

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, May 30, 1995/Jyaistha, 9, 1917 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met
at Eleven of the Clock

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

OBITUARY REFERENCE

[English]

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, it is my said duty to inform the House of the passing away of one of our former colleagues, namely Shri R.R. Morarka.

Shri R.R. Morarka was a Member of First, Second and Third Lok Sabha representing Ganganagar and Jhunjhunu Parliamentary Constituencies of Rajasthan from 1952 to 1967.

He was also a Member of Rajya Sabha from 1978 to 1984.

A veteran freedom fighter, he was closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi and actively participated in India's freedom struggle.

A businessman by profession, he served a number of Industrial and financial organisations.

A keen student of Economics, he was a fellow of Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay.

During his membership of this august House, he had served as Member of various Consultative and Select Committees. He was also the Chairman of Committee of Public Accounts.

A widely travelled person, he had special interest in various games and sports and was member of various sports clubs.

Shri Morarka passed away on 28 May, 1995 at Bombay at the age of 72 years.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolence to the bereaved family.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

11.02 hrs.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

11.04 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS

[Translation]

PRINTED PRICES OF CONSUMER GOODS

* 761. †Shri Rampal Singh :
Shri Balraj Passal :

Will the Minister of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution be pleased to state :

(a) Whether the Union Government are aware that the printed prices of the goods being sold in the market are much more than their actual market prices;

(b) If so, whether any action has been taken by the Government to protect the interest of the consumers;

(c) If so, the details thereof; and ,

(d) If not, the reasons therefor?

[English]

The Minister of Civil Supplies, Consumer affairs And Public Distribution (Shri Buta Singh) : (a) to (d) a statement in laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The Ministry's attention has been drawn to some Press articles to this effect. The price printed on package is only the maximum retail price and actual selling price may be lower than the market prices.

(b) to (d) The Ministry has constituted in February 1994 an Expert Committee comprising of representatives of Government Departments, Trade and Industry Associations and Consumer Organisations to review and suggest the best method of declaration of retail sale price on pre-packed commodities. The report of the Committee has not been received.

[Translation]

Shri Rampal Singh : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has admitted in his answer that the price printed on the package may be higher than the actual price. I would like to quote some such instances. A paint package shows marked price of Rs. 896 against the the actual retail price of

Rs. 635, the actual price of a pressure-cooker is Rs. 500 as against the printed price of Rs. 800, the salt package shows marked price of Rs. 3.50 as against the actual price of Rs. 2.50. Thus the printed prices contain much higher profit margin. It is known to all. What steps is he taking to protect the consumer from this fleece?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, the price on packages is printed in compliance with the provisions of official price policy which is the declared maximum price. Higher price is also printed because of some competitive market factors which enable consumers to negotiate the price with retailers.

[English]

Therefore, this price is always higher than the actual price in the market. There is nothing that the Government can do. The Government, under the Act, can make the manufacturer declare the maximum price on the packaged commodity.

[Translation]

Shri Rampal Singh : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the retailers. It that the printed prices are the prices declared by the Government and the commodities have to be sold on that very price. The hon. Minister in his answer has stated that a committee was constituted in 1994 to look into this matter and its report was awaited. May I know when this report is expected to be submitted by the said committee and whether the Government have evolved any mechanism to check such irregularities?

Shri Buta Singh : Mr. Speaker, sir, this expert committee has held 3-4 meetings with the representatives of trade, industry and consumers and the matter is being considered in length. We hope the committee will finalise its report within 2-3 months and then, we shall inform this House.

Shri Rampal Singh : My question has not been answered. I wanted to know what measures the Government is taking to check these irregularities till the time this report is received?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, the terms of reference of this committee stipulate :

[English]

- (1) "Taking into consideration the socio-economic system of our country, which is the best method for declaring the uniform retail price of a pre-packed commodity on the package as applicable for the entire country;
- (2) Which is the agency which should be made responsible for declaring such retail price, and
- (3) How the suggestions made at the points above could be enforced to provide protection."

[Translation]

Shri Balraj Passi : Mr. Speaker, sir, this is a very serious problem. The maximum retail price of Rs. 800 is printed in the package of a commodity whose actual price is Rs. 500/- only. Some times, the retail printed prices are double the actual prices. The urbanite consumers are generally enlightened and they, while making purchases, negotiate, the price, but the rural and hill people are not conscious of it, and if the retailer demands Rs. 800 for a pressure cooker, the price which is printed on the package, the simple consumer at best will hesitatingly negotiate it for Rs. 750 which the retailer will readily accept while the actual price of that pressure cooker is Rs. 500. Thus the consumer is fleeced of Rs. 250/- on one item.

Sir, even after 45 years of Independence, we have not been able to evolve a price policy with regard to a retail price and the margin of profit of retailer and the manufacturer. The hon. Minister has said that a committee has been constituted. May I know whether Government propose to formulate a profit policy and, till such a policy is implemented, whether some consumer awareness movement is proposed to be launched? I have asked the question in Hindi and I expect him to answer it in Hindi.

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, we have a National Consumer Council and in its last meeting, a suggestion was made for constituting a National Price Review Commission which is under our consideration. There is no doubt that Government cannot make any 'profit policy' since it involves the property of market competition. The maximum price is fixed keeping in view the production cost, sales tax, local taxes, freight packaging, advertisement and so on, and therefore, Government do not have any mechanism to adjust profit margin. The profit margin varied from season to season, market to market. The profit margin cannot be fixed by Government.

Shri Balraj Passi : This means any amount of profit margin, double, triple is allowed and it does not make any difference to Government.

Shri Buta Singh : Penal provision, prosecution is attracted only when the retailer charges more than the price printed on packages. If any case of such overcharging has come to his notice, he can inform us and penal action can be taken.

Shri Balraj Passi : Double price is printed in the package itself.

[English]

Shri Sudhir Gird : Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the replies of the hon. Minister it is evident that the prices printed on the package differ from the actual prices. The Minister has supported this practice. This practice actually deprives the people of the real prices. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government would fix up the prices of the commodities which are usually used

by the common people and takes steps to make delivery of these goods through out the country at the same prices?

Shri Buta Singh : As I stated earlier in my answer to my hon. friend's question, it is not the Policy of the Government to fix the prices or to determine the prices. I have stated the various factors which go into making the manufacturers to declare the prices on the packages or the goods. It is not the policy of the Government to fix the prices for the rest of the country for all the articles and goods. So, I have neither supported it nor have I objected to it. We are here to implement the rules which govern the MRP on the packaged goods. If there is a violation, as I stated just now, for that there is a rule. The State Governments are competent to take action. We have given the powers to the State Governments to book such people who are charging more than the declared price on the package.

[Translation]

Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya : Sir, as the hon. Minister has stated, the retail price includes many things. I would suggest that the packages should, alongwith maximum retail price, indicate the manufacturing cost also. However, this factor too is before the Expert Committee which is examining all these aspects.

Shri Rabi Ray : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not understood the answer given by hon. Minister. Government stand on protection of consumers interest vindicates that we are mute spectators, we cannot interfere, we have no control on margin of profit over the cost of production. The Government cannot absolve itself by merely saying this, because it involves the interest of millions of consumers. Though a committee is going into all these aspects, but Government have to have a policy for deciding the margin of profit over the cost of production.

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, as I have stated, there is no such provision under the existing law.

Mr. Speaker : He is not asking for today. He is asking about the policy to be framed for the future.

Shri Buta Singh : That is why we have constituted an Expert Committee which consists of representatives of trade, industry, consumers, Ministry of Finance and our Ministry. We can place this economic aspect before that committee but as for now, we have no mechanism to control it.

Shri Rabi Ray : Sir, no satisfactory reply has been given. He is considered to be the representative of poor classes but he has not included the margin of profit in the terms of reference of the committee which means the traders are free to charge as much as they want.

[English]

Shri Buta Singh : I have stated very categorically that the present Act and Law is a price declaration law and not a price control law.

Mr. Speaker : No, we are not worried about the present existing law. We are worried about what is happening really in the country. Are you going to give relief to the consumers or not?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, this measure, this declaring price is not meant for giving relief to the consumers. It is meant for upper price that has been declared. The retailers cannot charge beyond this. ...**(Interruptions)**

Mr. Speaker : Please let him reply.

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, as I said, the terms of reference...

Mr. Speaker : If they should not ask for relief from you, from whom should they ask for relief?

Shri Buta Singh : If the Hon. Speaker desires, I can recommend to the Expert Committee to have this element also

Mr. Speaker : It is not the desire of the Speaker - It is the desire of the House.

Shri Buta Singh : I am prepared to share with the hon. House that in the last meeting of the Expert committee, the terms of reference have been improved and amended. It has also been made obligatory.. **(Interruptions)**

Mr. Speaker : You hear him first

Shri Buta Singh : It has been made obligatory for the Expert committee to suggest, to include and to take up the issue of marking of indicative price. This has been the recent addition to the terms of reference and in that I can always convey the feelings of the House to the Expert committee to keep this also in mind.

Mr. Speaker : The House can depend on your sympathy

Shri Buta Singh : It is always there, Sir, in abundance

Mr. Speaker : Both justice and sympathy.

Shri Indrajit Gupta : I am afraid the hon. Minister, as a result of the replies he has been giving just now, is making the confusion worse confounded. He began by saying that it is not the job of the Government to fix the price.

Shri Buta Singh : It is under the present law.

Shri Indrajit Gupta : Because the prices, according to him, are fixed entirely by the law of supply and demand in an open market, in a free market. Then, who fixes the price which is called the maximum retail price which is stamped on the commodity or the packet of whatever it is?

Who fixes that if the Government does not fix it? He has already said : "the Government does not fix the price." Some times it is written 'Maximum Retail Price inclusive of local taxes' which is stamped on the packet, we would like

to know who fixes that price. The Government does not fix it. He says the Government's job is not to fix the price. That means that price is the price, which is fixed or demanded by the producer or the stockist or the wholesale trader. I do not know who, which is accepted without question by the Government. Now he says, 'If anybody is made to pay more than the maximum retail price then you please come to us and we will take action against the person who is selling that commodity.' Who is fixing the price?

Whatever price is fixed by the manufacturer is accepted by the Government and is put on the packet as the 'maximum retail price.' Please explain because we do not understand what is the purpose of this. How does it help the consumer at all, in any way?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, as I said in the beginning, the 'maximum retail price' is fixed by the manufacturer. In some countries, like the UK, it is fixed by the retailer, but in our country, as I said, it is fixed by the manufacturer. But what the law states I can read out to the hon. Member.

Shri Indrajit Gupta : Which law?

Shri Buta Singh : It is the Standards of Weights and Measures Packaged Commodities Rules, 1977 and also the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976.

Mr. Speaker : Buta Singhji, for you, for the Parliament and for the Union Government, law can be changed. It cannot be changed by the State Government or by any other organisation. But if it is not serving the purpose, if it is not helping the consumer and if it is helping those who produce, should we not have a look at it?

Shri Buta Singh : Very true, Sir. As I have already submitted to the House that keeping in view the feelings of the house, we in the Government will definitely look into it. But for the time being I cannot go beyond the law. I have to function within the law.

Mr. Speaker : Yes, you are bound by it.

Shri A. Charles : Sir, the quantity of sugar issued to the PDS is not sufficient even for the ordinary families

Mr. Speaker : No, that is altogether a different question.

Shri A. Charles : Sir, I am coming to this question. The question is, whether any relief can be given to the consumer from the open market. The cost of production of sugar is known and under OGL...(Interruptions)

Shri Buta Singh : That is another question.

Shri A. Charles : Sir, I am coming to that.

Mr. Speaker : I think, you are coming to the sugar which is just next question.

Shri A. Charles : No, Sir, I am coming to the question. On the basis of what the hon. Minister has just now said, can the Government think of a policy for framing some

rules, fixing the maximum profit that can be taken on the imported sugar and on the sugar produced in the factories so that the price can be fixed with reference to actual cost and the actual imported price?

Mr. Speaker : Would you like to reply?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, this question is going to be covered in the next question.

Mr. Speaker : All right.

Shri Buta Singh : But if you want, I can reply to it.

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : Sir, I would like to give a little background about the whole question.

Mr. Speaker : No, you do not have to give anything. You have to ask for it.

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : Sir, there is a confusion in the House and in your mind also. So, I would like to explain the whole thing.

Mr. Speaker : No, I am not replying to your question. Mr. Minister will reply. Even if there is a confusion in my mind, it is all right but there should not be any confusion in your mind and his mind

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : Sir, I am a Member from the Treasury Benches, I must explain certain things.

Mr. Speaker : No, please ask the question. You are not expected to explain, you are expected to ask the question.

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : Sir, I know the whole thing because this law was made by me...(Interruption)

Mr. Speaker : Please. We sympathise with the father of the law. You can ask the question, if you want.

...(Interruption)...

Mr. Speaker : I am just formulating what the members want.

...(Interruption)...

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee : Sir, I fully sympathise with the Minister. It is true that it is the manufacturers who fix the price as an instrument to see that the traders do not make profit in excess of what is prescribed by the manufacturers. That is how the retail price is fixed. There is no doubt about that. But the point is this. Have you asked them to fix the price? You do not fix the price. They do it. But you have desired that such a price, the maximum retail price, be mentioned on the packets, why do you do that? You wanted that the consumers be not cheated by the traders apart from the manufacturers cheating them and they are not further cheated by the traders. So, your interest is ultimately that of the consumers. Now two things are happening. Firstly, the maximum price is quite often very highly fixed. Secondly, in the market, even the maximum price is not

adhered to and still higher price than the maximum price is charged.

The question that the whole House wants to put is this. Do you have a role to see that the consumers' interests are not violated in this manner? If so, what is that?

Shri Buta Singh : As on today, my role starts if somebody charges higher price than the maximum retail price. Upto that, it is the manufacturers, who fix the prices. If the retailer sells beyond that price, he comes under the purview of the law and steps can be taken and he can be booked by the State Government. This is the position...(Interruption)

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee : Sir, this is a clear abdication of his responsibility. He can say by taking the argument from Dr. Singh, No We do determined by the market. 'He can take that position...(Interruption)

Mr. Speaker : Some steps have taken. If more steps are required, probably they would take...

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee : Sir, he is not agreeing to that. He is abdicating his responsibility.. (Interruption)

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, as I have already said, in view of the suggestions made by the hon. Members and the hon. Speaker .(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker : I am just crystalising the views of the hon. Members and putting them before you and you are not bound to accept my views.

...(Interruptions)...

Shri Buta Singh : These are very important suggestions and we will take into consideration the suggestions made by the hon. Members.

Shri Shreesh Chandra Dikshit : Sir, while there is some check on the traders, there is absolutely no check on the manufacturers and it is the consumer who ultimately suffers. And then where is the point in printing any price? Let it be charged by the manufacturer or the trader. How does it matter to a consumer whether extra profit is being made by the manufacturer or the trader and the consumer is being cheated in any way? So, how does it matter to a consumer that it is not the trader who is charging the higher price but it is the manufacturer who is cheating the consumer?

Shri Buta Singh : If this is the view of the BJP, I accept it...(Interruption)

Shri Shreesh Chandra Dikshit : What the BJP can do about this? I want the Minister to clarify this...(Interruptions)

Mr. Gen. (Retd.) Bhawan Chandra Khanduri : Sir, what the Minister has said should be taken out of the records...(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker : You should be happy that you have a comprehensive view which protects the consumers from those who sell and from those who produce. You should be happy about it.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker : Please sit down. Do not spoil a very important question.

Shri Anna Joshi : He has said, it is BJP's view...(Interruptions)

[English]

Mr. Speaker : If it is the BJP's view, you should be more happy about it

...(Interruptions)...

Mr. Speaker : Please sit down. Please do not create confusion unnecessarily.

...(Interruptions)...

Mr. Speaker : This is wrong, Shri Dau Dayal Joshi

...(Interruptions)...

Shri Shreesh Chandra Dikshit : I submit one thing. The answer to my question has not come. I said, 'how does it matter to the consumer whether it is a trader who is cheating the consumer or whether it is a manufacturer who is cheating the consumer'. In any case, the consumer is being cheated. And to this question, the answer given by the Minister is, that is the BJP culture. What does he mean by this?

Mr. Speaker : Let us understand. He has already said that the existing law is this. If something more has to be done, he would look into it and at the same time, he says that if this is the view of one of the Parties, it is more acceptable.

[Translation]

Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav : Sir, the Finance Minister of this Government, of which Shri Buta Singh is also a Minister, repeatedly assured this House during his budget speech that if the concessions being offered to industries do not reach the consumers, Government would take stern action and even withdraw those concession, since the aim of given these concession it to provide relief to the consumer. Sir, this is not only the opinion of this House, it is the question of protection; of the interest of common man. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, in case the present law does not provide for intervention and, is a hurdle in the process of price reduction and ensuring the benefit to the consumer, whether he will, as the Finance Minister, assure this House that he will take all the steps necessary, including amendment in the existing law, to see that the benefits percolate down to the common man and he is not put to disadvantage.

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : You allow some members to make a speech and do not allow others to put questions even if I rise even for two minutes once in a while, you do not allow me to speak

[English]

Mr. Speaker : I will go by your advice

[Translation]

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : I am sorry for this attitude of yours

Mr. Speaker : You ask question and also deliver a speech

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : What type of speech the hon Member has given just before?

[English]

Mr. Speaker : Please sit down. This is not for you to decide. It is for me to decide. I think he is well within his right to ask this question.

[Translation]

Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha : This is not fair

[English]

Mr. Speaker : You are crossing the limit. Now you please take your seat.

[Translation]

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav has asked as to what implementation measures have been taken by the Government to ensure that the benefit of the concessions given in the budget reach the consumers. I would like to tell the House that advertisements have been given officially in all the national dailies about the excise duty concessions given in the budget and I have myself written to the Chief Ministers in this regard. Our department has also written to the states to ensure that the benefit of the concessions reaches the consumer and we are bound. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker : Let him speak please. If you want to put a question and do not want to listen, please take your seat.

Shri Buta Singh : We have again written to the Finance Ministry to take stern action against those who have availed of the benefit of excise concessions but have not passed it on to the consumer. We are conscious of it and of our Commitment, and if there is any legal complication or hinderance in honouring our commitment, we are prepared to amend the law even

[English]

Mr. Speaker : I will allow you.

Dr. Kartikeswer Patra : Hon Speaker Sir, The consumers of the country should be protected. That is why on every commodity, the reasonable profit on production price should be fixed up. Sir, beyond the reasonable profit, if any producer or trader is selling his commodity, he should be punished under some penal provisions. My question is: Is the Government considering to make some penal provisions for the traders or the producers who are selling their commodity beyond a reasonable profit? The percentage of the reasonable profit should be fixed by the Government.

Mr. Speaker : All the details may not be given now.

Shri Buta Singh : There are already provisions to take action against those who contravene the maximum retail price (MRP) printed on the packet. The penalties can also be imposed. But the only thing is that the State Government has to initiate the action. There has to be a proper complaint on which the action can be taken. The provision exists to take action against those who contravene the declared price printed on the packet.

Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee : The other day while I was going in Rajdhani Express I bought one packet of Nice brand biscuits. On the inside packet the maximum retail price was written as Rs 12.30 and on the oil paper surrounding that packet it was written Rs 30.00. The seller took Rs 30.00 from me. Under such circumstances, what are we the consumers to do?

Shri Buta Singh : The prices are declared at a particular time. There are different batches of the same commodity. It might be possible that a different batch might have come to the hon Member. I also suffered the same thing. Therefore, it can be time variation, it can be different batches of the same commodity, same product. But if it is the same batch and the declared price differs, then legal action can be taken.

Shri Syed Shahabuddin : Sir, the point I wish to make, is this and the question arises from it. We make a distinction between making profit and profiteering. I am sure that the Government is anxious that neither the producer nor the wholesaler nor the retailer should profiteer.

Shri Ram Naik : Are you sure?

Shri Syed Shahabuddin : I hope that they have been elected by the people and, therefore, they think on these lines. I personally feel that the Committee which the hon Minister has mentioned has to have a much wider terms of reference. The Committee must be asked to fix a reasonable limit for profit for the manufacturers as well as for the wholesalers and for the retailers. Once the maximum retail price is printed on the packet, anybody who charges even a penny, a paise more than that should be subject to Prosecution. Is the hon Minister prepared to make the law stringent in this specific regard that if the maximum retail price is printed on the package of a specific packet, then

anybody who charges in excess of that shall invite a penalty?

Shri Buta Singh : As I said earlier, there already exists a penal clause in the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977. But the hon Member has made a very valid suggestion which was accepted by me earlier also. These suggestions will be forwarded to the expert committee and we will ensure that the views of the hon. Members are given due weightage before the committee submits the report to the Government.

[Translation]

Shri Phool Chand Verma : Sir, the basic question is that more prices are extorted from the consumer over the prices printed on packages. I want to know, through you, Sir from the hon. Minister, whether any agency has been constituted to oversee all these things, whether the consumers are fleeced and if so, what steps have been taken by the agency to check such fleecing and whether action has been taken against those found defaulting and if so, full details of the action taken?

Shri Buta Singh : As I have said, we have formed a National Consumer Council, a National Commission headed by a retired Supreme Court Judge where grievance of consumers are heard and if any case of contravention of the Consumer Act is found, the guilty persons are looked, prosecuted. Such consumer forums and judicial forums have been set up at every state and district level. As for the number of persons prosecuted for default throughout the country, I can only say that Government is prepared to take and has taken all constitutional legal and administrative steps to protect the consumer interest.

There is now awakening among the consumers and it is a welcome development. We are thankful to both this House and the consumer council for creating this awareness.

Shri Rajveer Singh : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the reasons why a dual pricing policy has been enforced in the country? The prices of wheat, of sugarcane produced by the farmer is decided by Government while the prices of industrial products are determined by the owners themselves.

Mr. Speaker : Mr. Rajveer Singh, it will create misunderstanding. Cane prices are the minimum while the manufacturers' prices are the maximum. Please do not create confusion.

Shri Rajveer Singh : No, Sir. There is no question of confusion. My submission is that whether Government have ever evaluated tried to know the production cost of cars, tractors etc. manufactured by industrial houses and also the percentage of profit they are entitled to earn? Minimum and Maximum prices have been fixed for

us, for agricultural produce, while the industrial manufacturer is extorting the price of his product arbitrarily, there is no control on him. Whether Government is in league with him?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, the hon. Member knows very well that the minimum price for the farm produce is fixed to protect the farmer so that his sugarcane is not purchased below the officially fixed price, while the price fixed for industrial manufacturer is the maximum so that he is not able to charge higher prices from the consumer. This is done to protect the interest of consumer.

[English]

Mr. Speaker : That is correct.

[Translation]

Shri Buta Singh : Therefore, both policies aim at serving the nation and the people, both are without malice or prejudice.

As for the evaluation of profit margin of manufacturers, this has been suggested by several other hon. Members also and as I have said, we shall place this factor before the Expert Committee and in case the Committee forms an opinion on this aspect, I shall inform this House accordingly.

Shri Ram Nalk : The Committee constituted in 1994 is likely to submit its report after 7-8 months. This is what the hon. Minister has perhaps said. Create problems, appoint committees and keep the problem hanging—this is what the Congress culture is. However, the question now is, whether the Expert Committee will submit its report during the tenure of this Tenth Lok Sabha and this Government will take a decision thereon?

Shri Buta Singh : Sir, we feel that the committee will hold its last meeting in September and submit the report and as soon as the report is received Government will consider it and inform the House.

PRODUCTION OF SUGAR

*762. **Shri Harisinh Chavda :** Will the Minister of Food be pleased to state :

(a) the contribution of Sugar by Sugar producing State in the Central Pool during 1994-95, State-Wise; and

(b) the percentage of increase in Sugar production as compared to the last year, State-wise?

The Minister of Food (Shri Ajit Singh) : (a) No Central pool of sugar is being maintained by the Government.

(b) The required information is given in the attached statement.