

Inaugural speech by Sri Chittabrata Majumder, General Secretary
C. I. T. U., West Bengal

Huge number of workers and employees are involved in tea, jute and other traditional industries ; with the closure of these industries, large no. of persons will be out of employment in this state. Naturally, we as trade unionists also feel that immediate steps should be taken to modernise the old industries as well as to build new modern industries in this region. You know that petroleum is a scarce and valuable item. Our fertiliser industry, particularly the industries in the Eastern Region, HFC & FCI units of fertiliser are not viable. What is the reason ? The reason is that these industries are not natural gas based, either coal based or oil based. Naturally, the cost of production is higher. That is why the govt. has decided that these fertiliser industries have to be closed ; industries in Bihar, in Orissa, in Assam will also be closed.

We have a vast resource of natural gas even in W. B. The problem is this resource was never seriously tried to be utilised. In W.B, very recently in 3 wells oil has been identified. One is Golf Green, another in Ichapur. But the ONGC management has taken the decision to shift the rigs to other states. The workers and local people have obstructed the removal of rig in Ichapur I. But what is the management doing ? They said that a large no. of rigs are idle in the western region, hence the rigs are to be shifted to Assam ; the rig will be brought here again when needed. So, what is the use of transporting it to Assam ? Better to transport from western region to Assam. But, they are trying to shift this. So, this is the attitude of the management,

Actually the govt. is not interested to utilise these resources. These are natural resources. We have steel also. Most of the efficient engineers, technicians, scientists who are engaged all over India, even outside India are from this region, particularly from this region, particularly from W. B. ; workers here are also highly skilled. But if you go to any other place, even outside the country you will hear that in W. B. there is no discipline. Previously

it was told that there was no power, there was no communication system, no telephone system, no electronic communication system. So, W. B. was not ideal for industries. And the trade union movement was also there. So, they would not allow you to work.

In W. B., the trade unions today are playing their role in a much more responsible manner than any trade union in other regions. Actually, the trade unions are feeling that industries should survive. Not only the CITU, our experience says that when a large no. of industries in the public sector have been referred to BIFR for their closure, all the trade unions and the officers' organisations and in some cases the management, are preparing viable alternatives. The trade unions are taking the initiative; workers also feel that if the industry remains sick, their earning will not continue. So, the sickness of the industries has to be overcome. So, they are taking the initiative preparing the viability reports, in collaboration with others. But actually the stand of the Govt. of India, as you know, due to the implementation of the new policy, is otherwise and they are determined to close these down. So, the trade unions are very serious about the revitalisation of industries in this area and particularly new and modern industries in this area and there will be no problem from the Trade Unions. May be some small problems there, but with the involvement of the trade union leadership all the problems could be sorted out. If you say about the weaknesses, this may be pinpointed as one of the weaknesses, the role of the workers. But along with this other things also are coming, i. e. about Productivity. Now, productivity depends on many things. Yes the workers are also responsible for less productivity. May be but that is not the only reason. The question of management is also there. The question of machinery is also there. Very recently, the textile mills, NTC Mills in W.B. entered into an agreement with the govt. There were five conditions. They accepted all the five conditions imposed by the govt. They accepted CITRA norms, accepted 7 days' work, they accepted amalgamation of some industries, some textile mills with others but there was a condition that the Govt. would invest 100 crores of rupees for modernisa-

tion. What is the use of CITRA norms, if the machines, if the looms and spindles remain old? So you can apply citra norms, but will the application of CITRA norms only determine the viability of the unit? Where is the modernisation effort? More than a year the agreement was signed, but till today not a single farthing has been spent towards modernisation. So, if one say that productivity is low, can the workers remain responsible for low productivity in this case?

Then another problem is there in W. B. In most of the cases there is no order. I know one industry, particularly, originally that was in the private sector, now it is in the public sector—Shipyard, Hooghly Dock and Port Engineers—the new name. Both the units, Hooghly Docking & Port engineering were building and repairing ships. Now, Govt of India appointed a committee & according to that committee these two companies can be amalgamated into one company and if 8 Crores of rupees can be invested towards modernisation, the units can be made viable. That was the recommendation of Kishan Deb committee. The recommendation was accepted by the govt of India and accepting that recommendation, the company was nationalised. Within 3 years 8 Crores rupees have to be invested, that was the recommendation. At the end of 3 years only 1 Crore or something like that was released, and nothing has been done. Now, the company has no order because the govt. is allowing the buyers to purchase ships, second hand ships from outside. So, when there is no order, there is no work, these workers are being habituated with idleness. What can be done?

Even where the job is there, the management, particularly, in W. B. what I have seen, is reluctant to impose shop floor discipline. In a seminar organised by the NIPM some years ago, I raised this issue. When I started trade union in the fifties at that time I had to reply a no. of showcase notices every day. That was a regular job in the Trade Union; But today, in fact no such showcase notices are coming and the workers are allowed to do according to their will. Is the establishment of discipline in the shop

floor the task of Trade Union? Trade Union can educate their workers, But imposition should also be there and that should come from the management, but we are lacking this also. So, this is also an area of our weaknesses and that has to be overcome. However, the main problem is not within the strengths & weaknesses. Today the power situation is best in W. B. Electronic Communication System is also available in Calcutta Physical Communication System, there are some problems true, but what about Bombay. The same problem, traffic problem is there in Bombay. What about Delhi? So problems are there everywhere, But some efforts are being taken to overcome the Communication Problems, physical Communication Problems particularly. But the main thing is the investors are advised not to go in W. B; If the investors are not interested to invest in this region, how the industrial situation in this area can be developed? What you will say, I do not know, Whether it is a strength or weakness, but this is a major factor before us.

It is not the economic factor, it is the political factor. So you also are not in a position to solve the political factor. So something is there beyond our capacity. How to remove this, that is another question. But apart from this, today in W. B. some of the industries are showing interest to come up and they are coming up also. Even some foreign companies are also coming with new technologies, Some Indian companies are also showing their interests. Now all of us have to try our best so that we could utilise the situation. Naturally, as a representative of Trade Union we cannot deny our responsibility in this matter but as I have already explained that the trade unions are not for deindustrialization: they are for industrialization, how to industrialize our country? What they understand by industrialization? These are the matters which should be taught: then the working class, as a class, can contribute in this activity. I from my organization, CITU can assure that all the times we are trying to educate our workers, to see the interest of the industries also, because under the existing system, whether our industry will remain or will be closed depends on whether the industry is viable or not; that is

one of the main conditions. So they are also to see that the viability of the industry can be maintained and for that reason, they have to contribute as they can do. Simultaneously, the other sectors also should come forward ; I am happy that particularly the engineers, the Association of engineers have taken initiative, so naturally you are also feeling in the same line, I think with all these efforts the revitalization of industries in W. B. will be possible, though there may be some negative things. Even then this can be done. With this and with thanks to you all I conclude.

Speech by Guest of honour, Dr. S. C. Roy, Director of the Indian Institute of Social welfare & Business Management, formerly Chairman of the Calcutta Port Trust.

First of all, I want to express my thanks to the Association of Engineers who has kindly invited me to be amongst you today, this afternoon to participate in a discussion which is so very vital for the country. I say it is for the country because industrial and economic development of West Bengal doesn't really mean that it is exclusively or even primarily for W. B. If a part of the body is in ill health, a whole body suffers.

Today, unfortunately, W. B. as a part of the country is in bad position. Therefore, it is the duty of every citizen of the country to see that it is nursed back to health. W. B. has everything which is necessary for economic development. It has ample land, it has resourceful people, skilled labor ; its entrepreneurs, its capital, its past history : a great economic stride : then the question is why are we in this position today ? This analysis is not necessarily of historical importance. It is of importance particularly because, new challenges are coming and new opportunities have been thrown open. In this, it is very relevant that the four principles of management, the SWOT analyses of the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of economic develop-