

Welcome address by Er. N. R. Banerjee, Secretary

We are extremely grateful to you for attending this programme and I accord a very hearty welcome to all of you for the encouragement you are providing to us through your attendance.

Today, West Bengal is passing through a very very critical stage where we, as professionals, think in terms of Re-vitalization of Industries. As you know, in the life cycle of Industries in W. B. we have crossed the maturity stage long ago and a large chunk of Industries in West Bengal in various areas are in the stage of decline. Nothing was done at the maturity stage to arrest the declining curve ; so it is time that we professionals give our strength together to explore what we could do in terms of arresting this decline.

With that end in view, we thought that if we could have a platform like this where we could discuss and indentify the strengths and weaknesses of Industries in W. B. and at the same time the opportunities and threats which are coming through the doors & windows of the nation thrown open to the international scenario.

We believe in the fact that strength of India lies in the strength of the states ; we have to ensure that all the parts of the country are equally developed. Unfortunately, we have observed that during the last 2 decades, eastern region has suffered most, both economically and technologically. Nothing much was done to revitalize this part of the country technically or economically, leave aside other aspects. As a result, whether it is generation of electrical energy, whether it is growth of industry, whether it is any other area of economic activity, decline is all pervading. It is time we rise to the occasion and find ways and means to overcome the situation, It is time that we have to forget quarrelling, and it is time that we have to devote all our energies, channelise all our energies towards bringing some kind of an arrest to the declining trend of economic activities in this part of the country, particularly W. B.

It is generally said, there is no work culture in this part of the country, particularly in W. B. I can say by virtue of the fact that I have to travel throughout the country, being a member of the National Committee on Technical Education & Training of the largest body of employees. C.I.I. whatever we see in W.B. is mostly due to act of the management, lost time is mostly due to the acts of the management, which means that there has been more of lockouts and less of strikes. But when you look at the newspapers, they depict that W. B. has gone to the dogs. It is not so, and during the past 4-5 years the Industrial scenario, particularly the infrastructural facilities have improved. The problem is due to the types of industries in W.B. —Tea. Jute, where not much of R&D efforts are given by the industrial leaders, and because of the fact that the industrial managers wanted very quick return on investment. And the two major industries (tea & jute) of the state have suffered, same is the fact with engineering industries. Not much of new technology was brought in, we relied on old technology, 30/40/50 years old technology. Therefore, we are suffering through some kind of a stagnation. Today we find Computerisation, M.I. S. ; before gearing up our people, training our men, imparting the right kind of skill, we are bringing in so called hightech areas. As a result, I believe, that unless the people are trained, unless the people are imparted the right kind of skill, again the experiment will fail. So in these areas—education. training, skill, R & D, technology upgradation we from our Association of Engineers, India feel that the management, the leaders of the trade unions, the professional bodies have to come together, meet somewhere and try to contribute and contribute effectively towards rejuvenation of Industries. If W. B. survives, the country will survive. If W. B. dies, the country will die. that kind of a feeling has to come. I am sorry to say that it is the Bengalees, who mostly criticise W. B.