कर्मचारी है । उनको VRS देने के बारे में हम सोचेंगे । लेकिन जब तक इन 67 मिलों के कर्मचारियों का VRS पूरा नही हो जाता, तब तक हम इन 53 मिलों को वॉयेबल बनाने या उनके कर्मचारियों को VRS देने के बारे में नही सोचेंगे ।

श्री कलराज मिश्र : सभापति महोदय, मेरा प्रश्न उत्तर प्रदेश में कानपुर में जो NTC द्वारा चालित मिल है, उसके संबंध में है । यधपि यह प्रश्न केरल में NTC द्वारा चलाई जा रही पार्वती मिल के बारे में पूछा गया है, लेकिन उसी प्रकृति होने के कारण, मैं यह प्रश्न पूछ रहा हूं । कानपुर में जो मिल है, वह बंद पडी हुई है ।

श्री सभापति : कानपुर की जानकारी इनके पास नही होगी । पूछ लीजिएअ कि जानकारी है या नही ।

श्री कलराज मिश्र : अगर जानकारी हो तो बता दीजिए, ज्यादा अच्छा होगा । यह प्रश्न उसी प्रकृति का है, इसलिए मैंने पूछा है । यदि मंत्री जी इसका जवाब दे सकें तो अच्छा होगा ।

श्री बसनगौडा आर0 पाटील : सभापति महोदय, अगला प्रश्न यानी संख्या 408 एक जनरल क्वश्चिन है । मैं यहां इतना बताना चाहूंगा कि उत्तर प्रदेश की जो 8 मिलें है, उन्हें पूर्णतया बंद करने का निर्णय किया गया है । माननीय सदस्य ने जिस मिल का जिक्र किया है, वह भी उनमें शामिल है ।

Policy on closure of abandoned mines

*407. SHRIABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had set up a Committee to suggest changes in the policy regarding closure of abandoned mines in the country, in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details of recommendations made by the Committee;

(c) whether Government have taken any action on those recommendations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government had constituted a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Additional Secretary, Department of Mines

to look into various issues relating to mine closure.The terms of reference of the Committee are to review the existing provisions regarding temporary closure of mines, abandonment of mines, planned mine closure and their systematic rehabilitation and to suggest suitable amendments in the Mineral Concession Rules. 1960 {MCR) and Mineral Conservation and Development Rules. 1988 (MCDR).

The Committee has not submitted its reports as yet. The Report of the Committee shall be considered in the Conference of State Ministers of Mining and Geology which is likely to be convened soon.

SHRl ABANl ROY: Sir, many mining areas were abandoned and not decommissioned, reclaimed or rehabilitated. This has resulted in unauthorised mining activities, causing social and environment damage to the mines and the surrounding areas. I would like to know what the Government propose to do in this regard.

SHRl RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir. I complement hon. Abaniji for raising an issue of great importance. Sir, Mineral resources are exhaustible; they are not permanent. Today, they are being exploited. But, a time will come when the mineral resources will completely get depleted.Therefore, mine planning was held to be a component of the existing rules, because we found that the existing rules 22,23 and 24 of the Mineral (Conservation & Development) Rules are not having sufficient teeth. The Mineral Development Advisory Council raised this issue, and the consensus emerged that the whole system of mine planning has got to be given a detailed consideration. A Committee has also been constituted, under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary. The report is expected by the end of December. On the basis of that, the Government will take adequate measures so that a comprehensive mine closure plan can form part of mine planning itself.

SHRl ABANl ROY: As you have rightly said, there is no such provision in the Rules. So, my question is: Would the Government think of changing the Rules?

SHRl RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Surely, the moment the recommendation comes—as i have stated in the main answer—we will discuss the matter in the meeting with the State Ministers of Mines to be held on 22nd January, 2003. After the meeting, we will certainly amend the rules.

SHRl JIBON ROY: You are abandoning many of the coal mines, despite the fact that coal is there, especially in underground mines. No where in the

world, coal is allowed to be destroyed, because it is a non-renewable source of energy. But, here, you are abandoning and closing the coal mines on the ground that they are not making profit. Now, everywhere, the system is cross-subsidisation. Underground mining is subsidised by open cast mining, and, here, you are not doing that. As a result, a large amount of coal, best quality coal, at Raniganj and Jharia, is getting wasted, So, will the Government change the policy and introduce the system of cross subsidisation and save the underground mines.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, this supplementary does not come within the ambit of the main question. It is a question of principle. But, Sir, if you permit me, I would like to reply to it. Sir, exploitation of coal from underground mines is not a very permanent affair even if coal is there. We have to see the commercial considerations as well. For example, Sir, the Shyamla Mine in West Bengal is incurring a loss of Rs. 11 crores every year. But, when we close a mine, we also open a number of new mines, and this is an onging process, and this fact is required to be appreciated.

डा0 कुमकुम राय : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहती हूं कि खाने बंद कर देने के लिए बालू की भराई की जाती है, या बाहर से तार लगा दिया जाता है लेकिन बेरोजगारी के कारण, गरीबी के कारण अगल-बगल के लोग उन तमाम चीजों को तोड़ ताड़कर अवैध खनन करना शुरू कर देते है जिससे हमेशा ऐसी दुर्घटनाएं होती है और कई लोग उसमें मारे जाते हैं । इसलिए क्या आप यह सुनिश्चित करेंगे कि जो बालू की भराई है, जिसमें बहुत बड़े स्तर पर घोटाला होता है, सिर्फ़ कागजों पर दिखा दिया जाता है कि वह खान भर दी गयी, लेकिन वास्तव में वह भरी नही जाती है जिसकी वजह से अवैध खनन जारी रहता है और लोग रोजाना मरते रहते हैं, इसलिए मंत्री महोदय यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए क्या कार्यवाही करेंगे ?

श्री रवि शंकर प्रसाद : महोदय, माननीय सदस्या ने अगर मेरे उत्तर को सुना होगा तो मैंने आरम्भ में ही कहा था कि माइन क्लोज़र के बारे में हमारी समग्र दृष्टि हो । माइन क्लोज़र जो माइन प्लानिंग का अंग है, इसके लिए वैधानिक संशोधन की आवश्यकता है । उसकी जितनी कमजोरियां सामने आई है, उन सभी कमजोरियों के मद्देनज़र हम राज्य के खनन मंत्रियों के साथ विस्तार से वार्तालाप करने के पश्चात निर्णय करेंगे और आपकी जो आशंकाएं है, वह नए नियमों के अनुसार दूर करेंगे ।

**408. [The Questioner (Shri R.Kamaraj) was absent for answer vide pages 46-47.]*

**409. [Ttie Questioner (Shri Jhumul< Lai Bhendia) was absent for answer vide page 47. j*