

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-

ment in W. B. are being discussed in this meeting. It is no use really going to the past history : it is much better to realise what is happening today and what must be done to rectify if there are remedial defects which can be rectified,

Briefly speaking, if we go industrywise, we know that W. B. has been having some traditional industries some of which are rather in bad shape now. These industries are Engineering industry, Chemical industry, Jute industry etc. Industry which is traditional but not in that very bad stage, rather doing well now inspite of some of the defects is the tea industry. Now industrywise a lot of analysis has been made why a particular industry which was a thriving industry in the past is in the present state now. That way when we find that most of the industries which had been traditional industries in W. B. are more or less, to use this cliché i. e. sick, the question is, what are the common factors ?

One common factor which has been alleged so far has been the labour situation. You ask any entrepreneur whether thinkingly, knowingly unknowingly, instinctively, with reason or without reason, the common answer would be people do not work here, people go for industrial unrest, there is no work ethics. This is the number one response. Number two response is, who will risk his capital, who will risk his enterprise, his efforts, if everywhere you find there is obstruction ; you go to the office, people are interested in discussing politics and football and they will not, even if they come, which again is again an allegation, that they never turn up before twelve and will vanish from the office before four or in the workplace they will not work. In that situation, why a freeman in the country should risk his capital and his venture in a situation like this ? Had the option been left that it is W. B. or none matter might have been different; but when W. B. can be compared with a situation obtainable in Karnataka, in Maharashtra, in Tamilnadu and in Delhi, whether we like it or not, whether it is palatable or not. If one decides not to stay here or not to come here and decides to go to Karnataka or Maharashtra, we must find out why is it so.

Therefore, the next problem as I see is the problem of availability of entrepreneurs and the people who will mobilise the forces for industrial and economic development. Third follows, that is of course infrastructure, what we know by infrastructure. In this background, if we discuss what is the position today, we find that lot of encouragement is being made. That foreign capital, NRIs, all entrepreneurs from other states, our states is offering this and that opportunities, come and utilise it. I do not place much credence on the media interpretations but again if all the media, all the time is saying something is basically wrong; that is why only two industries came to W. B. in the recent past ; one is Vesuvius, another is CFCL in Haldia. In spite of the efforts, not a single shipbuilding industry could be brought to W. B., in spite of very excellent workmanship of shipbuilding in W. B. W. B. artisan and craftsman and workmanship of shipbuilding have been excellent for centuries; they are excellent even today. Then why is it that port and dock engineers that is the HDPE, Hooghly Dock and Port Engineers is in terrible mess ? We have to analyse really what has gone wrong. At one time, both sides of Hooghly were dotted with shipbuilding firms, shipbuilding companies. Today, if you place an order with them you are sure that your ship is not going to come out. On the other hand, you will have to go on paying them their installments etc. Your money is sunk. Your project is gone. And there are alternatives available.

In Ratnagari district, a remote district in Maharashtra in Ratnagari, ships are being built on dot; absolutely on dot. In Gujrat, ships are being built on dot. Then who will place orders here and not go to Maharashtra and Gujrat ? Andaman and Nicobar Island administration placed orders for a number of ferry vessels and passenger vessels on HDPE. Not a single could, be delivered for the last 8 years. The lighthouse department of the Govt. of India placed an order for 8 crores of Rupees for a lighthouse vessel. It could not be delivered in the last 8 years and now the price has gone up to 30 Crores and it is an impossibility to be revived. I can or you can give no. of examples.

The question is would we go on apportioning blames or would we find out solutions ? There is no doubt that we are suffering. Now, when I contacted the disease, what is the use of going into the history ? Let us take the medicine straight away. What is the medicine ? Medicine as has been rightly pointed out by Mr. Mazumdar is productivity. Increase the productivity. I will add, better the quality. Quality has to be of the world standard today. The productivity has to be atleast in the Asian standard today. Nothing short of that will make us survive. As you would all know, in the recent past, we have seen emerging of new economic powers in the world. There are the south-east pacific countries. It is not only Japan, Japan's example is old. Nobody need to repeat Japan's history. It was closely followed by South Korea. It was followed by Hongkong, Singapore, next came Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia and now very surprisingly, a very communist country, China. Can you imagine China's rate of growth in the recent past has been one of the best ever seen in the history of economic growth in the world, more than 20% as against 8% in our country, as against 3% in the developed countries ? If they can do it, if southeast area can do it without a single explanation why can't we do it ? After all it is not a question that Western Europe did it, we are in different situation, the colonial powers etc. No, this is happening right with our neighbours, barring Bangladesh and Burma because of different reasons, all of these are our neighbours.

If they could do it; I will repeat, why can't we do it. Let us see what have they done. First of all, they have seen that they produce goods which can be exported. They don't produce goods for their domestic consumption. I will compare point by point although time is all that limited. Let us say, take tea. At one time, tea was exported to the outside world from India. We earned a lot of money, lot of foreign exchange. But today tea is mostly consumed in India. There is no exportable surplus. I would say, don't consume tea. First export : earn the money. Then if there is

available tea, you consume. Improve the quality of tea, so that kenyan tea, Srilankan tea, they do not outdo the export market so far as Indian tea is concerned, Increase the productivity of tea. Productivity of tea has been going down, down and down. I don't know whether it the management or the labour or any such thing, may be it is a combined scene. Tea bushes, you know are most productive between 25 to 50 years of age. After 50, it has to be discarded. And every year there should be plantation of about 5 to 10%. Our replantation has been less than 1%. Then not only our present is doomed Our future is doomed, although Darjeeling tea is one of the best in the world. Therefore, teaearning is suffering because we are drinking more, exportable surplus is less, bushes are old, these are not being replanted. I have seen myself in Tripura there were 52 tea gardens, 10 to 50 years back, may be 20 years back. When I saw it myself very closely about 7 years back, not a single tea garden was functioning. They have not only taken out the bushes to burn as fuels, they have even cut down the shade trees to be sold as firewood. Tea was totally out,

Same thing has happened in Jute. Same thing has happened in textiles. Same thing has happened in engineering goods. I have just given an example of tea because tea is a thriving industry. It is a good industry and not a sick industry. In spite of that you find that the disease symptoms have already set in. Therefore, let us analyse, not at this forum but in appropriate forums, what are the ills in the other industries which are occurring. Next I will come to the question of new industries coming in the state. As I mentioned, nobody can force anybody to come and set up industries here. I have personally seen how in Haldia we could not attract anybody. Now, Haldia had a tremendous promise, even now has a tremendous promise. As I mentioned, except CFCL of Goenka, not a single industry started in the recent past. Although, it is during the same time, Gujrat, Hazira area etc. took the facilities of the Core development and had been developing immensely. One portion of the national highway linking Haldia half a kilometer could not be made a road, a possible road in 7 or 8 years. Haldia could not

be connected with STD facilities or telecommunication facilities for decades. Haldia, even now, doesn't have hotels ( until recently one or two hotels have come up where you could go and stay. If you apply for thing, it takes years to process. You are not assured of power. The captive power plant will not work there.

What is the Public perception today about. Haldia petrochemical? It would have been much better if we had not mentioned the subject at all till we knew that it was going to come. It has created such a bad image, such a bad taste in our mouth that whenever we think of this Haldia petrochemical or we are in the news, nobody believes anything today. People have lost confidence, not only with the people who are entrusted with job, but with themselves. There are so many petrochemical complexes that are coming all over India and here there is so much of publicity in the last 8 years. So much of talks, conference, meetings, so many things. Result, not a single thing has occurred excepting acquisition of land-

As I say, let us analyse why it is so ? You will find Industrial Development Corporation and the IIDC ( Industrial Infrastructural Development Corporations ) thriving, thriving: Not here, not here, So, why is it so ? Now, negative criticism can lead to constructive action. It is necessary to introspect. Criticism does not necessarily mean that one is negative, one has to find out what is to be done. Today, whether we like it or not, our economy has been thrown open to world competition. With the recent union budget with duties being slashed, have you got any chance to compete with multinationals, if the product is the same ? If you produce a soap and Hindustan Lever produces a soap and 51% foreign investment, what chances have we got ? It is almost throwing open an infant, a sick person, an old person, to compete with a Gladiator. It is very unfortunate but the situation has to be accepted. No use criticising the policy, when we have to work within the policy. If we have to work within the policy framework, then what the W.B. finance minister has done is probably a direction in the right step, He has precisely tried to make within, of course, limits, because state finance has

has its own limits. The Central Government has reduced the fertiliser subsidy. Small farmers will have to pay more. Therefore, W.B. having revival in agriculture sector, will get a setback. He has tried to give some relief to agriculture. The state budget has given extensive relief in Sales tax. It has given extensive relief in different taxes so far as electronic goods are concerned, software of computers are concerned. So many other things. In tea, as I was mentioning, he has given relief that if you are going to invest in tea ventures out of tea capital you will get 20% exemption from agricultural income tax. There are many other examples in which he has tried to give some relief. It shows, the government is totally aware that in certain areas we have to encourage industries to come up.

It is very unfortunate that in this situation, there is a sort of ambiguity in the approach of the trade unions. It is not one trade union but multiplicity of trade unions. They should have come together, saying that so far as the Government efforts, private efforts or the international efforts of revitalisation or bringing in economy in W.B. is concerned, there is a total ban on strikes and lockouts. I won't join issue with Mr.N.R. Banerjee whether lockout is more or strike is more. That is more academic, relevant to class room situation. What we want is no strike, no lockout. What we want, if there is a Gherao, police does not wait till 5.30 .m. The status Symbol of being gheraoed these days are gone. It is a physical torture now. It is difficult to get not only entrepreneurs from outside, also to get an all India Officer to serve in W.B., they prefer to serve elsewhere.

Therefore, industrial relation has to improve. If management is at fault, yes, management has to be pulled down. If unions are at fault, they have to be pulled down. They work within the same confines, with the same objectives. Why can't they come together? Bring them together. have exchange of views across the table, have agreements which are honoured, have quality circles, have agreements committees. You know there is no

dearth so far as legislation is concerned. Then let the plant sort the manpower left to their destiny. Are we going for that? Let us be very cautious when we go for privatisation. It is not the case that all public sector units are good. We have to see which area, which units are good, which area, which units have potentials and go for that.

Unfortunately, bad examples are highlighted. Metal box gets opened. Next day Metal box gets closed. Whether true or not, I atleast don't know, but again it leaves me a frustrated man when I see that after so many years a company has opened rightly or wrongly, whatever the agreement with the unions are, I do not know, but the media has flashed it is open, next day it is closed. If it is wrong, let somebody come out with the facts. We have a number of conferences and workshop organised on different subjects in Calcutta, why cannot we have detailed discussions case by case, what is going wrong? The present strategy, which is being adopted all over the world, the strategic management of new companies, new ventures, old companies, old ventures when challenges are global. Let us find out what strategies to adopt, what strategies to adopt for turnaround of sick Companies. There are Companies which once were sick doing very well now; Titagarh steels for example doing very well. There is absolutely no reason why Hooghly Dock should not come back to health. I can only conclude by saying that let us think, let us discuss, let us come together. Article 19 of the constitution of India has given us freedom of thought & expression. Let us say freely, express freely and act freely for the common good of the country and West Bengal.