

shortcomings, namely, there is a shortage of coal at Mahanadi Coalfields, and, moreover, the cost of generation will become very high if the coal is supplied from Talchar as it will involve heavy transportation expenses. KPCL has identified Mahan Coal Block under South Eastern Coalfields Ltd. and has sought the Captive Coal Block allotment. In this connection, the hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka has even written to the hon. Prime Minister.

Hence, in order to increase the power generation in Karnataka, I request the hon. Minister of Coal to be generous enough in the best interest of Karnataka and allot Mahan Coal Block to the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited, on a priority basis, to solve the power crisis in Karnataka. Thank you, Sir.

**Need for setting up of Sixth Central Pay Commission for
Central Government Employees**

SHRI O.T. LEPCHA (Sikkim): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government regarding resentment and frustration among the Central Government employees over the non-setting up of the Sixth Central Pay Commission. This avoidable situation has developed due to the non-responsive attitude of the Central Government on this genuine issue.

Sir, the Fifth Central Pay Commission had, in the year 1997, recommended that there should be a permanent wage review body for reviewing and revising the wage structures of the Central Government employees periodically. The Fifth Central Pay Commission has also stated that if the Government is not able to set up a permanent wage review body, it should, at least, concede the right of the Central Government employees to have a complete pay revision once in ten years. The Commission had also stated that the Sixth Central Pay Commission be appointed by the year 2003 so that new pay scales for the Central Government employees could be made effective from 1.1.2006. In banking, insurance and other public sector enterprises, a wage revision has taken place after every four to five years. As the Government is aware that hundreds of anomalies in the pay scales have arisen consequent upon the implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission pay scales which are yet to be resolved, these anomalies can be solved by appointing a new Pay Commission. But it is a matter of grave concern that the Central Government has done nothing, and they are not serious over the setting of the Sixth Central Pay Commission.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to appoint, immediately, the Sixth Central Pay Commission for reviewing and revising the wage structures of the Central Government employees. Thank you, Sir.

Unreasonable hike in cement prices

SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, cement is one of the key elements in creating infrastructure in the country. Of late, the prices of cement are going up without any rhyme or reason. In fact, in the last six months, the price-increase is up to 40 per cent, which is not justified at all. It is not that all of a sudden, the demand has surpassed the supply. Moreover, the price-rise is not due to the increase in the cost of inputs that go in the manufacture of cement. But it is due to the fact that the major players have formed a cartel and on one pretext or the other they will stop production in the name of dispatch holiday or shut down the plants in the name of repairs. In this way, they create artificial scarcity in the market for limitless profiteering by pegging prices of cement.

As per newspaper reports the hon. Minister has held two meetings with the cement manufacturers and directed them to reduce this unreasonable hike in cement prices by 15th of this month. I do not know whether the cement manufacturers have paid any heed to the warning given by the Government. But there is no perceptible decline in the prices of cement at the market level.

Therefore, I request the hon. Minister of Commerce and Industry to take stern steps against cement manufacturers for hiking the prices of cement in an unjustified and unacceptable manner, and thus save the consumers from this unreasonable hike in cement prices. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned to meet at 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at twenty-one minutes past seven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 19th May, 2006