

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 25th March, 1982/4th
Chaitra 1904 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the
clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*441. [The questioner (Shri Mulka Govinda Reddy) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 31-32 infra].

*442. [The questioners (Shri Debendra Nath Barman and Shri Satya Pal Malik) were absent. For answer, vide cols. 32-33 infra].

*443. [Transferred to the 23rd March, 1982].

*444. [The questioners (Shri Lal K. Advani and Shri Lakhani Singh) were absent. For answer, vide cols. 33-34 infra].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 445.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Sir, question No. 447 is also of the same nature. Both can be taken together.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you are immediately after this.

Air pollution around steel plants

*445. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA HEPTULLA:†

DR. LOKESH CHANDRA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that 15 per cent of the total amount of waste gases released in the atmosphere come from the iron and steel industry; and

(b) if so, what is the pollution level of the air around steel plants?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF INDUSTRY AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA): (a) and (b) The percentage of waste gases released in the atmosphere from the iron and steel industry to the total waste gases in the atmosphere is not known.

Without an elaborate study of the total amount of waste gases released in the atmosphere in a particular area from various sources, it will not be possible to find out the contribution of the iron and steel industry to the total air pollution. However, studies have been initiated to find the levels of emissions of waste gases from the steel plants.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA HEPTULLA: Sir, in advanced industrialised countries like Japan, Germany and others, to control air pollution they have started chemical, electrical and mechanical means to keep the smoke down. In Delhi also you have seen how much smoke is coming and making places and also the atmosphere very dirty. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal before the Government about seeing that these mechanical, electrical and chemical devices are adopted by these industries. What action are they taking about this?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: Sir, the question relates to pollution generated by steel, that is, atmospheric air pollution. Firstly, I will reply to that question. In fact, the process of iron and steel making has a very high potential for generating pollution in the air. The integrated plants within their own system had an in-built process of avoiding pollution. In spite of that pollution is generated. What we have done is, in all the steel plants we have formed pollution control committees which are making efforts from process to process to see that pollution is mini-

mised. And there are various methods by which that is done. Now there are five major processes where different types of air pollution is generated: right at the stage of ore preparation; than coke making; iron making process, steel making process, casting and rolling and finishing. From plant to plant efforts are being made at different processes. The types of pollution that is generated needs to be treated and so we are working on that. I would like the hon. Members of the House to know that we are at a stage where we are making continuous efforts to minimise air pollution, in addition to the enactment by Parliament in 1981 regarding air pollution.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA HEP-TULLA: Sir, I am sorry the Minister is giving a very vague answer. He is trying to avoid saying what effort has been made and whatever result is there has not been specified, so far as smoke and air pollution are concerned. There are other kinds of pollutants that are let out by the steel industry in the process of making steel right from the ore to the final product. The people working in these industries are affected, their health is affected, they generally get tuberculosis, rashes, allergy and what not. What is the Government doing in this case and also how much money is being kept for it for the next two years?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: Sir, the plant to plant things that are being done today I would like to give for the information of the hon. House. For example, in the Rourkela steel plant, what we are doing right from the beginning is: the units which predominantly contribute to atmospheric pollution in the Rourkela steel plant are, first stage, the ore preparation, i.e. the sintering plant, the converters of the steel melting shop, the power plant and the rotary kiln of the refractory materials plant is the third. The blast furnace plant does not give rise to atmospheric pol-

lution as the gas evolved from the furnace is cleaned and is used as fuel. So this is one process. As far as the blast furnace is concerned, the process is such that in the process the pollution is minimized. The pollution discharges from the coke ovens are primarily of fugitive nature and normally difficult to control. The sintering plant at Rourkela is provided—I am giving the process to process things—with the process known as electrostatic precipitators. In the blast furnace, cyclones, scrubbers and electrostatic precipitators have been provided whereas two numbers of dry electrostatic precipitators have been provided in the steel melting shop which is also reported to be inadequate for the present load. Therefore, we are now in the process of increasing that also. Now stacks with heights ranging from 40 to 70 metres have been provided in blast furnace stove, LD, SMS, dust-catchers power plant. These are the processes I am telling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody can understand them.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: Sir, the hon. Member was not satisfied with the general reply of mine, saying that we are making efforts at different processes of production in the steel plant to minimize re-generation of pollution.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You forget M Minister that she is a scientist and we are not. Why don't you directly give it to her?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: With your permission, I would give all the details, but for the information of the hon. House I would like to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Place it on the Table. That is the best. Dr. Lokesh Chandra. Now put a question.

DR. LOKESH CHANDRA: Most of the steel plants are located in the public sector. So it is easier to control pollution because the construction of our steel plants are preplanned

in the Air Pollution 1982. Seminar held at New Delhi in February this year Mr. C. K. Lakshminarayan of the Metallurgical Engineering Consultants, Bangalore had pointed out that 15 per cent of the total amount of waste gases are generated by the iron and steel industry. So when the iron and steel industry which is primarily in the public sector and a major contributor to the total pollution in the country, what steps does the Government plan to induce into the planning process itself to avoid this major source of national pollution. And secondly the research on pollution by non-governmental agencies is not being utilized by the planners in the public sector. What steps are being taken to see that the work done by individual scientists also contributes to the lessening of pollution in the country?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: As far as the minimising process of pollution is concerned, an inter-disciplinary effort is, in fact, being made by a separate department of the Government of India, the Environmental Department. And the Ministry of Steel also takes advantage of that, because we have formed a working group of this particular thing where the Environmental Department is also involved. As far as the honourable Member's reference to the seminar and the 15 per cent pollution of the atmosphere is concerned, in fact, the estimates available with us only show that out of every tonne made 31 kgs is the pollution. So it has been 31 kgs out of one tonne. As far as the environment and pollution is concerned, for the information of the honourable Member I can bring to their notice that we must have to develop standards or norms or what is known as the base atmospheric frame. It is only after that base is defined, the deviations and the abnorms are, in fact, counted. As regards Honourable Member's reference earlier to Japan and other countries, we have already evolved frames under the latest Act and we are trying to form the bases...

DR. LOKESH CHANDRA: Can we not import the technology from abroad?

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: Technology aspect is all right. Before that for every particular steel plant assessment has to be made as to what is the norm of the atmospheric frame. It is only after that you can work out the percentages, as the honourable Member has said—15 per cent, 20 per cent. In fact, one of the schemes of the United Nations was to have pollution monitoring centres. One was put up at Gulmarg, the second at Ludhiana, the third was put up in the industrial area of Delhi, the fourth was in Kanpur and the fifth was in Jamshedpur, at Ahmedabad, and so on. These schemes are being made. This is as far as measurement of pollution is concerned. Import of technology, that is not required, because, the process here has already started by the enactment of a measure against air pollution and as part of implementation of that Act would be to evolve the norms and then according to the norms the deviations will be avoided. As far as counting the statistical part of the measurement of pollution is concerned... (*Interruptions*).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Sir. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will allow only two questions. There are other questions also. You cannot hold up only on one question. Now Mr. Mirdha.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: The Minister has referred to the Prevention of Air Pollution Act which has been passed by Parliament as being in force. And he has also mentioned about electrostatic precipitators and scrubbers which have been installed there. I would like to know from the honourable Minister what the permissible level of pollution is and also under the Act whether their preventive measures are enough to ensure the least possible level that is permissible under the Act, because in spite of all this, many of the scrubbers

do not work. We are having in Indraprastha Power House these scrubbers being used, but they are not effective. They are designed to a certain capacity. So we want an assurance from the Minister that the levels of prescribed pollutions under the Prevention of Air Pollution Act are being enforced and also we want to know whether the measures that are being adopted in the steel plants are sufficient to ensure that level of purity.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: The level of purity will be determined only after the standards are evolved under the Act. And in fact, the process has already started. The first thing would be the formation of a Central Control Board for Air Pollution. That is yet to be constituted. But the whole thing has started and is in operation. After the Constitution of the Board and the implementation machinery for enforcing the Act, all these things would become a part of it. As far as the steel plants are concerned, the effort is that we minimise the generation of pollution... (Interruptions).

AN HON. MEMBER: Does the WHO standard apply to Indian cities?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not been allowed. This amounts to pollution in the House.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: How much percentage, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fifteen per cent.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) ASIMA CHATTERJEE: During the process of production of various chemicals carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide are generated which are injurious to the health; these are also injurious to the plants. I would, therefore, like to know what steps are being taken against this pollution so that they may not be detrimental to the human system as also the plant kingdom. I have a suggestion in this connection. At many places around the factories

and industries if various kinds of plants are planted, they can pick up the pollutant materials and thereby they can also check the pollution to a large extent. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps are being taken against pollution of sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: The hon. Member's question is very relevant. Besides these two, there are other eight major pollutants namely, particulates, nitrogen oxides, silicon compound, benzene, hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen fluoride, phenol and cresols and carbon dioxide. The details of the work done in finding these pollutants and to minimise the pollution will be placed on the Table of the House.

Secondly, the hon. Member said that these pollutants have an adverse effect on the vegetation and on human life. That is a known factor and maximum effort is being made in fact to evolve methods to minimise the pollution and generation of these pollutants the details of which will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI DAYANAND SAHAYA: I would like to know whether the hon. Minister knows or not that there is a W.H.O. standard for human life and whether that standard applies to Indian conditions or not.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: The WHO and the U.N.'s Environmental Centre in Stockholm have worked out the details of the norm. But that norm is disturbed or deviation is created in that norm in the country by the pollutants. I have already submitted that we are working on this. Even if the UNO norm is brought in here, it will not fit in here unless and until we are able to diagnose the pollution generated in the atmosphere. The hon. Member's knowledge of the WHO's formula and the UN formula can be utilised by us after the basic diagnosis is made of the parameters of pollutants in the atmosphere.