are certain differences of opinion in regard to this. Therefore, if the hon. Member does not insist on this detailed information, I will be obliged. If you want to insist, I can give the information.

SHRI PILOO MODY: You can give it privately.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I can give it.