

the fact that the Railways have to carry coal over long distances in the Kerala region, will the hon. Minister give top priority in regard to electrification in the Kerala region ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, as far as the question of priority is concerned, we have already laid down the priorities in this order. The first priority will be given to electrification on the trunk routes. The second priority will be given to those sections even outside the trunk routes where there is heavy traffic. The third priority will be given to those sections which actually have heavy traffic but where there are certain special considerations. In terms of these priorities we will consider the case of Kerala also.

Damage to Taj Mahal on account of Environmental Pollution

*155 SHRI JAGAN NATH BHARDWAJ :

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN :

SHRI JAGDISH JOSHI :

SHRIMATI AMARJIT KAUR :

SHRI IBRAHIM KALANIYA :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that serious concern about the possibility of damage to the Taj Mahal, due to environmental pollution from the proposed refinery at Mathura, continues to be expressed from various quarters ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the marble slabs in the monument have already shown signs of gradual decay due to environmental pollution by the existing industrial complex around Agra; and

(c) if so, what action Government have taken or propose to take in this regard ?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Jagan Nath Bhardwaj.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (c) Apprehensions have been, expressed from time to time about the possible adverse effects of the gaseous effluents from the Mathura Refinery on the monuments at Agra. To advise the project authorities on the measures to be taken for keeping the pollution effect to the absolute minimum an Expert Committee was constituted in July 1974 with Dr. S. Varadarajan as Chairman, and representatives of the Ministry of Petroleum, India Meteorological Department, National Committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination, National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Indian Institute of Petroleum, Indian Oil Corporation and Government of Uttar Pradesh as members. A representative of Archaeological Survey of India was also made a member in December, 1975.

Since much work has been carried out in Italy on the effect of sulphur dioxide on monuments, IOC entered into an agreement in 1974 with M/s. Tecneco, an Italian firm which is a subsidiary of Government owned ENI Group to undertake the following studies :

(i) On the basis of meteorological data for the last ten years in the Mathura-Agra region, to calculate ' the ground level concentration of effluents (particularly sulphur dioxide) in the Mathura-Agra region on account of emission from the Mathura Refinery ;

(ii) Determination of the existing level of pollution in the Agra region by measurement over a period of six months ;

(iii) Determination of the present status of preservation of monuments and also the permissible concentration of effluents from the point of view of their preservation.

Reports have since been submitted by M/s. Teeneco to Indian Oil Corpn. These will be considered by the Expert Committee, and necessary action will be taken by Govt. after receiving the recommendation of the Expert Committee.

On the basis of data made available so far as a result of these investigations and studies, it appears that the contribution by the Refinery to the atmospheric pollution even under the most adverse meteorological conditions would be minimum at Agra which is about 40 Kms. away from the Refinery, and at such a low level as would not cause any concern about its effect on the white marble of Taj Mahal.

SHRI JAGAN NATH BHARDWAJ : Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state when the report of the Expert Committee will be available ?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA : The interim report has already come. But Sir, the question is being gone into, time and again, by experts and so far, every Expert Committee have clearly laid down that there is no danger to the Taj by location of this refinery at Mathura primarily because the total pollution content in the atmosphere will not be increased by this refinery so as to constitute a danger. It has also been found out that the amount of Sulphur dioxide which will get into the air will not be more than 2 mgm. per cubic metre of air which is a very low rate of pollution in terms of its capability to harm. It has also been clearly said even by the archaeological people who are in this Committee that there is no danger to the Taj. But time and again, issues have been raised in the Press. Therefore, an Expert Committee had been appointed by my predecessor Government in which experts ranging from the Archaeological Survey of India to experts in this field as well as U.P. State Government representatives and so on have been included. Their interim report indicates no harm. The final report is likely to come very soon.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN : The statement makes a very interesting

reading. But I can assure the hon. Minister that posterity will not excuse us if this world famous monument is destroyed. I and the hon. Minister may not be alive at that time. But posterity would surely curse us. This matter has been raised in this House very often as the hon. Minister himself has said. But it appears that the environmental pollution from the proposed refinery will inject slow poisoning into this world famous monument and it will gradually crumble and collapse from the face of the earth, a great tragedy indeed. May I, therefore, know from the hon. Minister, if all the efforts are now given up in view of the reports of the so-called experts and then this monument is going to remain where it is, can we not think of shifting the refinery from Mathura because we cannot shift the Taj Mahal from Agra ? Therefore, I will request the hon. Minister to give a second thought to the refinery's location at Mathura ?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA : Sir, the predecessor Government on whom my hon. friend had more reliance than this Government, had already gone into the question with rather great concern and so have we. We have involved even the Italian consultants who are supposed to be an authority in the preservation of built-up marble in Italy. They too have said that whereas in a number of countries the pollution degree is 80 microgram per cubic metre, here it will increase from 1.5 to 2, maximum. Already in Agra—I hope my hon. friend would do something on that score by taking up the matter with the State Government, as I am going to take up the matter—the degree of pollution is 6 microgram per cubic metre because a lot of smoke is emitting out of the power-house close to this great monument. A number of small foundries are going round Agra. Agra is a city of foundries and a lot of smoke is emitting. We, on our part, are taking every care by doing certain things. Firstly, we will use the low sulphur crude from Bombay High. It will not emit in atmosphere more sulphur dioxide, as otherwise it would if we were to use all the imported

crude. So, we will be taking crude from the Bombay High in tankers to Salaya and pump it to Mathura. To bring it down, 50 per cent of the crude processed in Mathura refinery will be the Bombay crude oil. Secondly, we will scrub the vapours coming out to a degree in which the sulphur dioxide really will be washed out. Thirdly, the slacks will be raised to 80 metres so that the effluent, whatever remains, will be left with absolutely no capacity to harm or injure. So, as I said, the interim report of the Committee has come. But that Committee on which we have the experts of India and from abroad, is going into it in full depth. So, our concern as laymen, though justified, should not disturb us after what we hear or see from these people. But should the Committee say or confirm the fears of my hon. friend, this Government would certainly not bother about the money spent by the predecessor Government on putting up this particular refinery in Mathura. We will certainly go into it but till date there is not a single authority which says or claims otherwise. In fact, the fear should have been that the pollution in Agra which is already 6 per cent and is harmful for any monument should have been curbed and should be curbed as early as possible.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN : Sir, the hon. Minister was addressing me as if I only belong to LLP. and he does not belong to U.P.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA : I never said it.

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN : When he was the Chief Minister in U.P., what did he do to reduce pollution in Agra?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN Shri Jagdish Joshi.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA : Kindly permit me to answer. The question is not at all relevant because all these are the findings of the experts appointed by the Government of India. They have given their recommendations and findings

on the 31st of last month. Therefore, I, as Chief Minister, was as good a layman as my hon. friend. I never claim to have high technological knowledge on either account.

श्री जगदीश जोशी : श्रीमन्, क्या मंत्री महोदय यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि जहाँ तक नक्षत्रीय प्रदूषण और आकाशीय प्रदूषण का प्रश्न है, उस पर उन्होंने विशेषज्ञ समिति की एक रिपोर्ट ली है और उस पर वह निर्णय करने जा रहे हैं। लेकिन प्रदूषण केवल वायुमण्डल का ही नहीं है बल्कि हमारे सामने जल प्रदूषण की भी समस्या है। यमुना का पानी कितना अधिक प्रदूषित हो गया है जो न केवल ताज को बरन यमुना में नहाने वाले कितने ही लाखों करोड़ों लोगों के लिये नुकसानदायक है। इनको इससे कैसे बचाया जा सकता है, इस दिशा में उनका विचार और वह क्या योजना बना रहे हैं ताकि यमुना का पानी प्रदूषित न हो जाय? क्या मंत्री महोदय यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे?

श्री हेमवती नन्दन बहुगुणा : मान्यवर, माननीय सदस्य नक्षत्रों पर चले गये, फिर आकाश पर लौट आये। इसलिये जहाँ तक नक्षत्रों की बात है इसका उन पर कोई असर होने वाला नहीं है। यह तो केवल हिन्दुस्तान के सीमित हिस्से की बात है। जहाँ तक जल प्रदूषण की बात है, उसको पूर्ण व्यवस्था कर दी जायेगी। सब बात तो यह है कि इससे जो अक्यूलिटीस निकलेंगे उन अक्यूलिटीस को बहुत धोया जाएगा और उनको सिचार्ज की योजना के काम में लाया जायेगा। जिनका फायदा किसानों को मिलेगा। जो पानी शेष रह जायगा, वह इतना हल्का कर दिया जायेगा कि यमुना का प्रवाह और गति स्वयं उसका भोजन कर जायेगी (Interruptions) यमुना भोजन कर जायेगी।

श्री इब्राहीम कलालिया : नेल शोधक कारखानों के जरिये आबो-हवा का दूषित हो जाना एक विश्व-व्यापी रोग सा बन गया है, उस महामारी से बचने के लिये सरकार ने अब तक क्या उपाय किये हैं और भविष्य में इससे रक्षा के लिये उसका क्या इरादा है?

श्री हेमवती मन्दन बहुगुणा : मान्यवर, प्रदूषण तो एक विश्व व्यापी प्रश्न है ही। स्टॉकहोम में इतनी बड़ी कॉन्फ्रेंस हुई, सारी दुनिया ने उसमें भाग लिया। जापान के लोग प्रदूषण के बारे में छली हजारों मील दूर से मंगवाने हैं। यह प्रदूषण का प्रश्न एक सीमित प्रश्न है। मैंने पहले भी कहा है और मैं आपको विश्वास दिलाना चाहता हूँ कि इस रिफाइनरी के कारण प्रदूषण की जितनी संभावनाएँ हैं और माननीय ज्ञान इस सम्बन्ध में जितना अन्दाज लगा सकता है, इन सब को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस सिलसिले में व्यवस्था की जा रही है।

Sole selling agency for Travancore chemicals and Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Alwaye

■ "156 SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON : f

SHRI NRIPATI RANJAN CHOU-
DHURY :

DR. RAJAT KUMAR CHAKRA-
BARTI :

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be phased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Travancore Chemicals, and Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Alwaye, had appointed a foreign equity company as its sole selling agents for distribution of their premium products and the foreign company is charging exorbitant prices for those products;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for appointing a foreign company as the sole selling agents in preference of co-operatives of State Government undertakings;

(c) whether Government propose to terminate the sole selling agency and appoint State Government undertakings and or co-operatives as distribution agents; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor ?

(The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Leela Damodara Menon.

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN) : (a) M/s. Travancore Chemicals and Manufacturing Company Limited, Alwaye has appointed M/s. Imkemex India Limited as its sole selling agents for a period of 5 years with effect from October 1, 1972 for the distribution of Copper Sulphate, Copper Oxychloride and Sodium Aluminate. M/s. Imkemex India Limited is an Indian Company inter connected with I.C.I. (India) Pvt. Limited. M/s. Imkemex India Limited have been appointed as sole selling agents for sale of these products on a commission of 5 to 7 per cent on the turnover.

(b) to (d) The appointment in question did not require the approval of the Company Law Board under Section 294AA of the Companies Act 1956. It is for the company to choose its own selling agents and the Company Law Board can take action under Section 294 (5) of the said Act only if the terms of the appointment are prejudicial to the interests of the company.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON : Is the Government aware that this agent is selling the produces at 50 to 200 per cent profit ? May I also know whether it is not the policy of this Government to see that foreign agents for our products are discouraged and internal agents are appointed ?

SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN : As I said, the approval for the appointment of the agent was not required under Section 294AA of the Companies Act as that provision was not applicable to the appointment of the selling agent. It is true that if the terms of appointment of a selling agent are prejudicial to the interests of the company, then certainly the Government has power under Section 294 to go into the matter. The Government did call for the relevant data and it was found that the sole selling agents were spending a substantial portion of the commission received by them on the sale of the products of the company as expenses. In fact, it was found that in 1973, the percentage