

Is it the pleasure of the House that leave as recommended by the Committee be granted?

The leave is granted. The Members will be informed accordingly.

12.07 hrs.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

[English]

Fortieth Report and Minutes

SHRIMATI CHANDRA TRIPATHI (Chandauli) : I beg to present the fortieth report (Hindi and English versions) of the Estimates Committee on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare—Medical Stores Organisation and Minutes of the sittings of the Committee relating thereto.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

(i) Demand for banning lottery system in the country

SHRI ANADI CHARAN DAS (Jaipur) : Gambling is punishable under law. But the lottery system which is almost as good as gambling, has been legalized by the Government, which is encouraging its citizens to take part in lottery. This gives rise to the tendency to depend upon speculation, and kills the spirit of devoting one's labour to earning a livelihood. This tendency to run after lottery gives birth to materialism, and also leads to exploitation, by suppressing the initiative to do honest work, which is inherent in human beings.

Our Constitution aims at equality and abolition of monopoly in all spheres of life. Thus, the system of earning money by purchase of lottery tickets not only makes a man to run after speculation, but also it goes against the spirit and letter of our Constitution.

So, I urge upon Government to change its policy; and it should not encourage the

lottery system. The lottery system should be stopped immediately.

(ii) Exemption of turmeric, chilli and coriander from excise duty

SHRI ANOOPCHAND SHAH (Bombay North) : Sangli in Maharashtra is internationally well known for turmeric and chilli trade. The cottage industries to grind the turmeric and chilli have come up in the southern part of India, due to availability of raw materials. Consequently, the exporters and spices manufacturers get their job work done from these cottage industries. Lakhs of workers from rural area are employed in these industries. This industry is basically rural unskilled woman-labour-oriented.

The limit of Rs. 15 lakhs sanctioned for turnover under MODVAT is exhausted within a month, due to the value of the material. In the total turnover, the value of the materials is 97 per cent. One can easily guess about its lowest profitability, and as the major amount of turnover is material value, there is no benefit of MODVAT scheme for grinders. Due to imposition of 15 per cent excise duty on spices, the industry has already stopped its functioning, and lakhs of rural workers are facing unemployment. The term 'spices' is not defined clearly. Among the spices, black pepper, cardamom, clove, ginger etc. are costly items, and can be considered as luxury items, but turmeric, chilli and coriander (*dhaniya*) specially, are poor man's daily needs. Turmeric, chilli and coriander are not treated as spices, when grinded and packed separately for sale. The imposition of excise duty on spices will result in shooting up the prices of spices, even common man's spices such as turmeric, chilli etc.

The imposition of excise duty will hit the said cottage industries, as a result of overall slow-down of domestic business as well as exports, which is against the national objectives. Due to increased tendency of using loose and adulterated material, there will be a revenue loss of Agmarkisation and standardization.

I request the Hon. Finance Minister kindly to grant exemption from excise duty levied on grinding turmeric, chilli and coriander powder.