

Concerted Steps For Industrialisation Of NE Region Urged

By A Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI, Nov. 12—
Sri R. V. Subramaniam, Adviser to the Governor of Assam, called for concerted and determined steps to rapidly industrialise the North Eastern Region as a key to solve the growing unemployment problem and for economic development.

Inaugurating the open session of a seminar on "Industrialisation of North Eastern Region", organised by the Assam Financial Corporation at the State Central Library auditorium here today, Sri Subramaniam emphasised better utilisation of the existing infra-structure and also setting up of industries based on locally available raw materials like forests, petroleum, tea, coal, lime stone, sillimanite etc. and raw materials from outside for local consumption.

Sri Subramaniam suggested formation of a compact group of representatives of financial institutions, entrepreneurs and experts for an in depth analysis of the problems of industrial development in the north-eastern region. The group by identifying the past 'mistakes and wrongs' should suggest measures for creation of a viable and healthy industrial climate in the region.

The Adviser also called for the creation of a consultancy organisation and merchant banking facilities to accelerate the pace of industrialisation in the region.

Following over the function, Sri Bishnu Prasad, Chairman of the AFC, said that it was imperative that the 'maximum advantage, help and support' should be taken from the Centre for economic development of the region.

He emphasised the need for constitution of coordinated body of all Government departments, financial institutions and allied organisations to implement the programme of industrial development in the region.

Sri Prasad said the purpose of the seminar, is to evolve a new concept for strategy and

new approach to overcome the problems in industrial development of the region. He deplored that 90 per cent of the six lakh handlooms in the region are lying idle, when six different Government departments are looking after the vital cottage industry which can usher in economic development of the region.

Speaking as the chief guest, Sri M. C. Narasimhan, Finance Commissioner, Assam, hoped the sizeable expansion of trade and commerce in the region, since lately, would usher in a rapid industrialisation of the region.

Sri P. G. Barua, Managing Partner of the Assam Tribune Group of newspapers, pleaded for rapid industrialisation of the region in view of growing unemployment and increasing pressure on land.

Sri Barua also called for revision of criteria of industrial backwardness of a region on the basis of distance from raw materials source, market etc. He said, for geographical reasons, the market for locally produced goods is limited. To overcome this, he added, industries should be based on raw-materials locally available or where consumption is within the region.

Sri P. C. Goenka, a leading industrialist, alleged the Industrial Estates in the State are ill-equipped. He cited examples of modern industrial estates in other States where facilities like canteen, stores, water supply etc. are available which encouraged entrepreneurs to come forward to set up industrial units.

Sri Goenka said in comparison to other States competing among themselves by offering more and more incentives to attract entrepreneurs, the Assam Government, on the contrary were creating hindrances in the form of arbitrary taxations etc. He also called for the rejuvenation of the traditional bell-metal industry of Kamrup which has a great potential. He questioned why large-scale and medium-scale engineering and electronic industries could not be set up in the region to utilise the talents of the local people who are more oriented to skilled

and precision works rather than to processing and mass production. Sri I. J. Laul, General Manager, Industrial Development Bank of India, Guwahati, while outlinging the different direct and indirect financing offered by the bank, assured of its maximum support through financial and promotional measures to bring about industrial development of the region.

Sri Laul expressed his disappointment at the shyness of the local entrepreneurs to come forward with viable projects which was primarily responsible for the poor flow of assistance from the IDBI. The bank since inception in 1964 had sanctioned Rs. 67.98 crores to projects in the NE region consulting 1.18 per cent of the total assistance in the country, he added.

Earlier, Sri Kamaleswar Bora, Managing Director of the AFC explaining the objects of the seminar, said the Corporation has at present about 800 loan accounts in Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura against which it had invested over Rs. 16 crores. He regretted that sufficient number of entrepreneurs had not come forward to avail of the benefits offered by the Corporation.

Sri Bora called on the prospective entrepreneurs to imbibe the practice of better financial management, sincerity and perseverance which will only lead them to success in a highly competitive economy.

In the afternoon session, papers were presented by Sri A. P. Singh, Managing Director, ASIDC and Sri Tapanlal Barua, Managing Director AIDC. Earlier, a working group session was held where a number of entrepreneurs participated.

In the concluding session tomorrow, several papers will be presented by entrepreneurs and others.

13 - November - 1981 - The Assam Tribune.

P 2